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CHINMAYA MISSION® WEST BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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To provide to individuals, from any background, the wisdom of Vedanta, and the practical means for spiritual growth and happiness, enabling them to become positive contributors to society.

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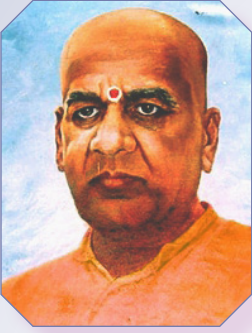
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His Holiness Swami Tapovanam

A man without *shraddha* [faith] is like a useless mass of flesh, which is a dead carcass without the enlivening consciousness. Proportionate to the intensity of his *shraddha* a man acquires strength to carry out great tasks and to beat the sorrows of life. . . . He never takes refuge in anything other than the Lord who is the object of his devotion. . . . There is no limit to the freedom and happiness of a man who is immersed in the ocean of *shraddha*.

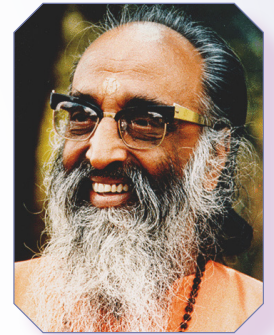
Source: *Kailasa Yatra*



His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda

*I*ndependence is the very essence of being a human. The person who has become free from his slave-like dependence upon the world is truly free. Such a person does not depend on the world to provide joy. The person who has not learned to live in such independence is tossed back and forth by the problems of life—much like an abandoned boat in a stormy sea.

Vedanta, the science of self-unfoldment, teaches us how to regain our divine heritage, to become beings who are free of all dependence on the world, having rediscovered the unchanging, blissful nature of their true Self.



Source: *Self-Unfoldment*



His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda



A *jnani* transacts in the world with equanimity of mind. A seeker practicing meditation also must strive to acquire and cultivate *samatva buddhi* [equanimity]. Our goal should be to develop an attitude of sameness towards things, beings and situations with a full understanding of the existence of differences, understanding that these differences have their place in the whole Oneness; and that the Consciousness that I am, is unaffected, pure, and ever free.

Source: *Meditation: A Vision*

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

Graceful Aging

by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Continued from CMW News, September 2009



A Lifelong Process

Everything changes in time; it is a natural process. But human beings have the ability to consciously change also. Conscious changes for the better are not seen in a lifestyle of disgraceful aging, which is merely living on impulses. In *Bhaja Govindam*, Adi Shankaracharya says about graceless aging:

balastavat kridasaktah

tarunastavat tarunisaktah

vrddhastavat chintasaktah

param brahmani ko'pi na saktah

During one's childhood, one is attached to toys and play—nothing more. In youth, one knows the play of youth and is lost in his “I love you”-s. And in old age, there is only *chinta*, or worry. Man has hundreds of worries and hundreds of different types of worry—over wealth, health, neglect, loneliness, and much more. Alas, no one is interested in the highest Truth, *Brahman*.

Being attached to toys in childhood, to love-play in youth, and to worries in old age, is called graceless aging. It is said, “*Jiryanti jiryata keshah*”: The hairs of the aging man become gray, or white, or fall down. “*Dantah jiryanti jiryatah*”: The teeth start shaking and fall out. “*Chakshu-shrotre cha jiryete*”: The eyes and ears also lose their powers, wearing out. But the worst is, “*Trishnaika tarunayate*”: Desire becomes younger and younger. The whole body is worn out, but man's desires for worldly pleasures remain ever-young, ever-strong, and ever-growing. Typically, if you receive the wedding invitation of an 80-year-old man, how does it make you feel? Forget

about 80, even if he is a 60-year-old, is this the age to get married? There is no grace in aging here.

Adi Shankaracharya continues, “*Angam galitam, palitam mundam, dashana-vihinam jatam tundam*”: The body is shaking, the head is gray, and the mouth has become toothless. “*A Vrddhoyati grhitva dandam*”: The old man is walking with a stick. And there is nothing wrong with these things, because in old age, this is what naturally happens. But the graceless part is, “*Tad-api na munchati-asha pindam*”: He still doesn't give up his bundle of hopes and desires. Some elderly people continue to insist, “I have to go to America!” *Are bhai*, why do you need to go at this age? Because there is *asha pindam*. And then there are people who take *sannyasa*. But if they take *sannyasa* only for the sake of belly, for the sake of food, then even that *sannyasa* is graceless!

It is important to remember that graceful aging does not suddenly come about in old age—it is a lifelong process. Consider the one who has always lived a licentious life and in old age wants to be graceful. Is it easily possible? Some rare examples you will hear about, like Ajamila, of people who truly turned their life around. But this is not the norm. If no conscious effort is made early on, one may attend spiritual camps and graceful aging seminars, but inner transformation late in life will not come easily. When yoga exercises are given and the instructor says, “Bend down and touch your toes,” the old man already set in his ways says, “If God wanted me to touch my toes, he would have given them on my knees!” In old age, there is much less flexibility, on many levels. So, making major changes late in life is quite difficult. Thus, the art of graceful aging must start from childhood.

If someone remains attached only to toys as a child, only to physical sense pleasures as a youth, and only to worries as an elderly person, what is the use of such a life? Someone may say, “A child is a child—he will be attached to toys!” This is right, but alongside, there should also be a conscious movement toward a higher ideal. I composed a verse that illustrates how to live in each stage of life:

balastavat shikshasaktah

tarunastavat dikshanishthah

vrddhastavat bhikshavrttah

sa eva brahmani sadanuraktah

In childhood, one should be attached to (focused on) education and learning. In youth, one should abide in *diksha* (to abide in vows; firm resolve to serve society with the knowledge gained). In old age, one should live on *bhiksha* (to be content with what comes in life by chance). Such a person alone can revel in *Brahman*.

Shiksha means learning; it means discipline. Let children play, but give them *shiksha* as well. In youth, yes, there is a strong sense of physical attraction, but one can also be taught to have *diksha* in life. *Diksha* means a *vrata*, or “vow,” and in this verse, it means developing firm resolve and a higher vision from a young age. In old age, when one enters *vanaprastha ashrama*, or retirement, there is *bhikshavrttah*, which means learning to be content with whatever comes to you in life. After living such a life of calmness and acceptance, one can go forward and come to revel in *Parabrahman*.

A Disciplined Childhood

Balastavat shikshasaktah

Let children be attached to *shiksha*—to learning, to studies, to discipline. They may be attached to toys initially, but you can start a Bala Vihar class for them. Let them play, but also ensure you teach them to live a cultured and disciplined life.

One day, I had an interesting dialogue with

a nine-year-old girl. She came to the ashram with her mother, along with two or three other children. I asked her, “Do you like to go to school?”

She said, “No.”

I asked, “Do you like to play?”

She said, “Yes, playing is fun. Why?”

So I asked her, “Playing is fun and you enjoy it. Now, suppose you do only that and do not go to school. Will this be all right?”

She said, “No.”

So she had some understanding. Even though she said she likes to play and doesn’t like to go to school, she knew a life of play alone would not be right. At least she knew that education and learning are important.

I said, “See, you think that play is fun, but learning is not fun. That’s why you don’t like learning, isn’t it? But suppose learning becomes fun, a great sport and joy. Then?”

She said, “Then, of course, there is no problem at all. I will like that also.”

So, now, what we have to do is make learning a joyous experience. Anybody would dislike school seeing how the whole system is at present. I am afraid of rebirth only for this reason—that I would have to go to school all over again!

Our *Param Guru* Swami Tapovan Maharaj went to a formal school and later told his father, “I’m not going to school anymore. But this does not mean that I will stop learning.” His education went on.

Mark Twain said, “I have never let my schooling interfere with my education.” This does not mean we should find faults with whatever formal education is given, but we should ensure there is *shiksha* in it. It is the duty of the elders to see that children play as well as learn, so that when lessons are given, the children are *shikshasaktah*. This was Pujya Gurudev’s main conceptual framework for “Chinmaya Bala Vihar,” Chinmaya Mission’s spiritual and value-education program for children.

Tarunastavat dikshanishthah

In youth, yes, there is a strong sense of physical attraction and longing, but that is just one aspect of youthfulness. One can also be taught to have *diksha* in life. *Diksha* means a *vrata*, or “vow.” With proper learning, there is a kind of vow in life, a resolve, from a young age. Because of this, there comes gracefulness and higher aspirations in life. So, *shiksha*, then *diksha*.

Diksha for youth is vital, for it molds one’s mindset and vision in life. Sometimes, students learn, get a degree, and then can’t find a job. Often they choose only those careers that pay the highest salaries. They go in the direction of money and market instead of aptitude and talent. Even the corporate world has the problem of finding qualified people and retaining them. There is a competitive, hire-and-fire business, and their employees always tend to go wherever the pay is higher. Now imagine how difficult it is for charitable or social organizations engaged in honorable work to get and retain qualified people!

An intelligent, eccentric man placed a newspaper advertisement that read, “All candidates seeking a job may apply. Whatever degree it may be, in whatever field, jobs will be given.” Naturally, many people applied. Interestingly, at the job interview, the man asked each candidate only one or two questions.

The interviewer asked, “What is your education qualification?”

The candidate replied, “I have an M.A. in economics.”

The man said, “Very good. Now, how much pay do you expect from this job?”

The applicant said, “Rs. 10,000 monthly, to start.”

The interviewer said, “Given.”

The applicant said, “Great! I have never had such a simple interview. Thank you! Now, tell me what I have to do.”

The interviewer said, “You tell me what you can do.”

“What do you mean?” asked the candidate.

“You have a master’s degree in economics, right? So you tell me what plan you can suggest to improve the economy of this city.”

The candidate seemed confounded, so the interviewer repeated, “What plan can you suggest to improve the economy of this city or district?”

The applicant said, “Thank you, but I don’t want this job.”

It is hard to find people with vision. People merely want jobs. But what is the plan for the big picture? How can we help improve current situations and solve prevalent problems? This very thinking process is missing! *Diksha* means having vision. An economics student who has been given *diksha* will naturally inquire on how the national or global economy can be strengthened. He may have simple beginnings, but he will build his plans to higher levels.

The youth who has received *diksha* is the one who will strive to achieve more. In sports, such persons are the rare Olympic gold medal winners. When India was under foreign rule, young men who were freedom fighters thought, “We have to study more and learn more.” They had vision. They studied law, went to England, and learned how India was being exploited.

So, whether it is in politics, economics, sports, the arts, the sciences, spirituality, or any other field, great achievements have come through *diksha* alone. Wanting to bring about the greater good for oneself and others is accomplished through *diksha*, where one is not content merely with what one has, but is striving for the higher welfare of all.



to be continued



“The Journey from Change to Changeless”

Chinmaya Family Camp 2009

Conducted by: His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda

Venue: Hilton Dallas-Fort Worth Lakes
Executive Conference Center

Texts: *Kaivalya Upanishad and Bhagavad Gita, Ch. 17*

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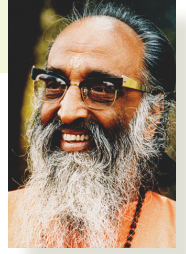
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The Present Moment

by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

Excerpt from Hasten Slowly



When the mind drops its perceptions of sense objects and stops identification with its thought dances, at that stage in meditation, the mind is no-mind. When thoughts rush out in their mad fury to hug objects of pleasure, they are called extrovert thoughts, and to quiet these is the sacred function of the path of meditation. When these outgoing thoughts are eliminated, the resulting condition of the mind is known as the no-thought state of highest meditation.

Thoughts gush in to flood the mind with angry bursts of self-ruinous compulsions mainly from two sources: the past and the future. Some thoughts stem from the past, dragging along with them the memories of the good and bad done in the days gone by. These confuse the individual with the regrets and sorrows, joys and pleasures, raised by his memory from the stinking tombs of the past, forcing him to relive the dead past in the fragrant moments of the present. The future is the other source of our thoughts. We are often flown upon the wings of our mind's fancy and imagination to a world of dreams, where we are made to shudder at the future possibilities of failure, tremble in the hopes of successes, and swoon in the expectations of total losses or large profits.

The past is made up of dead moments, and to unearth the buried moments is to live with the dead. We do so when we waste our energies in unproductive and wasteful regrets over things we have already committed. The more we remember them, the more those very *vasanas* get deeply fixed into our personality structure. When we are not engaging ourselves with the negative preoccupation of entertaining the regrets of the past, we are wandering in the fairytale castles of our fancied future, peopled with ugly fears, horrid dreams, unnerving

hopes, and perhaps, a thousand impossible expectations.

In short, when our minds are not rattled by the perception of objects, let us not thereby conclude that we have quieted our thoughts. Often, it is not so. The mind, when it is not engaged in the worldly objects that are right in front of it, can choose its own private fields of agitation by dragging up the buried corpses of a diseased past or by bringing up vivid pictures of a tragic hopelessness as the sure possibility of the immediate future. In either case, the mind of the individual at meditation can get sadly disturbed. Therefore, the rishis advise us, "Moment to moment, engage the outgoing mind to live in the present. Completely reject the past. Renounce the future totally. Then, in such a bosom, the agitated mind shall reach the state of mind-less-ness." This state of mind is called no-mind.

The content of the present moment, divorced from all relationships with the past and future, is the absolute fullness of the Infinite. Eternity is experienced at the sacred depth of the present moment. To live in the present, independent of the past and the future, is to experience *samadhi*, the revealing culmination of meditation. Seek it yourself. Nobody can give it to anyone else. Each will have to reach there all by himself, in himself, with no other vehicle than himself.

The sum total of the memories we retain from our experiences in the past gives us a false notion of ourselves as an "individual entity." This is the personality of our ego. It is this ego that is a mere bundle of memories of dead moments, which meets the present and interprets it constantly in terms of its diseased past. Never can the ego see the present truly as it is.

Again, when the past, the ego, meets the present, it always strives to weave out of the present a future pattern, a web spun by the ego out of its own imaginations. Hence, life is a confusing jumble of meaningless sorrows, purposeless tensions, unproductive strains, depthless joys—altogether a mad roar of an inconsistent destiny, dashing against the unyielding actualities of life. In the face of this frothy confusion, the individual feels helpless, a mere raft dancing to the whim of the surge around him.

Not to identify oneself with the rising tides of thought, but to remain as a witness of them all, is a definite stage in the efforts at meditation. In an atmosphere of disconcert, one's thoughts get suffocated and die by themselves. So the rishis advise the seekers on the path of meditation, "Moment to moment, disassociate from continuing any thought that consciously rises in the mind. This practice sweeps the mind clean of all rising thoughts and leads you to the state of thought-less-ness, to arrive at the Holy of holies."

This non-association with the rising thought-disturbances is achieved by training oneself to remain as a witness to the flood of happenings within. To be a mere onlooker of the lusty parade of thoughts in revelry is to withdraw from the thoughts their ability to continue their inner carnival any longer. As a witness, we remain in the present, without being conditioned by past associations or enchanted by future expectations. This state, called the neutral condition of the personality, will, in its sweep and depth, ultimately bring us to the thought-less condition.

This no-mind state is the very divine Substratum upon which the present, which serves as the threshold of time where the future becomes the past, exists. The no-mind state is the experience of pure Awareness, with no distracting objects—only the infinite Self, the Changeless, the Unique. This is

the goal to be reached, the Truth to be realized, the experience divine to be lived as the meditator's own essential Self. It is not a thing to be objectively recognized or even intellectually comprehended.

This state is to be spiritually apprehended—in an immediate, personal, inner experience. In this state, meditation gets fulfilled and the meditator becomes the one with the Self, where the three factors of meditator-meditated-meditation coalesce to become one vital experience of total transcendental Awakening, or Self-realization.

The goal is, no doubt, extremely covetable and supremely enchanting. But to attain it, the meditator must have the necessary equipment fully prepared. In our times, we find that failures in meditation are reported more often than successes. This is because the seekers, in the spirit of our hurried times, dash into the act of meditation without first procuring the required pre-flight attunement of their machines-of-flight. So the takeoff never happens!

To establish a scheme of life most conducive to helping meditators grow into meditative attunement, the masters give advice in the most general terms: "Stop remembering and craving for things bygone. Entertain no joy or sorrow as they reach you in the present. Remaining thus, you shall grow into the great glory of your own Self."

Therefore, let us learn to surrender our past unto His feet in love, and let us learn to remain in those sublime heights of divine Awareness, where worries and joys cannot reach to cloud our vision and upset our equipoise.

Be patient. Be steady. Strive continuously, cultivating these qualities. Success is sure, and the Upanishad rishis assure for us the experience of the Self. Toward this acme of life, hurry without haste. Hasten slowly.





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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)

Vedanta 2010

DATES / ACHARYAS

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

Full-time Resident Acharya

Acharya Smt. Sharada Kumar

August 2010

Puja Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

August-October 2010

Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya

November-December 2010

Swami Ishwarananda

January 2011

Swami Shantananda

February-March 2011

Swami Ishwarananda

April-May 2011

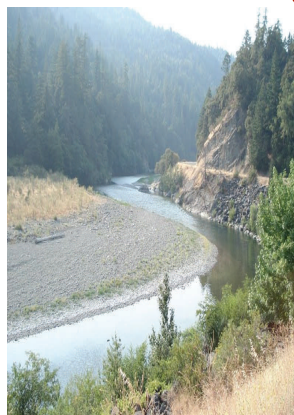
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July 2011

Acharya Smt. Sharada Kumar

August 2011

Puja Guruji Swami Tejomayananda



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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.

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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)

Acharya Sharada Kumar: Taittiriya Upanishad, Vivekachudamani, Vedic Chanting, Sanskrit, Sahasranamavalis, Bhajans

Pujya Gurudev's Birth Centenary 2015-2016



From the Desk of Swami Tejomayananda

June 13, 2009

Chinmaya Mission Centers and *Acharyas* Worldwide

Blessed Self,

Hari Om! Greetings from *Sandeepany!*

I am very pleased to inform you that the Overseas *Acharyas'* Conference held at *Chinmaya Vibhooti* in May 2009 was a great success.

The most important point which was brought out overwhelmingly is that the birth centenary year of Pujya Gurudev (2015 - 2016) should be celebrated in a grand manner befitting His stature. In order to do this, we should gear ourselves from now onward, so that the momentum will be created by the year 2015. Even though it will take some time to plan the details of the various programs to be conducted by each wing of the Mission, one thing can be done with immediate effect: To celebrate the three auspicious occasions—Pujya Gurudev's birthday, *Guru Purnima*, and Pujya Gurudev's *Mahasamadhi* Day—in a more organized and grand way. These days are, in any case, celebrated in all Mission centers each year.

The suggested plan is to conduct a *Samashti Paduka Puja* as the main function in all Mission centers on these three occasions. Those who wish to participate in the puja can make individual offerings in their local currency. Alternative offerings, as listed below, can also be kept so that all are encouraged to participate in the *paduka puja*.

Offerings for *Samashti Paduka Puja*:

Puja: \$108, *Arati*: \$51, *Prasad*: \$25, *Mukhya Yajaman*:
(center to determine)

Each center should have one *mukhya yajaman* for the main altar. The more people participate, the greater will be the joy for all. The funds raised thus can be disbursed as follows: 60% to be sent to Central Chinmaya Mission Trust and 40% can be retained by the local center. Centers can also promote book sales or organize some program (e.g., a devotional music recital).

In His Service,

travelogue

Vande Mataram

by Varun Khanna

Continued from CMW News, September 2009



February 3

This morning we left Bangalore for Mysore, a beautiful city about 2.5 hours away. Our first stop was Tippu Sultan's palace, an Indian leader who fought the British invasion for a long time and even captured one of the generals of the British army, before being eventually captured and killed by the invaders. We walked through the beautifully designed palace and grounds. There were countless intricate paintings that were 250 years old, yet bright and vibrant in color, having survived storms, rain, and sun. Another fascinating aspect of this palace is that it is made entirely out of wood. The palace is now a museum that showcases some of the actual weapons used in his battles. The guns and swords displayed there had actually killed people, and the color on them was not due to rust, but blood.

The fort of Tippu Sultan was a city protected by 50-foot stone walls and two security gates at each entrance. Once inside, we drove around to see the mosque and temple, Tippu Sultan's death place, and his ancestral burial ground.

We stopped for a South Indian *thaali* lunch before reaching Mysore Palace. The palace was grandeur to the core. I was not expecting much, but this place can leave you speechless. This is how kings lived! The palace is a massive and stunning three-storied structure that spans tens of thousands of square feet and is surrounded by grounds and temples. It is now a museum and tourist spot, though the royal family still lives in a small section. The tour guide showed us artifacts and walked us through at least 20-30 rooms, each of which served a different purpose and has 15- to 25-ft. ceilings. We were not allowed to go into most of the palace.

February 19

I have been at *Veda Vijnana Gurukulam* for two weeks now, and time is flying by. I had a good feeling about the place as soon as we arrived. First of all, they were speaking in Sanskrit, so that was cool. Second of all, it was so peaceful. I felt a certain lightheartedness without a cause.

The first day, I was taken to my room, which had a nice bed, desk, shelf space, and bathroom. I was served food, which was pretty good. No complaints. I got a tour of the place and chilled out for a bit. My relatives who had brought me here soon bade me farewell and left.

When they left, I had no idea what to do. I went to talk to the *acharya* in charge of me; his name is Mahabaleshwar Acharya. He told me not to worry and that we would start classes that night itself. I had a nap, and at 5 p.m., Mahabal Acharya gave me my materials and reviewed my schedule with me. He gave me a *veshti*, or *dhoti*. I told him I didn't know how to wear it, so he showed me. It took me a few days to get used to it, but now it is my most comfortable piece of clothing.

He took me to the *yajnasbala* where an *acharya* was conducting a class. He then told me to sit in a corner and left. He returned with *kumkum*, which he put on my forehead. When the class was over, Mahabal Acharya introduced me to the other teacher, Arvinda Acharya, who asked me to repeat after him as he chanted select portions of the Vedas. He gave an approving nod with raised eyebrows and told me I would be joining his Vedic chanting class. Mahabal Acharya then told me I would also be attending the 7 p.m. *kavyakakshya*, or "poetry class," for first-year students.

Every building has some sort of opening to the outdoors or no closure from the outdoors. The premises include a prayer hall (*yajñashala*), courtyards, a cowshed, a laundry area, a library, dorms, administrative offices, and lots of trees. I was fascinated by a pyramid-like structure, called a *shikharni*. It is a place for meditation, designed to catch and hold cosmic energy. They have tried experiments here with milk and fruits, which were put in open vessels, left in the *shikharni*, and did not go bad for over a month!

Also notable is the Ayurvedic garden, which has plants of exceptional medicinal value. Of course, there is not a single plant that does not have medicinal value, but these are the really special ones.

The grounds also house a large *pipal* tree with a circular platform, and classes are held here. Unlike most other trees, the *pipal* is special because it produces oxygen 24 hours a day. This provides for better brain stimulation in that area, so I guess classes held under *pipal* trees in olden times resulted in better learning overall.

The kitchen had the biggest pots I've ever seen. They are used to make food for 70 people at a time. Next to the kitchen is a large sink/drainage area with 10 faucets next to each other, where we wash our plates and cups before and after eating. My room is in this building.

I feel like I've jumped about 5,000 years into the past. The classes are held outside and everyone is just unbelievably nice. And they all know so much! And it's all in their head, memorized. I don't know how they do it, but it seems like in this kind of atmosphere, learning just automatically happens.

Sanskrit is the only language I can really communicate in here. The funny thing is that they all want to learn English from me, so I am teaching some basics. It is the most amazing learning community experience I've ever had, and I'm teaching just as much as I am learning here. Everything is so laid back, yet there is still a sense of discipline (the day officially starts at 4:30 a.m., but activity starts at 3 a.m.). I have found inspiration and peace here. No matter how tired I am, I still want to study. I love

learning this stuff and want to gain however much I can.

I went to my first poetry class and it was terrible. First, I didn't have an *asana*, or small carpet seat, so someone had to get me one. Second, I didn't understand anything, and when the other students didn't understand, the teacher would explain everything in Kannada, and I just became more lost.

At my first dinner, I was seated in the furthest corner (the "guest" spot) of the dining hall. Everyone sits on long mats on the floor. Our plates are put before us and we eat with our hands. I was initially shy to ask for more food because I didn't know who was who, but another student sitting next to me helped me out.

After dinner, some of the students came to talk to me. We chatted, but my Sanskrit was still not that great. After 30-40 minutes of broken conversing, they left. I had some free time before I slept. My schedule was still not finalized and I was not the happiest camper. I loved the atmosphere and the people, but about the classes I was still unsure.

That night was quite possibly the worst night of my life. I could not sleep because there were so many mosquitoes, and because of the sound that they make. In India, mosquitoes are so big that they seriously sound like little jet engines when they come near you. And I could feel them biting me, which suddenly made me aware that I could catch malaria. I decided right then that I would never forget my weekly malaria protection medicine. I was kept awake, and at 3 a.m., I decided to turn the light and fan on to try to sleep. This way, I would not hear the mosquitoes, and hopefully the bugs would go to the light instead of me. I fell asleep around 4:30 a.m.

I awoke at 6 a.m. and ran for morning prayers at the *yajñashala*, again without my *asana* (which again someone had to get for me). This time I kept my *asana* with me when I left. I still had no schedule, and no one was telling me what to do or where to go. At 11:30 a.m., Mahabal Acharya came to get me for class. And where did we go? We went to a tree and sat under it. It was the most amazing feeling, because right at that moment, I realized where

I was. This was going to be an interesting month, whether I liked it or not.

He told me this class would be my *puja homashcha kakshya*: how to do *puja* and the significance of various rituals. Eventually we would learn how to perform a *homa*. I enjoyed my first class. He was not good at English, and I was not good at Sanskrit, so I was forced to keep up, but knew that my Sanskrit would improve over time.

After lunch, I busied myself with tidying up my room, but there wasn't any space to unpack my stuff as such. For the longest time, nobody came to tell me what to do. Finally, two students came to talk to me about some math because the previous night they had learned that I am studying math in school. Rakesh Acharya came at the same time and said (in Sanskrit), "You missed your Vedic chanting class today, which was supposed to be at 2:30 p.m. It is not good to leave a class on the second day, so you will be taught today by someone at 4:45 p.m. Come to the *yajnasbala* then."

I could not follow what he was saying, so when he left, I asked my two other visitors. When they told me what he said, I was like, hey, wait a minute! Nobody told me there was a 2:30 p.m. class, or else I would have gone. I felt disoriented, so again I went to the main office to ask for a schedule. They said they would print it out and give it to me.

At 4:45 p.m., I went to my Vedic chanting class with Arvinda Acharya. After class, a student named Shrivatsa came and told me that he would be my chanting teacher from now on.

I found my 7 p.m. *karyakakshya* class to be way too advanced for me, so I decided that later I would tell Mahabal Acharya that I could not attend this class even though I wanted to. That night, I went to Rakesh Acharya and told him that I needed a schedule. He said he'd type it up and give it to me. I had also informed them about the mosquitoes and they put "All-Out" in my room. I slept well that night.

The next day, Rakesh Acharya gave me a schedule and I told him I could not do the *karyakakshya*. He said that was fine. I asked

him if I could take another class instead at that time. When he said yes, I opted for an additional Sanskrit class on *sambhashanam* (conversation). Arvinda Prasada Agraja (*agraja* means "elder" and is a sign of respect like using "Bhaiya" or "Uncle") said if I wanted to add or remove classes, I should let them know.

For lunch, we went to a nearby temple inauguration. There was a huge crowd and lunch was served on banana leaves. It was one of my most memorable experiences thus far, because I have never eaten on a banana leaf before.

I heard someone playing the flute extremely well that afternoon, so I went to Mahabal Acharya and asked him if I could learn how to play the flute. He said no problem, and that same day my flute lessons commenced.

So this was my schedule: 4:30 a.m. wake up, 6 morning prayers, 7 Vedic chanting, 8 breakfast, 8:30 *shrama seva* (cleaning the grounds, etc.), 9:30 Sanskrit *subhaashitani*, 10:30 break, 11:30 *puja/homa*, 12:30 p.m. *yoganidra* (nap before lunch), 1 lunch, 2:30 flute, 3:30 break, 5 yoga, 6 *shakha* (discipline), 6:15 break, 7 Sanskrit *sambhashanam*, 8 dinner, 8:30 Sanskrit *vyakarana*. After 9:30 p.m. I could do whatever I want, but there was so much work to be done—it was unbelievable sometimes. I did all of it and that was the best part. I had never wanted to study this much in my life; it was a great feeling.

A few days later, we went to a lecture of Pujya Amritanandamayi Ma, also known as "Ammachi." I didn't understand a word Ammachi said because it was in Malayalam.



And I didn't understand the translation either because it was in Kannada. But then one of my new friends sitting next to me started translating in English as Ammachi spoke. It was pretty sweet. She said love is the only answer to anything. At *darshan* time, the devotees lined up and went up to her one at a time. She whispered something into each devotee's ear and the person moved away. When it was my turn, I was asked rapidly what my mother tongue was. "Kannada? Kannada? Mother tongue?" I was so flustered that somehow the first thing that came out of my mouth was, "Sanskrit!" But I don't think they understood, so they asked again. Then I said, "English." Again they asked, "Hindi?" and before I knew it, I was right in front of Ammachi. Before I got a chance to think, my head was pressed forward toward her and she whispered into my ear something that sounded like, "Mydohn mydohn mydohn." When I arose, I looked at her face. She looked at me and let out this cackle of a laugh. I was confused and sort of angry because I wanted to understand what she said, but I was moved away. It was not a waste though, because when I was actually near her, the feeling in my stomach, and all over my body, was incredible. I felt like I could lift off the ground at any moment.

On my third day in this unique community of learning, I started teaching as well: English to two people, piano to two people, Tae Kwon Do to one person, and computers to one person. I introduced them to *a cappella* music and they all wanted to start a group in the *gurukulam*. The cool thing is that they all can sing, so it was hard to keep the group to 15 or so people. I taught one person how to lead the group so he could sustain it after I left.

During the first few days, I observed that before eating lunch and dinner, everybody did an interesting ritual, where they took water in their hand from their cup, sprinkled it into their plate, took more water and circled it around the plate, put a few grains of rice on the ground next to their plate, and chanted a short mantra. I asked Arvinda Agraja, who still sat next to me at meals, what they were doing. He said they would teach me later. On the fourth day, I asked again and he said, "Oh, they still haven't taught you?" He said he would tell them to teach me on that day. But at dinner, I told him they still hadn't taught

me. He said he had asked the *acharyas* there to teach me, but they had said I needed to get my *upanayanam* done before I could learn it. Why that is the case, I still don't know, but the *upanayanam* represents the transformation of the student from the material indulgences of the world to the world of spirituality, in which he seeks the answers he has come to the *gurukulam* to get.

I think I will get this ceremony done because now, knowing what it means, I feel that I can protect what it stands for if I wear it. Before, I did not want to get it done because I did not know what it meant. I would see lots of kids getting it done, but they didn't know what it meant either. They would do the ceremony, have a big party, and a few days later take off the thread. Now that I know what it means, I want to uphold the dharma for which it stands.

I witnessed my first wrestling event at a nearby school with all the *gurukulam* students. It was quite interesting and unique. The kids held hands and just pulled each other (there was no padding or anything), trying to knock each other down. I later learned that the goal of the match was to touch the very center of the shoulder blades of one's opponent to the ground (that is, the base at the back of the neck). And this is no easy task. So we watched them squirm and writhe trying to avoid letting their back touch the ground and trying to pin down the opponent at the same time. It was interesting, but also really funny, and we all laughed a lot.

One of the speakers at the event was Shankara Agraja. When he first came here, he did not know Kannada or Sanskrit at all, and now, he is a master of both. He gave his entire speech in Kannada. I am so inspired by every student here.

My *sambhashanam* class has gone from studying Sanskrit theory to studying Indian logic. It is said Stephen Hawking once called a meeting with the world's modern scientists and said that we have discovered that atoms are not the smallest particles in the universe, and neither are protons, neutrons, electrons, or even quarks. Protons, neutrons, and electrons are only made up of quarks, so if we can determine what makes up quarks, we can find out the real substance behind the

universe, because whatever it is, it is the same in everything. Modern science is stumped here because it fails to acknowledge the spiritual world as a realm of study. But our ancient rishis dived much deeper into this subject by searching inward as much as they explored outward. They found that the subtlest matter within themselves is the same within everything else and this is what we call *Brahman*.

February 27

Today, I got my *upanayanam* ceremony done. The *upanayanam* ceremony is a set of rituals and prayers to make a student eligible for Vedic studies. With powerful mantras that invoke divinity and faith in the student, it acts as a springboard for the student's entry onto the spiritual path. Once this seed for spiritual growth is sown, it is up to the student to make it grow by practicing the guidelines outlined in the ceremony. We were told that the sacred thread received in the *upanayanam* ceremony is worn from the left shoulder to right hip, and symbolizes the replacement of one set of qualities with another. The qualities of *kamachara* (doing what I like to do rather than what I should do; neglecting what is right for what I want), *kamavada* (talking without giving proper thought to what should be said and when), and *kamabhaksha* (eating without considering one's limitations, surroundings, etc.) are to be replaced with the qualities of *shraddha* (faith in Guru, God, scriptures), *medha* (intelligence, focus), and *prajna* (readiness to accept the Truth).

February 29

My chanting class with Srivatsa Acharya is amazing. He chants one line and I repeat it twice. Sometimes it just sounds so funny that I can't stop laughing, but he gives me time. For a couple of days I had a cold, and my nose was blocked, so on every nasal sound I tried, we just kept laughing. Outside of class, Srivatsa Acharya is a joker through and through. He doesn't know English very well and knows it's funny when he tries to speak it, so he speaks it all the time, and it really is hilarious.

This *gurukulam* does not provide any certificate at the end of a student's six-year term. In fact, people come here only out of their own will, and nothing more. Most students here take correspondence courses at universities or colleges and get credits from them, but remain in the *gurukulam* environment. I think this is such a great idea because the richness of life training you get here is unparalleled.

My *sangita kakshya* with Shivaji Acharya is probably one of the best things that has happened to me in the past few months. I am learning the *venu*, or flute, which I can say I have wanted to play for the longest time. I will try to continue my training until I go back to America. I'm learning Carnatic style right now, but when I go to Varanasi, it may transform into Hindustani style—let's see.

Arvinda Agraja has become my guide and role model here. He is a fifth-year student from Chennai, and speaks Sanskrit, Kannada, Hindi, English, Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam. In my *sambhaashana* class with him, we just talk. It's basically to improve my fluency in Sanskrit, but sometimes when it gets really intense, we switch between Sanskrit, English, and Hindi. It's an interesting session every time.

My Sanskrit grammar class is with Tilaka Acharya, who is a sixth-year student here, and he knows everything. I am in amazement every time he pulls out some root for some word without any referencing. He's like the Hermione of this *gurukulam*. My interaction with him is only during class, and however much it is, I am just in awe of him.

I don't want to leave this place. I have received so much from this *gurukulam*, and I feel like the only way I can properly give back is by learning more and more, and by applying what I have learned. I leave today.

to be continued

Join The *Yatra*!

Read all about the ongoing

Chinmaya Dham Yatra, Oct. 20-Nov. 12:

chinmayadhamyatra.blogspot.com

Love of Vedanta

by Dilip Mathur

Pujya Gurudev gave us a beautiful and simple mission: 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. A visitor at any Chinmaya Mission center, upon seeing this mission statement, might ask, “But what is Vedanta?” In a way, the mission statement itself answers the question. Vedanta is the wisdom that teaches individuals how to grow spiritually and find true happiness, which in turn develops their capacity to help society. Vedanta is practical. It is helpful to people from any background. Pujya Gurudev called Vedanta the art of living. You could say it is the science of happiness and service (*seva*). There is an implication that *seva*, happiness, and spiritual evolution are linked as three sides of the same triangle.

Concerning spiritual evolution, a key Vedantic insight is that there is more potential in each of us than we realize, that this potential is infinite and divine, and that divinity is commonly shared by us all. Beyond ordinary comprehension, this divinity called “*Brahman*” is our true identity, while our present self-view of a limited individual called “ego” is our fake identity. Spiritual evolution involves relinquishing our fake identity and discovering our true identity. Vedanta, then, is the science of self-discovery, or rather, Self-discovery. It is the ultimate self-help science. Pujya Gurudev called this self-discovery “unfoldment,” evoking the beautiful metaphor of a bud blooming gently into a flower.

Vedanta guides us and reunites us with our true identity. We are familiar with yoga as a system of physical postures and exercises that restores our body to its natural state of health and balance. We can think of Vedanta as yoga of the mind, because it shows us how to purify and ultimately transcend

the mind. The foremost book on Vedanta, *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*, has 18 chapters, and the one word common in every chapter title is *yoga*, which means “to unite.”

Bhagavad Gita means “the Lord’s Song.” It may be Carnatic classical, country, or western, but foremost, it is a love song. We all want our children to acquire knowledge, and more than that, love of knowledge. However, the *Gita* gives us something far more important—knowledge of love. Not romantic love, but love that expands our being. And the term “song” is apt; for like a song, in the *Gita* there are no false or missing notes. Not a word is extra. And like any love song, the *Gita* touches the heart, which in Vedanta is the union of the mind and intellect. So you could say that Vedanta is the knowledge of love.

Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda once said that Vedanta is a combination of metaphysics and mysticism. Metaphysics is the philosophy of existence, experience, and reality beyond the physical; while mysticism is the immediate, intuitive understanding of truth beyond ordinary understanding. A blend of the metaphysical and the mystical, Vedanta is an inquiry into the ultimate nature of reality. It deals with what is unreal, and what is truly real.

The American philosopher Henry David Thoreau, author of *Walden*, was well-versed in the Upanishads and studied at Harvard University. A friend once said to him, “Harvard has all the branches of knowledge.” Thoreau replied, “Harvard has all the branches, but none of the roots!” Students of Vedanta discover that Vedanta, true to its etymological meaning, is the ultimate knowledge, the root of knowledge, the foundation on which all other kinds of knowledge are supported.

Knots, A Labor of love

How can I
bear to
untie
these knots?
Each one
is a
labor of love!

Yet untie
them I must
for
they bind,
they cloud
my mind.

How can
I understand,
my love,
that release
from these knots
will tie
that
eternal knot
with you?

How can I
make
that
eternal knot
my labor of love?

- Chetana Neerchal

A Cup of Sunlight

Would you like a cup of sunlight,
Or perhaps a bowl of moonshine?
Would you like a plate of stardust,
Picked fresh from the tree of time?

Would you like a box of happiness,
Or maybe a tin of joy?
Would you like some imagination,
A child's biggest toy?

Would you like a bag of wisdom?
How about a full dish of love?
Would you like a glass of peace,
Carried on the wings of a dove?

Would you like a shelf of devotion,
Or perhaps a box of hope?
Would you like a tub of faith,
Which helps one up trouble's slope?

I hope I may earn all of these,
For then I can truthfully say,
"I am wealthy beyond measure,
For I have wealth that will forever stay!"

- Roshni Jhanjee

The Lord's Remembrance

by Anonymous

In his commentary on *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, Maharajshri (Pujya Swami Akhandananda Maharaj) says: *Krishna chintanam jo hai, naa, wo udhar kaa dharam nahin hai, woh to nakad dharam hai. uska phaal abhi kaa abhi miltaa hai*. The Lord's remembrance is not given on

credit and does not have future results like *svarga* (heaven), etc. It is like hard cash. Its result is instantaneous!

In another place, he says: One needs to learn everything from a guru, including patience, *daya* (compassion). Yes, even *daya*. Otherwise, the situation will be like King Bharata. And in the worst case, someone may get you to do something immoral. For example, if robbers come to your place, it is out of compassion that you have to

call the police. This is not the time to fold your hands and do *pranaams* to the robbers, for if the Lord wanted you to fold your hands, He would have sent mahatmas to your place instead!

Pearls on a String

by Anonymous

Based on Pujya Gurudev's talks on Vivekachudamani

After the coronation of Lord Rama, every monkey was given a valuable gift by Mother Sita. Hanumanji was just sitting in a corner, not interested in all the hustle that was going around. However, Mother's eyes were looking for her son. When she noticed him, out of love she gave a beautiful pearl necklace to Hanumanji.

Hanumanji received the same with humility. However, something strange happened. Hanumanji started biting each pearl, looking at it, and throwing it away. He kept doing it until at last only the string remained. He finally looked at the string and threw that away too.

Mother Sita, as though wanting to understand the meaning of this incident, looked at Shri Rama. Lord Rama smiled and called for Hanumanji, and requested an explanation.

Pujya Gurudev explained that this episode is meant for a spiritual seeker: A true spiritual seeker, examines the world of plurality, and on examination, when he finds out that it is only inert and has no sentiency, has enough *vairagya* to throw it away. The pearls represent the sense objects and Lord Rama represents *Chaitanya*, Bliss. To a seeker who has matured in *viveka*, and thus has *vairagya*, the Lord manifests in his heart as Lord Rama did in Hanumanji's heart.



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).

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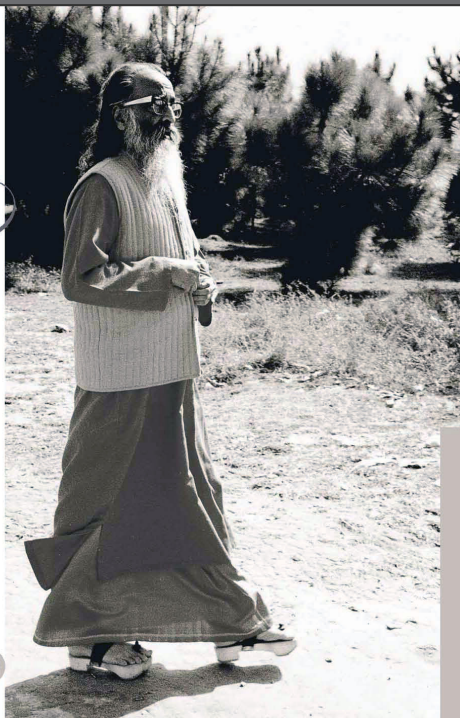
Questions? E-mail easysanskrit@chinfo.org

In the silence of Meditation

There I demand!

"Let me walk in Beauty,
And make my eyes ever
Behold thy play all around me,
Both in joy and sorrow,
In pleasure and pain,
In loss and gain."

3 | Demand Astakam

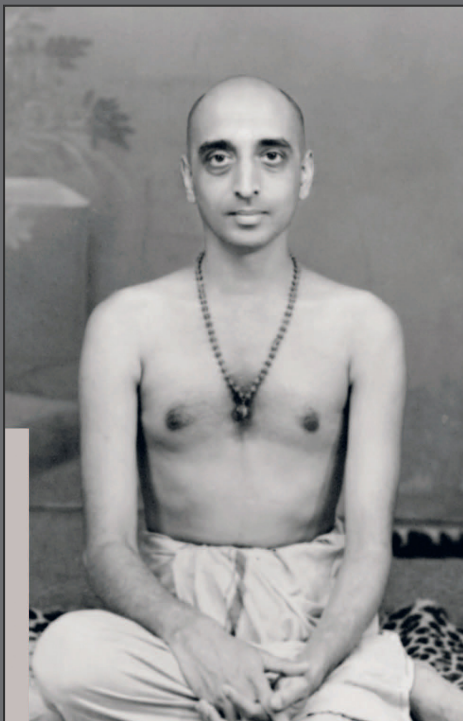


In the silence of Meditation

There I Whisper!

"O Great Spirit! O my Lord!
Your voice I hear in the winds,
and your breath gives life to all the world!
Hear me: I am small and weak,
I need your strength
and your wisdom always"

Demand Astakam | 2



- Designed by Renjith (CHYK)

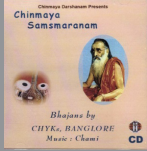
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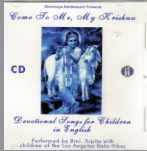
Abhinandanam

Sanskrit greeting songs composed and sung by Swami Tejomayananda



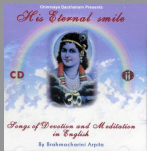
Chinmaya Samsaranam

Bhajans by Chinmaya Yuva Kendra Bangalore



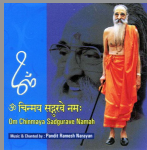
Come to Me, My Krishna

Devotional songs for children in English by Brahmacharini Arpita



His Eternal Smile

Songs of devotion and meditation in English by Brahmacharini Arpita



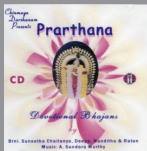
Om Chinmaya Sadgurave Namah

Mantra chanting (continuous) by Pandit Ramesh Narayan



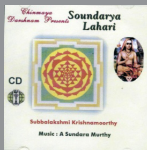
Pooja Vidhi

Puja chants by Swami Brahmananda



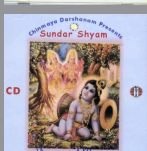
Prarthana

Bhajans by Brahmacharini Sunita Chaitanya and others



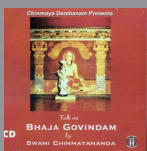
Soundarya Lahari

Chants by Subbalakshmi Krishnamoorthy



Sundar Shyam

Bhajans by Archana Venkatesh



Bhaja Govindam and Nirvana Shatakam

Talks by Swami Chinmayananda; Chanting by Sudha Malhotra



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Mahasamadhi Camp 2009 Report

by Ranu Ramraj and Anu Parmar

The idea of a Chinmaya family camp evokes in many a sense of back-to-the-basics togetherness, family, bonding, quality time, and visions of music, singing, storytelling, and children playing. Hosted by CM Niagara Falls and CM Toronto, July 29-August 3, 2009, the 16th Chinmaya *Mahasamadhi* Camp was all of these things, with one big Chinmaya family interaction, bound to each other with love and respect. Under the able, patient, and loving guidance of Swamini Shivapriyananda (resident *acharya* of CM Toronto), the workers and members of the two centers welcomed the inspiration that touched hearts, and united heads and hands, to culminate into the first-ever *mahasamadhi* camp hosted by a Canadian center.

With nearly 18 months of planning and preparation, by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda's grace and Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda's blessings, the 16th *mahasamadhi* camp, entitled, "The Essence of *Shrimad Bhagavatam*," was an overwhelming success with over 625 delegates. Over the camp's five days, the Delta Meadowvale Resort in Mississauga was transformed into a hub of dynamic activity that blazed with cheer and purpose, with a contagious and spiraling energy that flowed through all, day to day. The resort was as if transformed into a Chinmaya Mission ashram, with the hotel staff wholly engaged in the spirit of the camp. Our Guruji became their "Guruji" as they served *thaalis* and *paani* with sincere care, with no lack of comfort or attention to detail.

The daily schedule was packed with programs for adults, CHYKs, and Bala Vihar children, including morning meditation, *satsangs*, discussions groups and workshops with *acharyas*, rest, recreation, reflection, evening cultural programs, children's field trips, and of course, the daily highlight of Pujya Guruji's three discourses on *Shrimad Bhagavatam*.

On the camp's inaugural day, rain showers

poured as an array of cleansing. As arriving delegates navigated through flowing waters into the hotel lobby, there was an upsurge of chatter and laughter in the embracing of old friends and greeting of new faces.

At the break of dawn each morning, delegates walked intently to the meditation hall, beginning the day by invoking the auspicious presence of Pujya Gurudev and filling it with prayers for spiritual guidance. This period of serenity and silence and was followed by a hearty blend of *satsanga* and spiritual Q&A sessions with various *acharyas*, both of which responded to the delegates' yearning to explore life's mysteries and inner unfoldment. It was truly a time to revel in the company of sages.

Without a doubt, Pujya Guruji's discourses on *Shrimad Bhagavatam* were the highlight of the camp. A master storyteller, Guruji delighted us in the stories of Lord Krishna. One needs to have been there to know the pure devotion and intimacy with which Pujya Guruji replayed Shri Krishna *katha* in everyone's hearts. Shri Krishna stories everyone had heard many times, but never in the way Guruji told them, not taught them—yet every delegate was a student who received all the teachings effortlessly. His telling of these stories was nothing short of sci-fi time travel, where everyone was transported back thousands of years, where every story of drama, glory, love, and divinity of Shri Krishna was seen, heard, felt, and lived through smiles, laughter, tears, understanding, and above all, devotion.

From one lecture to the next, Pujya Guruji kept his *shrotas* (listeners) suspended in the joy of being with Lord Krishna. He took us to Mathura, Gokul, Vrindavan, and Dwaraka, where we played, sang, and danced with Shri Krishna, where we basked in the melodious sounds of His flute, where we shed tears on seeing the greatness of His devotees. In day-to-day life, emotions, agitations, and distractions can wreak havoc, but Pujya Guruji effortlessly tuned everyone's emotions from the worldly to the Divine. And through his grace, wisdom, breadth of knowledge, and love for all, we were able to catch a glimpse of Lord Krishna,

shimmering in the moonlight of Vrindavan.

Humor and hilarity were in no way shortchanged at this camp—the children’s drama presentation made sure of this. The script, direction, and performance of the story about Krishna’s headache that could not be cured by medication but only by a prescription of selfless love, was brilliant. This troupe of artists was impressive to so quickly learn and perform all the roles in just a matter of days. The integration of antiquity and modernity was unforgettably hilarious, with the “Pink Panther” and “Mission Impossible” theme songs playing as the musical backdrop for Himalayan rishis doing *asanas*!

The camp concluded on August 3, Shri Chinmaya *Mahasamadhi* Day, with a *Guru Paduka Puja* that was individually performed by over 500 *yajamans* and 20 Mission *acharyas*, in the august presence of Pujya Guruji. This grand scale *puja*, presided over by Pujya Guruji and conducted by Swami Shantananda guiding the *mukhya yajamans* (the presidents of CM Toronto and Niagara), was deeply profound and powerful. The vision of so many CM *acharyas* absorbed in *bhakti* at the feet of Pujya Gurudev was a sublime expression of our dynamic and devoted *guru-shishya parampara*. From wall to wall, the hall was a sea of white saris and *kurtas*, permeating purity and simplicity, laced with the ochre, yellow, and white robes of our *acharyas*, epitomizing *tapas* and knowledge. The sight was an artist’s delight and worthy of being captured on canvas. Pujya Gurudev’s presence pulsed throughout the hall and the worship, chanting, and *bhajans* left an indelible impression that will be cherished by all. It was a day when there was true contentment in the hearts of all to be together in our Pujya Gurudev’s embrace.

The 16th Chinmaya *Mahasamadhi* Camp was a resounding success that became all the more fulfilling when Pujya Guruji said that it had surpassed everyone’s expectations. The Lord’s grace, Pujya Gurudev’s and Pujya Guruji’s blessings, and Swamini Shivapriyananda’s love and guidance were undoubtedly the secret behind its success.

Our heartfelt appreciation to all our sponsors, supporters, camp delegates, families and *sevakas*

across the board, who served in so many innumerable ways. Our gratitude to all our camp *acharyas*, whose presence and teachings transformed the resort into our very own CM ashram. Our eternal gratitude to our *Guru parampara*. May the Divine permeate every breath in our lives.

Chinmaya Naada Bindu Inaugurated

by Pramodini Rao

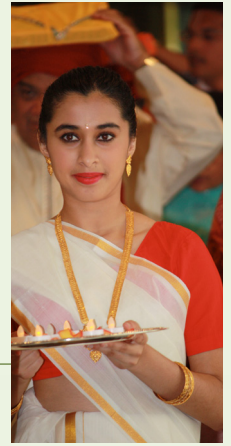
Chinmaya Naada Bindu, the Mission’s residential school for Indian classical music and dance, housed in *Chinmaya Vibhooti* (Kolwan, India), had a gala opening on September 13, 2009. *Chinmaya Vibhooti*’s very auditorium itself, *Sudharma*, where the inaugural ceremonies were held, was so eye-catching that it immediately created the mood for a rich and stunning evening of music and dance.

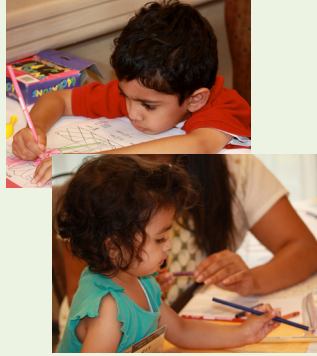
The benevolent presence of Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda graced the event. It was also indeed good fortune to have *Padma Vibhushan* Pandit Jasraj as the Guest of Honor. Not only did he and the legendary Shri Purushottamas Jalota, attend the function, but they also stayed overnight at *Chinmaya Vibhooti* and took in the entire experience of *Chinmaya Jeevan Darshan*, a permanent exhibition on the life, work, and teachings of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda. *Padma Vibhushan* Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma also graced the occasion of this inaugural function.

Devotees and well-wishers gave an overwhelming response as over 1,100 persons, including over 50 artists in the fields of music and dance and media representatives were estimated to have attended this event. *Chinmaya Naada Bindu* offers its gratitude to all the attendees. For the benefit of those who could not attend, delayed webcasts were aired on September 15 and 16 on the Chinmaya Internet Channel. Featured were the inauguration by Pujya Guruji, the benedictions of Guest of Honor Pandit Jasraj, a dance performance on “*Aroha: The Ascent*” by Ramaa and Swetha Bharadvaj, and a Hindustani vocal recital by Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar.

16th Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Camp







Chanakya Accomplishes Goals

by Sameer Pateria



Chinmaya Mission Alpharetta (CMA) organized “*Chanakya*,” a gala drama performance, on September 13, 2009. The program was a fundraiser to purchase property for its center, for which CMA approached and worked with local Atlanta artist and director, Syam Yellamraju, who undertook the project with reverence, as *seva* to Pujya Gurudev.



In this conceptualization of the life of Chanakya, one of India’s wisest and boldest scholars and prime ministers, various traditions of the *gurukula* were featured, and the virtues of patriotism, inner strength, self-sacrifice for a higher ideal, and abidance in the teachings of the scriptures and *acharyas* were highlighted.

Research for the script began in December 2008. The auditions and music compositions commenced in March 2009. By the end of April, tickets were on sale and rehearsals were underway. What began as a fundraising show turned out to be a *yajna* for all *sevaks*, volunteers, and community members, who united and worked in *yajna* spirit for the noble ideal of having a spiritual home (ashram center) for CM Alpharetta.

Writing the script was an arduous task that took several weeks of research in academic works,

videos, books, and input from historians. The elaborate music compositions were completed through professional and other artists in the studio. The challenge of finding actors for all 112 roles was no small matter because they needed to be able to dedicate time for rehearsals over a period of five months. The three-hour play’s 34 scenes, in three acts, also needed a large place for rehearsals. The ornate costumes and backdrops were provided by several people who volunteered to haul them in batches on their return trips from India. A large team gathered to work on publicity, ticket sales, and the program souvenir. Publicity began in December 2008, in an effort to fill an auditorium with over 1200 seats. Last but not least, such a huge undertaking needed the blessings of Pujya Guruji and Mission *acharyas*, support from various sponsors, and a dedicated team to create a memorable souvenir.



All this came to pass through the grace of God, with the necessary help coming at the right time from different sources in different ways. For all the CM Alpharetta volunteers, this was not only a confirmation of the purity of the motivation behind the project, but also a uniquely humbling experience.

On the evening of the performance, special guest Acharya Sharada Kumar (CM Ann Arbor) first

lighted the ceremonial lamp and sought Pujya Gurudev's blessings. As soon as the show began, the audience became immersed in the powerful chants of *Taittiriya Upanishad's Shiksha Valli* in Takshashila, the city that housed the first university in India and the world. Takshashila showed Vedic mantras being chanted by young *gurukula* children, energetic sword fighting during the Greek invasion, the gallantry of Alexander and his army, and the splendor of Indian kings. The enchanting music woven throughout the script brought to life this fascinating era *circa* 300 B.C.

The sold-out show was a grand success, concluding with a standing ovation from the entire audience. CM Alpharetta was honored and overjoyed to receive Pujya Guruji's congratulations and blessings after the event. While *Chanakya* was a successful fundraiser, it was also a central catalyst that greatly increased the awareness, goals, and teachings of Chinmaya Mission in the community.



CM Ottawa: Celebrating Big

by Shalini Sahni

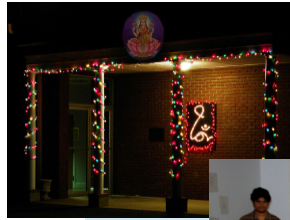
CM Ottawa is celebrating its 20 years, a milestone in its activities and growth, in 2009-2010. From its

humble beginnings of weekly classes with only five children, the center now proudly serves 100 students of varied ages. The celebratory theme for the year's activities is "The Year of the *Gita*," chosen as an expression of gratitude to Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda. Pujya Gurudev captured the hearts of devotees all over the world for over 40 years through his piercing and humorous explanations of *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*. Due to his efforts, this scripture and its teachings have gone from *puja* rooms to living rooms, to Board rooms, to university campuses.

CM Ottawa plans to organize 20 activities to introduce the message of the *Gita* in Ottawa homes throughout the year. These activities will include family camps, youth camps, weekday classes, and other fun events. Our weekly Sunday classes will be themed around the topic, "*Gita* As A Way of Life," wherein the teachers will focus on the meaning of selected *shlokas*, *Gita* chanting, and other

related activities. We also plan to host a gala Open House in Spring 2010.

Chinmaya Sanjeevani's First Anniversary



By the grace and blessings of Pujya Gurudev and Pujya Guruji, CM Pittsburgh's *Chinmaya Sanjeevani* ashram celebrated its first anniversary in August 2009. Pujya Guruji inaugurated *Chinmaya Sanjeevani* on August 3, 2008, which marked the 15th anniversary of Pujya Gurudev's *mahasamadhi*.

The week-long first anniversary celebrations duly commenced with the observance of Pujya Gurudev's *mahasamadhi* on August 3, and for the following six days, the center hosted a *jnana yajna* on *Prahlada Charitam* from *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. CM Pittsburgh (CMP) was indeed honored to welcome Brahmachari Uddhav Chaitanya (CM Dallas-Fort Worth), who conducted the greatly appreciated discourses that were filled with *bhakti* and *jnana*. Concurrent with the *yajna*, Uddhavji also conducted a successful three-day Bala Vihar Day Camp on *Dashavataras*.

With continued guidance from Swami Shantananda (CM Princeton), CMP's first year flew by in a whirlwind of activity, including Vedanta classes for all ages, festival observances, discourses, cultural events, and

classes in yoga, Vedic chanting, and Sanskrit. A priest now maintains the Lord Hanuman shrine, which is open daily for *darshan*. The center's focal point is its Chinmaya Bala Vihar program, in which the teachers and coordinators have put forth great efforts to ensure its growth and success. The results have been notable and CMP is grateful for the kind and resourceful help of Bala Vihar coordinators from various CM centers around the country.

As CMP members continue their spiritual journey, we offer gratitude with bowed heads for the many blessings showered on us by the Lord and our *guru parampara*, and we pray that Pujya Gurudev continues to guide our hearts and hands in the furtherance of his divine work.

CM Calgary's Jnana Yajna

by Vinita Uppal



Chinmaya Mission Calgary proudly hosted its 21st annual *jnana yajna* during the week of August 24-31, 2009. Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya (CM San Jose) graced Calgary for the second time and conducted discourses on *Gita* Chapter 9: "The Sovereign Science and the Sovereign Secret."

Prabodhji was welcomed on the evening of August 24 with a *purnakumbha* at the Hindu Temple of Calgary. Following the invocation,

he gave a synopsis of *Gita* Ch. 9 and discussed Lord Krishna's message to Arjuna. Each evening's discourses started with devotional music performed by members of CM Calgary and the local community. Prabodhji unfurled the knowledge imbedded in each verse to a rapt audience in a full hall. Prabodhji explained how Lord Krishna had imparted to Arjuna the sovereign secret, or the knowledge of the Self and liberation from all bondage. Prabodhji's clarity in expounding on seemingly contradictory aspects helped the appreciative listeners better understand the teachings.

In his morning lectures on Chapter 6 of *Chandogya Upanishad*, which is found in *Sama Veda*, Prabodhji brought out the essence of the *mahavakya*, *tat tvam asi*, or "That thou art."

The *jnana yajna* came to a befitting conclusion on the evening of August 30, with Pujya Gurudev's *paduka puja*. CM Calgary members were blessed to attend an additional Q&A session with Prabodhji on August 31.

CM Houston Bala Vihar Blooms

by Padmashree Rao; photos by Nilesh Shah



The 2009-2010 academic year of Chinmaya Bala Vihar at CM Houston's *Chinmaya Prabha* was heralded with joyful reverence and a special ceremony on Sunday morning, September 13. The apt vision behind CM Houston's *Bala Vihar*, or "garden of children," is to provide a place for children to bloom and grow. The human spirit blooms with the grace of God and Guru, and this was the central theme of

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.

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ABOUT CIF

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

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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].

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the first day's events.

The morning began with the Vedic *arati* and the Chinmaya Mission Pledge, followed by a warm birthday wish to Acharya Darshana Nanavaty. Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty lit the lamp to inaugurate another year of learning. This was followed by a procession of 73 teachers, each carrying a decorated lamp to symbolize the onward flow of knowledge. The atmosphere was divinized with Vedic chants, melodious *bhajans*, are prayerful hearts, as the teachers walked with eager children and parents into “*Smṛti Hall*.” Later, the teachers led the children to offer *pranaams* at the Lord Shiva temple, *Shri Saumyakashi Shivalaya*. On this journey, everyone carried a bright orange flag with Pujya Gurudev's *Om* signature, signifying his loving presence. It was indeed a moving and beautiful sight to see over 700 children walk up the marble steps, seeking the blessings of Lord Shiva, whose lustrous form and deep silence drowned all thought.

As Chinmaya Bala Vihar bloomed that morning, inspired by Acharya Darshana Aunty and the team of dedicated teachers, Acharya Gaurang Uncle addressed the adults in *satsanga* and brought to focus that any investment in life needs discipline to yield benefit, and thus, diligence is an important asset for inward growth. He said if life's aim is happiness, one should recognize the true role of spirituality in guiding the mind toward right choices. He emphasized that man's freedom comes with responsibility, and society flourishes with the values taught by religion. Faith then opens the way for greater understanding as the intellect ripens.

Wisdom Resounds at CM Orlando



Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya (CM San Jose) visited CM Orlando August 9-16 to expound the teachings of *Chandogya Upanishad* in

morning talks and *Shrimad Bhagavatam* in evening talks. These enlightening discourses were indeed a blessing for all CM devotees and the local community.

☞ The Shvetaketu Within Us All

by Avni Solanki (CHYK)

Six o'clock lectures for six days straight. Let's just say it's no stroll-in-the-park for a college student. Regardless of the amount of sleep I lost those few days, if asked to do it again, I would in a heartbeat.

The study of *Chandogya Upanishad*, through vivid examples and descriptions as never presented before, opened my eyes to the reality of life. Shvetaketu, the disciple in this Upanishad, has striking resemblances to any college student or young professional today. These characteristics include laziness, a know-it-all attitude, and a lack of due respect for elders. After attending *gurukula* for 12 years, Shvetaketu returned home and spoke to his father as if he now had all the knowledge in the world, even more than his father. Little did he know how little he knew. College students like me also return home from university and act the same way. Truly, we know nothing, for we are ignorant about the reality of our true nature. We may have copious book knowledge, but we forget that we have barely any knowledge of the Truth. In essence, similar to Shvetaketu, we all have the capacity to attain what he did, to realize the Truth that his father led him to discover. In this way, Prabodhji's lectures also opened my eyes to the importance of integrating Vedantic knowledge into daily life. Prabodhji's clear explanations of the scenarios in the Upanishad, inspiring presence, and caring advice helped me assimilate the concepts and strive to understand the teachings. Prabodhji's morning lecture series was exceptionally informative and I look forward to such an experience again.

Invoking our Shvetaketu within, transformation of attitude will help us walk our spiritual path to attain the same goal. And if Shvetaketu did it, so can we. I am truly grateful for our

Vedantic teachings and teachers like Prabodhji who continue to inspire us all.

☞ God in All, as All

by Nikita Kathuria (CHYK)

In his evening discourses, Prabodhji shared with us the wonderful stories and priceless teachings found in the third canto of *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. He repeatedly reminded us to seek that Truth and to remember that ignorance of this Truth is the cause of all suffering.

He gave a powerful example of how we watch movies. When we go to the movie theater, for example, we don't like watching the projector, even though we know that it is the unchanging cause and source of the movie showings. Rather, we like watching the myriad movies, full of joys and sorrows, being projected onto the screen.

So, too, instead of focusing on our source of Being, we are more interested in gratifying our sense organs through sense objects. In this push-pull scenario between our senses and the world of objects, it is our attachment to both that stops the progress of knowledge. Our senses pull us in one direction, and no matter how much right knowledge pulls us in the opposite direction, we ultimately compromise and stay stuck because of our attachments. If we detach ourselves from our senses, the pull from that side is extinguished, so the pull from our knowledge can take place. Therefore, we must give up this attachment to our senses and strive to seek the Truth.

Prabodhji's beautiful explanation of every story and teaching in the third canto was extraordinary. From the stories of Jaya and Vijaya, to examples of how all effects come from the one Cause, Prabodhji provided such simple and easily understandable points for everyone to take home and reflect upon. He concluded by reminding us to see God first in one form, then in many forms, then in all forms, and finally, as formless. This can be done by listening to the scriptures, reflecting on this knowledge, and then owning what we know. All the devotees were most grateful to him for his blessed visit, loving guidance, and inspiring talks.

CM Atlanta's Family Day Camp

by Dipali Trivedi

Inspiration filled the hearts of CM Atlanta members during their first-ever Chinmaya Family Day Camp, which was held over Labor Day weekend in September 2009, in Atlanta's Hindu temple. Swami Shantananda (CM Princeton) and Brahmacharini Aparna Chaitanya (CM Miami) conducted the camp for adults and children, respectively. The topics of the discourses included *Shri Rama Gita* from *Ramacharitamansa*, Chapter 15 *Bhagavad Gita*, and the essence of *bhakti yoga*. Children of ages 4-15 enjoyed their specially planned program in two groups. CM Atlanta devotees were delighted by the talks and grateful for the opportunity to enjoy *satsanga* with Swamiji and Aparnaji.

CM Minneapolis Celebrations

by Manu Madhok



Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda inaugurated CM Minneapolis's *Chinmaya Ganapati* ashram on July 13, 2009, and since then, its activities have been on a jump start.

On Pujya Gurudev's *mahasamadhi* day, devotees gathered at the center to offer *Guru Paduka Puja*. Later in August, members also celebrated *Krishna Janamashtami* and *Ganesha Chaturthi*. A lively picnic was held on August 29 on the

ashram grounds, where new families got the chance to socialize with members and *sevaks*.

The first day of Bala Vihar commenced with *Ganapati Puja* on September 13. The main hall was filled to capacity, with approximately 160 attending families overflowing into the foyer. The weekly adult study groups, conducted Sundays and Thursdays, have enthusiastically embarked on the texts *Kindle Life* and *Self Unfoldment*, respectively. Study group members were fortunate to have visiting CM Kolkata devotee, Mr. Naik, speak to them on *Atma Bodha*.

The festival season began with *Navaratri* celebrations and *dandiya-raas* on September 18. *Dassehra* celebrations were held on September 27 and a *Diwali Mela* was hosted on October 25. Thereafter, in support of Hindu Awareness Week, which was themed “*Seva in Action*,” CM Minneapolis conducted a food drive benefiting Second Harvest Heartland. With such invigorating and inspiring new beginnings, everyone is looking forward to a blessed year to come.

CM Beaumont Ganesha Puja and Jnana Yajna

by Raj Dhamankar



By the Lord’s grace, Puja Gurudev’s blessings, and Puja Guruji’s guidance, Chinmaya Mission Beaumont members joyfully inaugurated their new *Chinmaya Shripati* center on the auspicious day of *Ganesha Chaturthi*, on Sunday, August 23, 2009.



CM Beaumont devotees were also

blessed with the visit and week-long *jnana yajna* conducted by Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya in July. This was Prabodhji’s fifth annual *yajna* on *Shrimad Bhagavatam* in Beaumont. This year, he taught Cantos 8 and 9 in his unique style of love and devotion.

Prabodhji’s morning talks on Chapter 6 of *Chandogya Upanishad* and its *mahavakya* of “*Tat tvam asi*” were well received and appreciated by all. In his lucid style, he made this complex topic very simple for all the beginner students of the Upanishads.

The *jnana yajna* was held in Beaumont’s India Cultural Center and the weekend morning talks were held at the new ashram, *Chinmaya Shripati*.

On the last day of his trip, Prabodhji also had a special *satsanga* in Gujarati, which was attended by the larger Gujarati community of the Golden Triangle area of southeast Texas. All Mission members and the community are looking forward to Prabodhji’s next visit in December 2009 with Puja Guruji.

Events at CM Raleigh-Durham

by Lavanya Mandavilli

Swami Ishwarananda (CM Tustin) conducted a week-long *jnana yajna* on “Self-Discovery: A Path to Perfection” in Raleigh, North Carolina, September 22-26, 2009. The lecture series, based on various chapters of *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*, enlightened the audience on *Gita* teachings.

The *jnana yajna* was well attended and enthusiastically received by all. Swamiji said that one of the most frequently asked questions about the *Gita* is, “Which are the most important verses to be learned and absorbed?” He said his reply always is, “Every verse,” because every verse in the *Gita* is unique and profound, so reading even a random verse from this great scripture can help anyone in spiritual self-unfoldment.

As the adult community celebrated the teachings of Lord Krishna, so too, CM Raleigh-Durham’s Bala Vihar students are celebrating “Krishna, My Friend” in 2009-2010. The Chinmaya Bala Vihar year was launched with great pomp and splendor with the *Matka Phod* ceremony.

continued on page 42

Worship at Adi Sankara Nilayam

(Maternal Ancestral Birth Home of Adi Sankara)



Adi Sankara Nilayam is a hallowed place, the maternal birth home of the great saint, Adi Sankara. This centuries old sacred dwelling houses some precious temples from an era gone by. These temples were worshipped by Sri Sankara and his mother, Aryamba.

TEMPLES AT THE NILAYAM

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| ✿ Lord Ayyappa | ✿ Vettakorumakan |
| ✿ Lord Ganesha | ✿ Devi Nagayakshi |
| ✿ Sri Rama | ✿ Devi Bhagavati |
| ✿ Sri Krishna | ✿ Gurudev Shrine |

TO PRAY IS TO INVOKE THE BLESSINGS OF THE LORD ON ONESELF AND ON THOSE WE LOVE. WITH PRAYERS WE ESTABLISH OUR PERSONAL CONTACT WITH THE COMPASSIONATE DIVINITY.

At Adi Sankara Nilayam, we provide opportunities for worship at these sacred and divine temples.

PUJA SERVICES

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| ✿ Chuttu Vilakku / 1008 Lamps | ✿ Anniversary Puja |
| ✿ Ganapati Homa | ✿ Kalasa Puja |
| ✿ Sahasranama Archana | ✿ Samskriti Samrakshak |
| ✿ Birthday Puja | |

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॥ पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति । तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥

Whoever offers Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, that I accept, offered by the pure-minded with devotion.

- Bhagwad Gita 9.26

For More Details Contact

The Puja Administrator
Adi Sankara Nilayam
Veliyanad, Ernakulam District
Kerala, India – 682 319

Phone: 0091 484 2747307

Email: worship@chinfo.org



Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF) is located in the sacred precincts of Adi Sankara Nilayam.



SECOND PUROHIT COURSE

(2010 – 2011)



Chinmaya Garden Trust

"One who leads others on the path of good by keeping others interest before his own is called a Purohit."

AN APPEAL

THE TRADITION

Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji desired the Hindus to be 'true practicing Hindus'. In order to do so, he started Gurukulas to train Acharyas who in turn could spread the message of Vedanta. In line with his vision, the Chinmaya Mission now proposes to start a Purohit Course to train 'Purohits' (Hindu Priests) with knowledge of Puja Vidhis, Shodasha Samskaaras, Vaidik Chanting, Sanskrit and Hindu Culture.

THE TEMPLE OF LEARNING:

This course will be conducted in the sylvan surroundings at the foothills of the Nilgiris at Chinmaya Vaidik Vidyapeeth, Chinmaya Gardens, Coimbatore.

THE SALIENT FEATURES:

- * One and a half year's **RESIDENTIAL COURSE**.
- * Starting on **18th JUNE, 2010**
- * **Inauguration by PUJYA GURUJI SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDAJI**
- * **NO COURSE FEE.** Free accommodation, food, clothes, medical care and books will be provided by Chinmaya Garden Trust.



THE VEDAPUTRA SCHEME (Vidya Daanam)

| | | |
|---|-------------------|--------------|
| 1. Sponsorship for 25 students for 1 ½ yrs. | : Rs. 15,00,000/- | US \$ 30,000 |
| 2. Sponsorship for 1 student for 1 ½ yrs. | : Rs. 50,000/- | US \$ 1,000 |
| 3. Sponsorship for 1 student for 1 yrs. | : Rs. 36,000/- | US \$ 800 |
| 4. Sponsorship for 1 student for 6 months | : Rs. 18,000/- | US \$ 400 |
| 5. Patron | : Rs. 10,000/- | US \$ 200 |
| 6. Donor | : Rs. 5,000/- | US \$ 100 |

THE BHIKSHA SCHEME (Anna Daanam)

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1. Per day bhiksha | : Rs. 11,000/- | US \$ 250 |
| 2. Lunch bhiksha | : Rs. 6,000/- | US \$ 150 |
| 3. Dinner bhiksha | : Rs. 4,000/- | US \$ 100 |
| 4. Breakfast bhiksha | : Rs. 2,000/- | US \$ 50 |



THE APPEAL

To educate a person is great. To provide education and livelihood is greater still. To impart education, livelihood, culture and religion to those who will in turn spread our religion and culture and aid our worship (the Purohit) is truly noble.

DO JOIN US IN THIS NOBLE SEVA, BY SPONSORING THE EDUCATION OF A PUROHIT.

THE VEDAPUTRAS:

After completing the course, the Purohitis may opt to work for the Chinmaya Mission, or pursue their individual goals.

THE DONATIONS:

- * All amounts are covered under IT 80G.
- * Cheques to be drawn in favour of 'Chinmaya Garden Trust' payable at Coimbatore.
- * Donations within India may be transferred vide ICICI Bank A/c No.001601005298 (Trichy Road Branch, Coimbatore).
- * Please contact us for 'SWIFT TRANSFER' from abroad indicating the currency & donor's PAN No.

OUR CONTACT DETAILS

BRAHMACARI BHASHA CHAITANYA, CHINMAYA VAIDIK VIDYAPEETH

Chinmaya Gardens, Siruvani Road, Coimbatore 641114. India.

Tel: +91-422-2615637/2615493 Email: purohitcourse@gmail.com

VEDAPUTRA DONATION FORM

To,
Sri Sureshan, Administrator
Hari Om!

I am happy to sponsor the education (vidya daanam) of a Vedaputra under (please tick your option)

Category 1 ☐ Category 2 ☐ Category 3 ☐

Category 4 ☐ Category 5 ☐ Category 6 ☐

I am happy to sponsor the bhiksha (anna daanam) for the Vedaputras under (please tick your option)

Full Day ☐ Lunch ☐ Dinner ☐ Breakfast ☐

Enclosed herewith is a Demand draft/Cheque for Rs. / \$ _____
(Indian Currency / any non Indian currency)

The donation may be instituted in the name of
(write name in capitals) _____

Signature

Name _____

Address _____

Tel No. _____ Mob: _____

Email: _____ PAN No. _____

Lifelines: CHYK Camp 2009

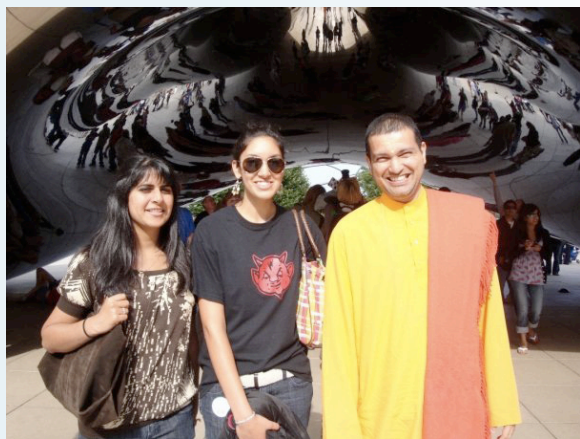
by Toral Parikh

Young adult lives are filled with stress, important decisions, and responsibilities. This is the time that our personality, character, and confidence are tested the most. How do I decide? Should I let my parents decide? Should my friends' opinion be more important? Is there something more important to consider? Whether we feel invincible or insecure about our futures, we all have one thing in common: We all have questions. What defines our life and determines our success is based on where we turn for answers about our culture, dharma, and God. In July 2009, CM Chicago's Chinmaya Mission Yuva Kendra (CHYKs) organized a retreat entitled, "Lifelines," which offered a venue to help young adults find answers. All of the attendees were swept off of their feet and catapulted into such a stimulating environment that everyone felt empowered to succeed in attaining happiness.

The retreat lasted for six days, filled with sometimes physically and mentally challenging activities. Every morning began at 6:45 a.m. with yoga and meditation, followed immediately by one half-hour of *maunam*. These were perhaps the most difficult activities of the day. *Maunam* was a time to dive deeper in complete silence.

At the start of meditation, we first tried to focus our thoughts on just one mantra, but our sneaky little minds would explore many trivial thoughts and scenarios crouched in some mental nook or cranny. Our progress, however, in flexibility and concentration in just one week, surprised us all. Even more astonishing is that many of us continue to meditate even after returning to our daily lives.

Pooja Merai, one of the retreat's main coordinators, said a few months after the retreat, "I've been more diligent about taking





some time to meditate most days of the week. Work can be stressful, so conditioning my mind to be peaceful each morning has a significant impact throughout the day.” The positive reverberations from the retreat still inspire us to strive to become better people and more committed to spirituality.

After a delicious warm breakfast, we attended thought-provoking discourses conducted by Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya (CM San Jose) on *Manah Shodhanam*, an original Vedanta composition of Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda. The text reveals how to purify the mind to become happier and more successful. As societal dwellers, we are accustomed to looking to other people and objects to complete ourselves. Prabodhji skillfully made us realize that the world we experience is forever changing and unreal, so the greed, anger, and attachment we have toward it are in fact trivial and major impedances to our happiness. We learned that understanding the mind and learning to work

with it is much more beneficial to our success, rather than discouraging it or letting our base desires rule over it. Prabodhji had each student design a customized plan that would help us purify our own mind. Not only did we learn tremendously from him, but he, too, was surprised at how much of his discourses we absorbed and were willing to implement.

Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara Falls) conducted discourses on how to be a spiritual student, and more specifically, on the four qualities of a spiritual student as described and detailed by Adi Shankaracharya in *Vivekachudamani*. Vivekji urged us to differentiate between the real and the unreal (*viveka*) and act accordingly with dispassion (*vairagya*). Of the *shad-sampatti*, the “zip file” of six qualities that signify inner wealth, *titiksha*, or “forbearance,” proved to be the most intriguing and popular concept among the CHYKs. To Vivekji’s amusement, not only did we discuss *titiksha* endlessly, but we also found a way to include it in every skit, game, and as many conversations as possible. Lastly, he talked about *mumukshutvam*, the longing to liberate oneself from *samsara*, and convinced each of us that we, too, were on this track. His lectures seamlessly tied into Prabodhji’s lectures, for the ultimate purpose in both was the same—to seek and find our happiness within.

Between lectures, we attended small group discussions. During these sessions, we discussed and summarized answers to the provocative and contemplative questions given by both *acharyas*. Sometimes these sessions were so intense that the allotted one hour was simply not enough, especially when we were given the daunting task of proving that joy (unconditional happiness) is one’s true nature. One group had to continue that discussion at night, and it lasted until 4 a.m.!

Each *acharya* also held Q&A sessions open to topics such as career, family, love, and marriage. Both *acharyas*, along with CM Chicago’s resident *acharya*, Swami Sharanananda, gave us the encouragement and knowledge we needed to become spiritual students. Sheena Agarwal, a student at Northwestern University, quickly noticed their impact on her spiritual growth and said, “The 30 minutes I spent talking one-

on-one with Prabodhji about my questions regarding family and education gave me the confidence and answers that I know I would not have been able to get anywhere else.” The *acharyas*’ kindness, dedication, and patience inspired all of us to implement Vedanta in our daily lives. All the retreat attendees also helped create an intellectually stimulating environment for learning and growing. Sheena added, “I had been losing touch with spirituality since I started college, and being in the Chinmaya Mission environment has brought me back. At the Mission, everyone is unified in a single desire to help each other become more spiritual, and ultimately, happier.”

The evenings were usually reserved for recreational activities that allowed us to use our new spiritual knowledge practically and to have fun together. These activities included a spirituality themed scavenger hunt, an ice cream social, an intense game of “Capture the Flag,” a wonderful Chicago outing (which included deep dish pizza and a boat tour), and an open-mic night followed by everyone’s favorite raas/garba.

One of my favorite activities was the music session with Vivekji. Before the retreat commenced, we were all asked to choose a song that had made a deep spiritual impact on us. At the music session, everyone shared their song and explained the spiritual messages

intertwined in the lyrics or musical scores. We found Vedantic messages in songs by artists such as Pearl Jam, Lifehouse, Michael Jackson, Death Cab for Cutie, The Beatles, A.R. Rahman, Lauryn Hill, and Red Hot Chili Peppers. We realized that Vedanta, indeed, is part of every culture, even in the noisy Western music culture that is sometimes dreaded by parents.

This CHYK Retreat allowed us to meet inspiring young adults, experience and learn Vedanta, and most importantly, recharge our spiritual battery. Because we all came with the goal of empowering ourselves for improvement, we could rely on each other to constantly push ourselves forward. Pooja Merai said, “At the conclusion of a retreat, individuals usually feel encouraged to make sweeping changes in their lives and be the people they have always envisioned. However, we are told to start with making small changes, not radical ones. We aren’t told to quit our job or studies, and go to meditate in the mountains. Instead, we are encouraged to live more thoughtful lives.”

In “Lifelines,” each CHYK took the opportunity to settle into the winner’s seat with three infallible lifelines: Chinmaya education, infectious enthusiasm for happiness, and constant *titiksha*.

For upcoming activities and events of CHYK West, visit www.chykwest.com.



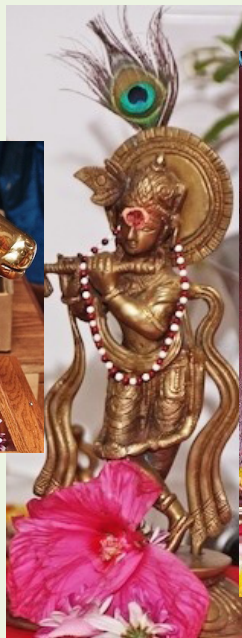
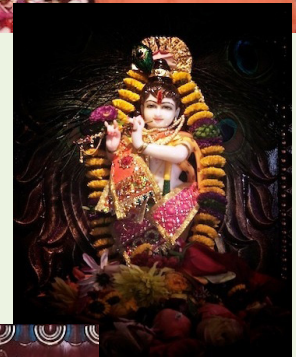
Congratulations to Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles’s Kashi ashram for being selected by the U.S. Commerce Association (USCA) for the 2009 Best of Anaheim Award in the Places Of Worship category.

Each year, the USCA identifies companies that they believe have achieved exceptional marketing success in their local community and business category. These are local companies that enhance the positive image of small business through service to their customers and community.

Shri Krishna Pratishtha

at Chinmaya Kedar Ashram

CM Philadelphia, Janmashtami 2009



Children came dressed as Govindas, and all sevaks and sevikas came outfitted as *gopas* and *gopis*. The children sang *bhajans* for Lord Krishna and chanted *Gita Dhyanam*. In different corners of the large room, *jhulas* (swings) were set up with baby Krishna and all the children, youth, and adults got the opportunity to swing little Krishna in his *jhula*.

A wave of excitement swept over the children and teens as they gathered with their sticks around the beautifully decorated *matkas* (mud pots). Blindfolded, each of them had a chance to swing their stick and try to break the *matka*. Their perseverance eventually paid off and each *matka* was broken, and its hidden treats were quickly collected and consumed. The celebrations concluded with *prasad* for all the families.

Royal Secret Unfolds in CM Alpharetta

by Sameer Pateria



CM Alpharetta welcomed Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya (CM San Jose) to conduct a week-long *jnana yajna* on *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 9, August 17-23, 2009. Attending the daily discourses were around 150 avid listeners, who were mesmerized by Prabodhji's assertive delivery interspersed with humor. He clearly classified and gave the breakdown of sub-topics by groups of verses in Chapter 9. Everyone enjoyed the discourses and felt dismayed every day that the 90-minute session concluded, as it time had evaporated while everyone remained spellbound. Prabodhji urged us all to push ourselves toward the goal of Self-knowledge and to cut down on whatever

was deflecting us from this goal. He said that such concentrated intention ensures that God's grace and self-effort will work together to bring wonderful changes in our lives.

Prabodhji also conducted morning meditation sessions followed by discourses on *Ishavasya Upanishad*. He addressed all the children and parents at the opening session of CM Alpharetta's Bala Vihar for 2009-2010. Emphasizing the importance of reading the scriptures and attending study classes, he reminded us that one of Pujya Gurudev's goals was to convert Hindus to Hinduism and that the Mission center is where seekers can come together for *seva* and *sadhana*.

Purohit Course 2010-2011

Applications are now being accepted for Chinmaya Mission's 1.5-year, residential *Purohit* Course 2010-2011, to be conducted at the CM Coimbatore ashram in India. The course covers the study of the *puja vidhis*, *shodasha samskaaras*, Vedic chanting, Sanskrit, and Hindu culture. Students must be 15-30 years old, have passed at grade 7 at the minimum, and understand simple English.

The course will commence on June 18, 2010 and its resident *acharya* will be Brahmachari Bhasa Chaitanya. Accommodation, food, clothes, books and medical care will be provided free of charge. The final date for application is March 15, 2010. Personal Interviews will be conducted. After completing the course, candidates may opt to work for Chinmaya Mission or pursue their individual goals. To receive an application, e-mail purohitcourse@gmail.com.

In Memoriam

by Swami Siddhananda

Surendra Patel (1938-2009), a senior member of CM Philadelphia, met Pujya Gurudev in 1980. With the help of his wife, Kusum, he established the office and distribution work of





*How can I understand,
my love,
that release from these knots
will tie
that eternal knot
with you?*

*How can I make
that eternal knot
my labor of love?*

Chinmaya Publications in his home, thereafter in his Indian grocery store, and finally, in the current *Chinmaya Kedar* ashram in Langhorne, where it remains housed today.

He retired from his business and Chinmaya Publications in 1994, and moved to Anoopam Mission ashram in 2000 with his wife and son, Shree. He continued to share Pujya Gurudev's teachings with everyone he met, emphasizing the importance of clarity

of the goal. His daughter Bina Patel remains an active member at CM Washington DC.

Surendra Patel breathed his last on August 27, 2009. While he was not a man of many words, he is remembered for his unflinching devotion to God and Guru, and his innumerable acts of service, kindness, selflessness, and love, by which he effortlessly touched so many lives, without seeking recognition.

Chyk

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