



# NEWS

CHINMAYA MISSION® WEST BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER

May 2010, No. 135

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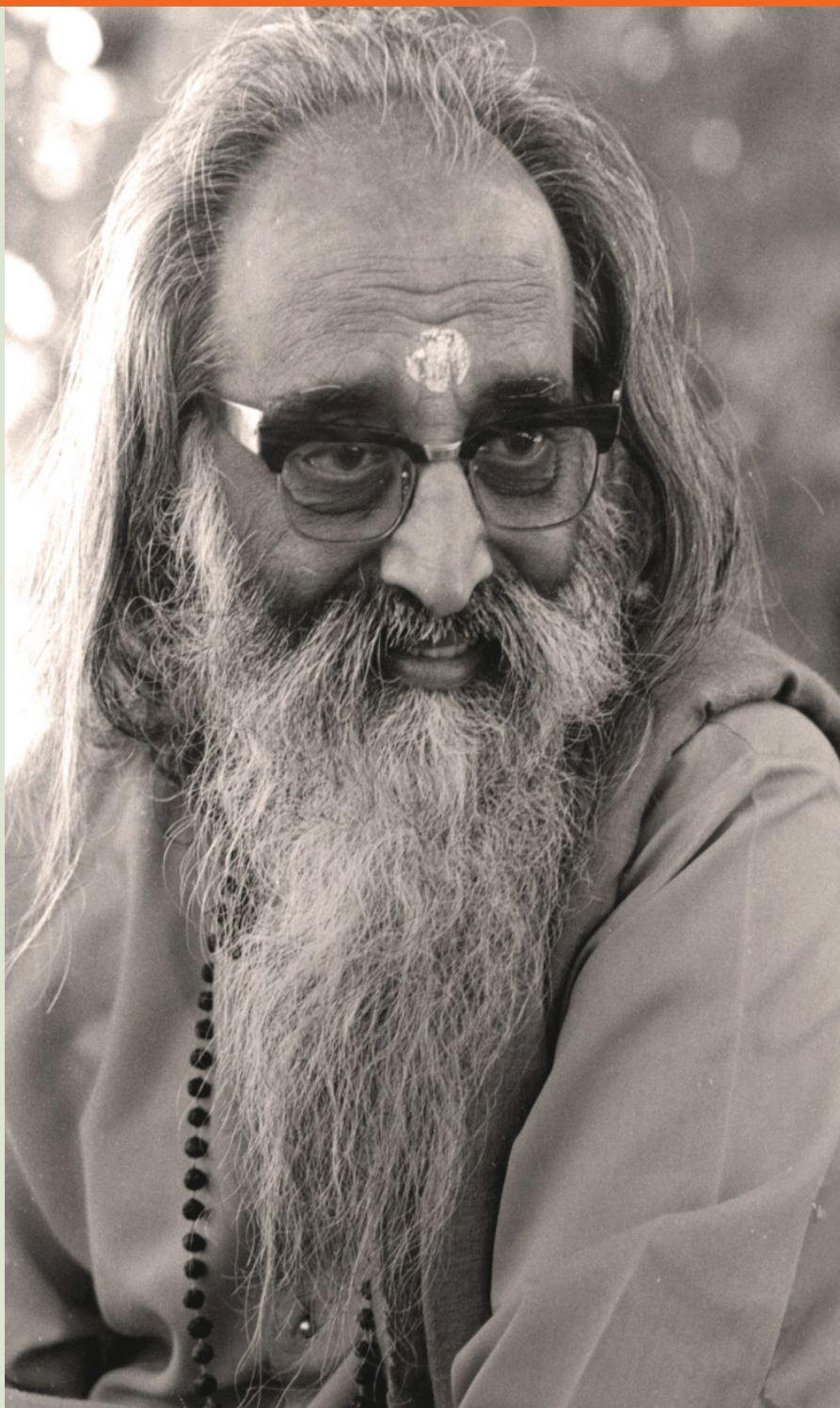
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# Message for Chinmaya Jayanti Day 2010

Swami Tejomayananda

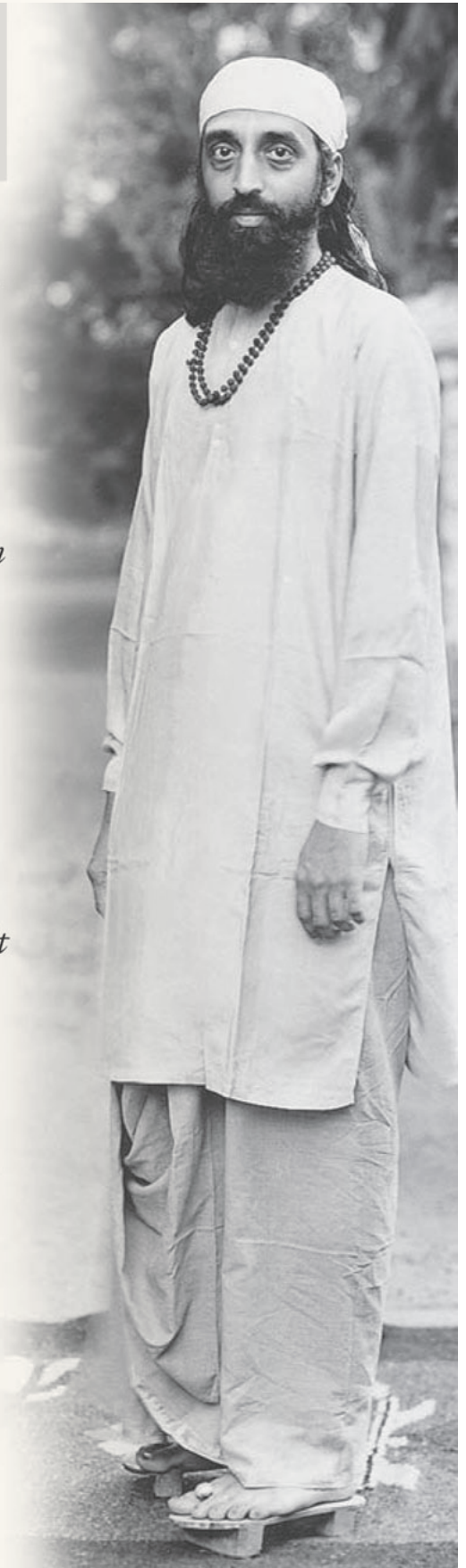
*In Srimad Bhagavatam<sup>1</sup>, Bhagavan Sri Krishna praises trees for their selfless service of others. They offer their leaves, flowers, fruits, roots, bark, timber, sweet-smelling sap, wood, tender shoots and ashes – all to serve others. They bear the wind, rain and heat, and give us shade and protection from them. They provide sustenance to all creatures in every way. This is how Pujya Gurudev lived and wanted us to live.*

*We celebrate **Chinmaya Jayanti Day** as **Seva Day**, reminding ourselves to serve others all through the year. Nature nourishes us, and it is our duty to nourish it in turn. We have to serve and preserve our natural environment.*

*This can be done in two ways: by not polluting the atmosphere and by preserving and enhancing the existing natural resources. Each one of us can do this by making small adjustments in our lifestyle. It will go a long way in bequeathing a healthy, green Earth to the future generations.*

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<sup>1</sup> Bhagavatam, 10. 22. 29-36



## Graceful Aging

by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Continued from CMW News, March 2010



### Aspire to Inspire

In childhood, it is natural for a child to be attached to toys and games, but it is also the duty of his parents and guardians to educate and discipline him, inculcating in him good values. This is giving a child *shiksha*. When the child grows up to become a young man, he may or may not get married; he may even become a *sannyasi*. Regardless, in his youth, it is the duty of his parents and guardians to give him *diksha*. *Diksha* initiates one into a life of *vratams*, or “vows,” so that one develops firm resolve in facing life with strength, love, and righteousness.

Everyone should have some great aspiration in life—not only one that relates to employment, but one that strives for excellence, significance, or service in any chosen field, secular or sacred. The world may be in whatever condition when one comes into it, but each person should try to ensure that he leaves it in a better condition than it was when he arrived. At the very least, he should not harm, destroy, or worsen it.

A tenant decided to move from his rented flat to another place. Before leaving, he went to a pet store, where so many other kinds of little creatures were also sold. He said, “Please give me 4 lizards, 10 cockroaches, 35 mosquitoes, and 2 rats.”

The shopkeeper frowned and asked, “Why this strange list?”

The tenant said, “I’m moving from my current flat. The landlady told me that I must leave it exactly as I found it. I need these creatures so I can give back to her exactly what she gave to me!”

To leave the world a better place than when we found it is a discipline or *vratham* in itself.

There are beautiful and interesting Upanishadic mantras that teach us about *vratams*, particularly in *Taittiriya Upanishad*. . . .

### Vows of Love and Service

*Annam na nindyat. Tad-vratam.* Do not criticize food. This is the vow. Even though the literal meaning of *annam* is food, it refers to any “food” that we enjoy or experience through our sense organs. When it comes to food, its enjoyment begins with our nose—an aroma from the kitchen. “Aah! Something nice is being cooked!” So first we smell with the nose, and then we see with the eyes. Food that is so creatively presented, so well-cooked—just seeing it makes you happy. Then you touch it. “Aah! This *idli* is like silk! It is so soft, so perfectly steamed!” So we enjoy through touch also. And when we rush to put it in the mouth, we experience its delicious taste. And finally, as we chew our food, we hear the various sounds resulting from the different textures of different foods—some crunchy, some sticky. So, *shabda*, *sparsha*, *rupa*, *rasa*, and *gandha*—all the five sense organs come into play and complete the picture.

*Annam* thus refers to the entire world of sense objects. Therefore, don’t insult, condemn, or criticize any of them, for we all need them for sustenance throughout life. There are many people who criticize many things in this world. But think: Have the objects done anything wrong? When a man gets angry, he breaks doors and windows. Do the doors and windows deserve such treatment? They have not done anything to him. A person is on the phone, and her call isn’t being answered or just isn’t going through. She gets so angry that she bangs it on the table. But what is the use of breaking the instrument? It, like all objects in this world, are needed and used in life.



Therefore, first learn to treat the whole world with respect. Each object has its own value, its own place in life. All objects may not be equally important, but each object has some importance, some value. On the same note, do not give undue importance to any object, being, or situation. For example, some people say, “I don’t care for money!” Don’t say this, for money has its own value in life and teaches its own lessons. At the same time, don’t think that money is God and that it alone matters—this is another extreme.

Never insult or criticize the world. In the larger vision, the whole world is created by the Lord. If you insult the world, you are insulting the Lord. If your mother or wife has cooked your food and you throw it out, you not only insult the food, but also the one who made it. Therefore, *annam na nindyat*. When the scriptures teach us the importance of developing *vairagya*, or “dispassion,” we should criticize our excessive attachments, not the objects. With food, objects, and the whole of creation, every youth must learn and fulfill this vow reverentially.

#### *Annam na parichakshita.*

Do not waste food. In the world, every day, how much food is needlessly thrown away! In some places people are dying of starvation, and in other places they are dying because of overeating. And, in between, food is simply being thrown away. In some homes, after eating from a plate, they pour water onto it, and then drink it clean, so that not a single morsel of food is wasted.

Countries speak highly of the progress they have made, yet in such matters, they continue to create grave imbalances by wasting or throwing away all surpluses. Take, for example, buffet food service. The idea is to let people take as much as they want so that there will not be wastage. But this is far from what happens. You should see how people fill their plate at buffets—as though they have never seen food before in their lives and as though they are never going to eat again! They take everything!

Even in air travel, sometimes the quantity is too much, and I feel terrible to waste it. But at the same time, I know that if I finish it, I

might fall sick. So when and where possible, we should only take only as much as we need.

Like this, so many things in life are wasted. Disposable items that don’t disintegrate create so many problems. How much and where can so much garbage be thrown? It used to be that after the eldest child in the family got a toy, the second and third generations would play with the same toy. And now? *Baba re!* Each child has so many toys! What will they do with all of them? In earlier days, the same cloth bag was used for years to buy groceries from the market, and it was washed regularly. Then it became fashionable to use plastic bags. Now they are advocating use of the cloth bag again. We are finally coming to understand that by little changes, large problems can be created. And once we get used to easy comforts, if we have to go back to basics, it becomes very difficult. *Annam na parichakshita. Tad-vratam*. Thus, the implications of this seemingly simple instruction are far-reaching.

#### *Annam bahu kurvita. Tad-vratam.*

Grow more food! There should not be scarcity. There should be plenty. Today, agricultural lands are being converted into non-agricultural lands for construction. Cultivable land is disappearing. Where will we cultivate if this goes on? Mass industrialization has made it so that nothing, not even man, is in harmony with nature anymore. In olden days, they would say that the best occupation was in agriculture, but now the best job is in I.T. Ultimately, though, the fundamental need is food. Without food you can’t live. Without computers you can—more comfortably and more happily, for that matter. Food is the first necessity and countries that continue to grow their own food and enrich their food sources will naturally have more power in the world.

If you reflect deeply on all these mantras together—*annam na nindyat*; *annam na parichakshita*; *annam bahu kurvita*—your life will gain a totally different vision, one that is fuller and more holistic. Some people say that Hinduism is an escapist or otherworldly kind of philosophy, but these people have not read the Upanishads! The scriptures do not say one should not have material prosperity. During India’s Golden Age, under the reign of the Maurya Dynasty, there was immeasurable

prosperity all around, in all aspects. But today, prosperity comes at an incredibly high cost. With excessive pollution, with atmospheric and water contamination, it is not only materially that man is greatly affected—even his spiritual and cultural worlds are affected. In all these aspects, man must become more prosperous—this is what the *Upanishad* says: “*Annam bahu kurvita.*” And even if we limit the meaning of *annam* to be just “food,” then understand the instruction to be, “Grow more food.”

***Na kanchana vasatau pratyachakshita. Tad-vratam.***

When anyone comes to your house, do not turn him away, for *atithi-devo bhava*. All that you have is meant for serving the world. I may not insult *annam* by wasting or throwing it away. And I may grow more *annam* and become prosperous. But what is the purpose of this? Remember, it is not merely or solely for individual enjoyment.

***Tasmad-yaya kaya cha vidhaya bahu-annam prapnuyat.***

Therefore, always have plenty of everything in your home. These instructions are not for a *sannyasi*, but mainly for a householder or youth who will soon become a householder. You must have plenty to offer anyone who comes to your home. When a guest visits your home, for however short or long a time, give him a place to stay, give him food. Don’t send him to a restaurant. In fact, you should not even ask, “What will you have?” The *Upanishads* instruct that you should say . . .

***Aradhyasma annam-itya chakshate.***

“Sir, food is ready.” Do not ask, “What will you have,” because what if he asks for something that you don’t have? What if he says he wants a cup of tea when no one in the house drinks tea—it will be embarrassing for both of you. This is a very practical matter, so the best thing is to just give what you have. And strive to ensure that you always have plenty—not only for your own *bhoga* (enjoyment), but so that you can serve others as much as possible.

***Etad-vai mukhato’nnam raddham.***

You will receive food and everything in life

depending on the manner in which you give these to others. If you offer with love, respect, and honor, then you will receive the same. If you offer ordinarily, without honor or insult, then you will receive the same. And if you offer insultingly or disrespectfully, then you will get all things in this manner. We see in the world that some people do get things, but always with insults. Why? There must be a reason, for there cannot be an effect without a cause. Meanwhile, whether they want it or not, some always get the royal treatment everywhere they go. There are many examples in history where guests were welcomed and served with love and respect, even if the hosts did not have enough for themselves, and, as a result of their observance of such *vratas*, they always earned great blessings. These types of *vratas* are not meant for a *brahmachari* student in training, because his main jobs are to study, do *guru seva*, and such. As for *vanaprasthas* and *sannyasis*, their roles are also different. All these *vratas* are thus applicable to *grhastha ashrama*, and if householders follow them, their lives will be enhanced with gracefulness.

## **An Altar-ed Life**

*Diksha* must be in the life of a youngster, for it helps direct and guide where one is going, in whatever chosen field. When someone devotes his life to music, not only will music grant him fame, but his accomplishments will also lift the art of music to a higher level. Each depends on the other, so it is hard to tell whether the art has made the artist great or the artist has made the art greater.

There are immense dangers in living a life without *diksha* and *vratam*. I remember seeing a poster in a youngster’s room: “Don’t drink and drive. Smoke and fly.” Unfortunately, many really do smoke their lives away completely or start drinking away from their 16<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Graduating medical students are asked to take an oath that they will use their knowledge for *seva*. But often, because they have to repay the bank their large student loans, they focus only on how to become debt-free first. In this, a vicious cycle of exploitation begins. The patient visits the doctor, who says, “I have to take this much money from you.” The patient says, “Okay. One day when you come as my customer, I will get you for this.” Society is like this.



One of the highest teachings in *diksha* is dedicating to God everything that one does, in whatever field. By offering everything of body, mind, and speech to the Lord as worship, one grows stronger in one's *vratam*. There are many talented and accomplished people who do not have an altar of dedication in their life—their altar is solely their own pleasure. But how much joy and fulfillment can this give?

I read a beautiful line: “An altar in life alters your life.” The greater the altar, the greater the transformation. Dedication to an altar—whether God, your parents, your teachers, or society at large—leads to great inspiration and transformation. When the altar of dedication is a lower ideal, it reflects in one's growth. In the lives of history's extraordinary men, we see that whenever they found their altar of dedication, their life became distinguished. Before this, it was an ordinary life—though good, it was nothing special. That grace, that beauty, that greatness all came when their dedication became firmly rooted.

The altar of dedication does make a difference, for that is the key in *diksha*. Lord Krishna has said in the *Gita*, “*Yat karoshi yad-asnati, yaj-juhoshi dadasi yat . . .*” Whatever you do, whatever you enjoy, whatever you sacrifice,

whatever you give, give to the Lord. Even when you give a few coins to a roadside beggar, do not think that you are giving to a beggar. Think that you are giving to the Lord. Living such a life, you will age gracefully.

There is a famous story of King Akbar, Tansen, and Tansen's guru, *êri* Haridas Maharaj. Akbar asked Tansen, “You sing well, but your guru's singing is divine, of a different nature. Why is there a difference?”

Tansen replied, “Because he sings for God and I sing for you!”

Perform your *vratam* as worship of the Lord. *Svakarmana tam-abhyarcha siddhim vindati manavah*. Man can attain perfection simply by worshipping the Lord through his *karmas*. And it is not even about having to do any specific, special *karmas*. Whatever *karma* you are capable of, whichever is enjoined to you, whichever is your duty, do this as your worship of the Lord. This is the greatest blessing in *grhastha ashrama*. From here, one slowly proceeds into *vanaprastha ashrama*.

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to be continued

## Chinmaya Mission Niagara welcomes you to *Shri Radha-Krishna Murti Sthapana*

Conducted by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda  
August 21-22, 2010  
*Chinmaya Dhara Ashram*

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*From the Desk of  
Swami Tejomayananda*

*Hari OM!*

I am giving this update to allay the anxieties that all have experienced while I was in the hospital.

I was on my New Zealand and Far East tour, where I experienced tightening in my chest during my Jakarta stay in April. The doctors there immediately performed several tests and a CT angiogram revealed that my coronary arteries were blocked. However, the good news was that the heart muscle had not suffered any damage, and as such, I was able to complete the remaining five days of my tour without any problem.

On my return to Mumbai, I was admitted to the world-renowned Asian Heart Institute. An angiogram was performed by Dr. Sudhir Vaishnav, which showed that five arteries were blocked. As such, the option to put in stents was discarded, and the decision to go ahead with a quadruple coronary bypass surgery was taken.

My surgeon was none other than the world-renowned Dr. Ramakanta Panda, recipient of the Padma Vibhushan award for excellence and innovation in the “Beating Heart Surgery.”

My surgery took quite long. I did not need transfusion from any donor. My own blood was transfused to me due to its high hemoglobin content. My heart was beating all the while that the grafting on my arteries was taking place. Another unique feature of Dr. Panda’s technique was that blood vessels for grafting were taken from the chest itself, avoiding thereby another incision in the legs.

Dr. AppaRao Mukkamala was present inside the operating theatre, and told me later how impressed he was with the doctors and the procedure that they had conducted. It was truly creditable that Dr. Apparao had flown in for 24 hours from USA despite his recent foot injury.

By the Lord’s grace, Pujya Gurudev’s blessings, and everyone’s prayers, my recovery went at a pace that was satisfactory to the doctors, without any complications.

I was operated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May, and stayed in the ICU until noon of May 6<sup>th</sup>, when I was shifted to my room. Our Manisha stayed with me throughout my stay in the hospital.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> post-operative day, I was discharged from the hospital, and am now required to go back on the 17<sup>th</sup> for follow up and stitch removal.

As of now, I anticipate being in Mumbai until the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, and the last ten days of June I hope to be at *Chinmaya Vibhooti*.

I have been advised plenty of rest, exercise, and a healthy and balanced diet. Therefore, at present I will not be doing any active work. I will be meeting devotees and visitors everyday for 5-7 minutes at the *Gita Mandir*, mornings 11:30 a.m.-12 p.m. and evenings 5:30-6:00 p.m.

With *Prem* and Om,

*Tejomayananda*



# 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,

# 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 Devanagari (Sanskrit) script, or the script for any other Indian language for that matter.

So it is truly Sanskrit made easy!

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CORD USA, Inc. serves as the support organization for Chinmaya Organization for Rural Development (CORD) in India. CORD focuses on rural development, empowering women and children, vocational training, and administering the *Chinmaya Vijaya* orphanage (Andhra Pradesh), in India and Sri Lanka.

CORD USA is designed to promote social and humanitarian services through Chinmaya Mission centers in North America. Mission centers and devotees are encouraged to support and fundraise for CORD USA by organizing walk-a-thons, read-a-thons, groups of “Friends of CORD,” etc. Donations and event net proceeds (total raised, less event expenses) should be sent to: CORD USA, 4545 Warwick Circle, Grand Blanc, MI 48439. Checks should be made payable to “CORD USA.”

E-mail [subha@cordusa.org](mailto:subha@cordusa.org) or visit [CORDUSA.org](http://CORDUSA.org) to learn more and find out how you can help.

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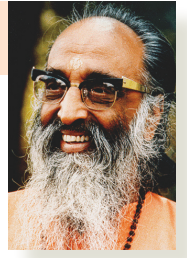
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# From Without to Within

by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda



All ritualism in every religion is nothing but a dramatization of Vedantic truths, be it in the temples or in the *yajñashala*, be it in a *homa* with fire or in a *puja* with flowers. Not only in Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism, but in every faith, ritualism is simply a dramatization of the Vedantic path of Self-realization. The lights in front of you during a *puja* represent the PFT (Perceiver, Feeler, Thinker)—the *jivatma-bhava* in each one of us. These lights are symbolic of the Light in the altar, from which these lights have been lit.

To understand the significance of a *puja*, take the analogy of an election process. When we vote, we know that the local person running for office represents the party platform. We may not like the personal qualities of this representative, but our vote for him demonstrates our faith in his party's philosophy. In the same way, when we worship a person, it is not the person that we adore, but the ideal that he stands for.

[As spiritual students,] since at this moment we do have direct experience of that Ideal, we take a symbol that represents that State: the Teacher. Just as a *Shivalinga* represents Shiva, and a *Shaligrama* represents Vishnu, in the same way, the feet of the Guru represent to the student not the feet, but the concept of the Ideal. What we are invoking is *Brahman*, the Lord. But we cannot directly go to Him. We want a symbol. At this time, there is no symbol more sacred than the feet of the Teacher.

Therefore, we borrow the feet of the Teacher for some time, and the Teacher allows us to play with them! We wash the feet and worship them as though they are the Lord Himself. We clean them with love, put sacred ash, adorn with sandal paste, and do all that we do in a *puja* at the temple. We worship the

feet as though they are that *Shivalinga* or *Shaligrama*, invoking Him, the Ideal.

So, friends, don't think you are worshipping my feet during this *pada puja*. I am lending them to you for the time being! My personal experience may be unpleasant because my feet tickle when a devotee washes them, but I am not supposed to say anything. One may sometimes pour very hot water and at other times ice cold water. There can still be no reaction from me. Why? Temporarily, they are not my feet—they have been lent! During this time, both you and I are in adoration of something else. What we are invoking is as much my Substratum as yours. This teacher holds on to his Teacher's feet, and thus, the teacher and disciple lineage (*guru-shishya parampara*) is formed. You are not worshipping me. Don't misunderstand the fact that you are invoking Him through the feet of this teacher.

This is also why teachers always keep the feet clean. They don't wear shoes because the feet may not be ventilated properly. When the disciple prostrates, he must have clean feet in front of him. Still the disciple may have his own doubts! So, he first washes them, and then the rest of the worship follows. All through the *pada puja*, understand the significance that the feet are borrowed from Swami Chinmayananda.

You are not worshipping the Swami. If you say or feel so, it is a disaster to me, because my vanity will increase. All of us are worshipping Him. I will be turning my mind to my Teacher, and you will be turning your mind to your Teacher and the Lord.

Hence, this ritual is one of the most significant of rituals. It is not akin to the act of shaking hands, a [mere] common ritual that happens during a meeting. Do you know the

significance of shaking hands? In Anglo-Saxon times, there was so much infighting that nobody believed that another person could come to you in love. So, for example, if I want to show you that I have not come to harm, kill, or fight with you, but have come in love, then I come with both hands open! My open hands let you see that there are no weapons. You may greet me yet still have your own doubts. I have also got a trace of doubt about you. So, both of us search the hands of each other while shaking hands! In Arabia, this handshake alone is not sufficient. Two people who meet may have a fear that the other fellow has a dagger behind him—so they embrace and look behind to complete the search!

In contrast, look at the tradition here in India, soaked in Vedantic truth. As soon as we meet, first we remember that the essence behind you and the essence behind me, both are one (pure Consciousness). To Him our prostrations. Isn't it? Whomever you may be, a wicked man or even a murderer, yet, behind you that enlivening Essence is one and the same as the enlivening Essence in me. Once we know this, every time we meet, we first remind each other that the Lord who resides in each of us is the one Truth. Because we are working at the body level, there are naturally competitions and misunderstandings, but at the substratum level, we are all one. To that One we bow down. Even if there are differences, there is the one integrating Truth. You and I are brothers. We may quarrel between us, but the Father is One, and when we think of the Father, harmony is created. This unity in diversity, this harmony amidst the disharmonies, is beautifully brought out in this symbol of prostration.

The mark of sandal paste or *kumkum* on one's forehead only means that today you had a satisfactory session in your prayers, meditation, and contemplation. Of that joy you make a mark, taking a little sandal paste from the feet of the Lord or *kumkum* from Mother, or *vibhuti*. Now if I see you in the marketplace and see that mark, I remember the mood of contemplation that I had today; and when you see a similar mark on my forehead, [your] mind also glides into a spiritual mood. [Our] normal contact becomes totally different.

One more culturally significant action is when we prostrate to our elders—father, mother, or

teacher. Prostration means that one touches the feet of an elder with one's head. Why? The feet stand rooted in that elder's love for me, in the sacrifices that he/she has made for me, something that I admire in that person. That ideal I want to bring into my head—this is symbolized in prostration. I have to surrender myself in order to invoke that great essence or quality into myself.

All these different rituals hold great significance. This *pada puja* is a venerable action of invoking that Infinite Reality. *Tat-tvam-asi*. Just as we worship a symbol, whether it is of wood, a cross, a *Shivalinga*, and so on, we worship here the living feet, the moving feet of the Teacher. Once we understand the import of this symbolism, our *pada puja* becomes a great beginning in the search for Reality.

[The spiritual journey takes the seeker from rituals without to meditation within.] When the mind drops its perceptions of sense objects and stops identifying with its thought dances, at this stage in meditation, the mind is “no-mind.” When thoughts gush out in their mad fury to hug objects of pleasure, they are called extroverted 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 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 hopes of successes, and swoon in the expectation 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, those very vasanas are getting more 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 fairy-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. . . .

For establishing 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.

[Thoughts may come and go.] To remain as a witness of them all is a definite stage in the efforts at meditation. In an atmosphere of your own [witnessing], your thoughts will get suffocated and will die by themselves. So the rishis advise the seekers on the path of meditation: “Moment to moment, disassociate yourself from continuing any thought that consciously rises in the mind. This practice

sweeps the mind clean of all rising thoughts, leads you to the state of thoughtlessness, and you arrive at the Holy of holies.”

This non-association with the rising thought-disturbances is achieved by training ourselves to remain as a witness to the flood of happenings in ourselves. To be a mere onlooker of the lusty parade of thoughts in revelry is to withdraw from the thoughts their ability to continue their 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 exists and which serves as the threshold of time, where the future becomes the past.

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 immediate, personal, inner experience. In this state, meditation gets fulfilled, and the meditator becomes the one Self, where the triple factors—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.

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## Chinmaya Dham Yatra 2009

by Subha Varma Pathial

A tour of India's major Chinmaya Mission centers and projects, led by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda;

Continued from CMW News, March 2010

### Chokahalli-Chinmayaranyam: October 29



We reached the *Chinmaya Ganapati* ashram in Chokahalli, about 40 miles from Bangalore, in the morning, before breakfast. We had a short *satsang* with Brahmachari Shaunak Chaitanya, wherein he discussed the history and activities of the ashram.



The children from *Chinmaya Vidyalaya* were there, and it was fun watching their participation with loud “*Jai-s*” and “*Hari OM-s*”. Also present were the students of the *Purohit* Course (priest training program), who captivated us with their Vedic chanting.



As the name of the place itself suggests, one experiences the exquisite beauty of Mother Nature here. The literal meaning of *chokka* is that which is “beautiful, neat.” The quiet and serene surroundings of Chokkahalli, 7 km. from Kolar, appealed to Swami Brahmananda, who chose this location for *Sandeepany Karnataka* in 1984. In 1993, during Pujya Gurudev’s visit to Bangalore for a *Gita jnana yajna*, a devotee undertook the responsibility of building a big temple for Lord Omkareshwara.



The *kumbha-abhishekam* took place in November 1994. A *Rudra homa* was performed according to tradition, followed by a *sahasra kumbha-abhishekam*, in which nearly 3,500 devotees participated.

The temple has an engraving of Lord Shiva on Mount Kailasa. An idol of Lord Ganapati occupies the position below Lord Omkareshwara. Two bulls stand guard at the entrance of the temple. The crown of the temple is adorned with the carvings of Shri Dakshinamurti, Lord Ganesha, and Lord Kartikeya. On top of the temple is a huge *Shiva-lingam*.





Pujya Guruji consecrated *Chinmaya Ganapati* in February 1998, during which a *sahasra kalasha-abhishekam* gave Lord Ganapati a grand, holy bath, enough to drench His gigantic form. This colossal, 45-foot *murti* has its own charm and captivates the hearts of everyone who visits the ashram.



After a splendid breakfast, we took off for Tirupati. We received a warm welcome at Hotel Bliss, owned by Mr. Rajashekhar, who has a long association with Chinmaya Mission and was a CHYK with Swami Mitrananda. After our quick lunch and freshening up, we were off to *Chinmayaranyam*.



The *Chinmayaranyam* ashram at Ellayapalle in Andhra Pradesh, upon its inception, was proclaimed by Pujya Gurudev as a new kind of ashram, where the poor and needy would be served with love and affection. True to its motto, “Receive the light of knowledge. Bring out the heat of action,” *Chinmayaranyam* has done tremendous work for the upliftment of the rural poor in that region.

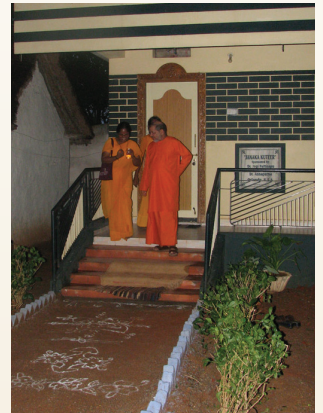


The project was spearheaded by Pujya Swamini Saradapriyananda (*mahasamadhi* April 17, 2000), a foremost direct disciple of

Pujya Gurudev. As the driving force behind *Chinmayaranyam* and its activities, she conquered one and all with her selfless, tireless service and unconditional love.



“Amma,” as she was lovingly called, had been donated a piece of barren land in a burial ground, from villagers who wanted an ashram established in a remote village in the drought-prone Cuddapah district of Andhra Pradesh. Pujya Gurudev’s first visit to this place on February 8, 1982 was to conduct the *bhumi puja*.



The village had two wells, of which one was dry and the second was down to its last few drops of water. Against this background, Pujya Gurudev visualized a forest around the ashram. Pointing with his walking stick at two banyan trees on either side of the land, he said, “Dig along the line that connects the two trees. Water is sure to come.” Sure enough, water gushed forth from the well when it was dug.

*Chinmayaranyam* was transformed into a beautiful, green haven, and in recognition of this work, the government granted the ashram an adjacent hillock for development and reforestation. To date, this is being carried out successfully.

We visited the *Hari Har* school, which serves over 500 economically disadvantaged children from the nearby villages, and has an associated orphanage housing 45 children. Here, Pujya Guruji performed a *bhumi puja* for the school's expansion.



## ☞ Tirupati-Tamaraipakkam: October 30

We were off for *darshan* of the Lord of Tirupati at 2 a.m. It was an auspicious day, after *Vaikuntha Ekadashi*, and we considered ourselves very fortunate to have the Lord's *darshan* in the presence of our Guru.



Our *yatris*, inspired by the wonderful work and beautiful children, immediately donated Rs. 30,000 collectively for the school and orphanage.



We were enthralled in the evening by a play by *brahmacharis* and children on Pujya Swami Tapovanji's life. The children brilliantly depicted episodes from Chippukutti's birth to Pujya Swamiji's *mahasamadhi* with beautiful background multimedia presentations. Swami Mitrananda was so moved by the performance that he invited them to Chennai for an encore performance.



Beautiful winding roads lead us to the abode of Venkatachalapati and our *darshan* was done in no time. After *darshan*, we were led to a room where special worship was conducted for us and a shawl was presented to Pujya Guruji on behalf of the *pujaris* there. While we were walking out, the temple's yearly procession was on its way, and we got to see the *utsava murti* in full resplendence.

Considered the wealthiest and most sacred temple in the world, Lord Balaji's Temple is located 67 km. away from Chittoor in southern Andhra Pradesh and is a major pilgrimage center.

The temple is located on a hill at Tirumala. It is a conglomeration of seven hills known as Seshachalam or Venkatachalam. The temple boasts of a vibrant and colorful culture, and a grand and glorious past. The ancient Tirupati temple follows the Dravidian style of architecture and its highlight is its *gopuram*. A gold *vimana* or *kupola* called "*Ananda Nilayam*" sits over the *sanctum sanctorum*.

A day at Tirupati Temple begins with *suprabhatam* (waking the Lord) at 3 a.m. and ends with *ekanta seva* (putting the Lord



to sleep) at 1 a.m. Prayers are offered daily, weekly, and periodically, in the form of *sevas* and *utsavs*.



After breakfast at Bliss, we went to *Chinmaya Srinivas*, the new Tirupati center. In its temple resides a beautiful Venugopal *murti*. Phaneendra Sai Garu, who plays an instrumental part in the ashram's activities, talked briefly about its history and events.



Guruji commended the wonderful new *satsang* hall connected to the temple. The center plans to expand on land nearby.



In his *satsang*, Guruji explained that *Krishna* means "one who attracts." In life, what attract are beauty, sweetness, and happiness. What gives beauty, sweetness, and happiness is called *madhura*. Thus, Madhuradhipati, the Lord of sweetness, beauty, and happiness is the presiding deity known as *Chinmaya Venugopala*.



After lunch at Bliss, we thanked our hosts and were off to Tamaraiykkam. In the last hour we were escorted to the ashram by a brigade of CHYKs on motorbikes with orange flags. We received a warm welcome at the center.



*Sarveshwara Nagar* is a *Chinmaya Pitamaha Sadan*, or senior citizens' home, in Tamaraiykkam, about 40 km. from Chennai. It provides a quiet, serene environment conducive to reflection and meditation. A Tamil *Sandeepany* was formed here and two batches of students were trained in residential Vedanta courses under the guidance of Swami Shreedharananda.

The *Gita satsang* hall on the ground floor of the temple, *Sarveshwara Dhyana Nilayam*, is a circular, well-ventilated prayer hall.

The ashram also has a *goshala* (cowshed), paddy fields, and beautifully forested areas.

We got a tour of CORD activities by Mr. Kannan, a senior and dedicated *sevak*, after which we visited the center's Shiva temple, a unique structure shaped like a *Shivalinga*. The center's administrators told us about its history, activities, and plans for the future. The *Hari Har* school is now being expanded thanks to generous support from the family of one of our fellow *yatris*. Before





leaving, Guruji introduced us to Brahmachari Sadashiva Chaitanya, who has been instrumental in interfacing with the local people.



We reached Hotel Breeze for the stay while Pujya Guruji and a few delegates went on to the Chennai Ashram. A long, eventful day came to an end.

### Chennai: October 31

We went to the *Chinmaya Vidyalaya* at Taylors Road, where Pujya Guruji inaugurated the new air conditioned auditorium, *Kalaalayam*.



Guruji introduced the patrons, who gave a brief history of the *Vidyalayas* of Chennai. The first school in Chennai started with 20 students without even a concrete building, and now there are four *Vidyalayas* in Chennai that are rated as some of the best schools in the city. Chennai is a stronghold of Chinmaya Bala Vihar and CHYK groups.



Chennai has an important place in the Mission's historical annals, as it is the birthplace of Chinmaya Mission. It is here that Chinmaya Mission had its inception on August 8, 1953. During our visit, we were honored to meet Mrs. Leela Nambiar, one of the pillars of CM Chennai, who continues to serve the Mission even at the age of 90.



After a traditional lunch served on banana leaves, we headed back to the hotel for a short rest. At 4:30 in the afternoon we were off to the Chinmaya Heritage Center (CM Chennai's main center/ashram in the heart of the city) for a tour and a stage show called "Death."



The center's *Chinmaya Tapovan* auditorium is built on the second floor without any pillars, an architectural marvel that is sought after as a venue for the city's premium programs. There is a well-furnished library, conference room, and a well-stocked bookstall.



The center also houses the offices of *Tapovan Prasad*, Chinmaya Mission's international monthly magazine, and *Chinmaya Udghosh*, the international magazine of CHYK. After a brief

presentation on all activities, we got a tour of the large facility; it was fascinating to see the art of displaying books in the bookstore.

Here, CHYKs have staged plays, such as Kamba Ramayanam, LOC, 2047, Bharatiyar, Surya 108, and Death. In turn, these have been performed all over the country and abroad.



“Death” was an intense, marvelous show. I should mention that Swami Mitrananda, the guiding hand behind this show, was traveling with us throughout the *yatra*, yet even without him, the performers didn’t miss a beat and the show was absolutely stunning. We *yatris* were amused to see our own faces on display in Lord Death’s list.



Death (the CHYK actor) came and served me rice during the dinner!

A small group of ours had branched off from Tirupati to go to *Chinmaya Vijaya*, an orphanage under CORD,

initiated by Drs. Sumathi and AppaRao Mukkamala (CM Flint). The group described their trip as very uplifting, especially on seeing four- and five-year olds who had once been street children now smiling and beautifully reciting *Gita* Chapter 9.

## ☞ Coimbatore: November 1

We set off from Chennai to Coimbatore via Jet Airways. It was short uneventful flight, almost completely filled with the *yatris*.



We were welcomed at Coimbatore airport by Swami Swaroopananda, Swamini Vimalananda, and Brahmachari Ajit Chaitanya. After an hour’s bus ride to the *Chinmaya Gardens* ashram at Siruvani, the *Veda-putras* (*Purohit* Course students) and other *brahmacharis* welcomed Pujya Guruji and the group.



*Chinmaya Gardens* is nestled in the foothills of the Western Ghats. The ashram and CIRS (Chinmaya International Residential School) are jointly spread here over 100 acres of lush greenery.



Regular camps, *yajnas*, and classes are conducted at the ashram under the guidance of Swamini Vimalananda and other *acharyas*. The *Dhyana Nilayam satsang* hall has an exquisitely designed meditation hall for over 100 people, audio and conference facilities, and a library with an exclusive collection of books on Vedanta and Indian culture.







This ashram is also a *Pitamaha Sadan*, providing senior citizens a peaceful environment for reflection and meditation. The ashram has its own *goshala*, paddy fields, coconut groves, orchards, vegetable gardens, and crops, and thus is quite self-sufficient.

Swamini Vimalananda, head of CCMT's Educational Cell and Chinmaya Vision Program (CVP), me with us in the evening and spoke on the history of these programs. A wonderful presentation on CVP followed, CVP being the bedrock to nurture holistic growth, strong values, and the right understanding of Indian culture in students, teachers, and administrators in Chinmaya schools.



Brahmachari Samvit Chaitanya, *acharya* of the *Purohit* Course, led the evening *arati* at the *Ganesha Mandir*, and mantras filled the air with divinity. Pujya Guruji began *satsang* thereafter by describing the difference between *aarti* and *aarati*: The former means distress and the latter removes distress.



Swaminiji then described the history and activities of CM Coimbatore. Pujya Gurudev first conducted a *yajna* here in 1954, and numerous times thereafter, as well as his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations. Swami Sahajananda did a *pada yatra* collecting only one rupee from each individual to help buy the beautiful ashram of *Chinmaya Gardens*.



Pujya Guruji released Pujya Swami Brahmananda's *Gita* Chapter 10 chanting learning aid (booklet and audio aid) for all India centers' *Gita* Chanting Competition 2010.



to be continued



# Vande Mataram

by Varun Khanna

*Continued from CMW News, January 2010*

## April 5: Living in Nagwa

I have moved to Nagwa in Varanasi, right next to BHU, closer to where my classes will be held this month—one will be in BHU itself and the other one involves exploring the city. Nagwa is right next to Assi Ghat, the southernmost ghat of Varanasi. I have effectively moved from one end of the city to the other. Here, I am living in Sanskrit Bharati's office, which is an apartment turned into an office/classroom setting. I sleep in the classroom, and classes are now held in the living room.

My conversations with my teacher, Upendra Mahodaya, are only in Sanskrit, and this month I feel like my Sanskrit will be solidified. He is an awesome person who has been living in Varanasi for 10 years, alone for almost the entire time, studying and teaching. His age I don't know, but my guess is 26 or 27. He has been married for a year now, but his wife is currently not here because she has her own examinations going on where she studies.

Here, I am learning how to live. In the five days that I have been here so far, I have learned how to cook food from scratch (including rotis directly from the flour and sabzi directly from the raw vegetables), how to wash clothes by hand, how to bargain with street vendors, how to use an Indian-style bathroom, how to ride a bicycle in Varanasi traffic (so much fun, but requires so much concentration), how to explore the city, and much more. Throughout all this, I have been practicing the techniques of observation and exploration that I learned from the KFI center in Raj Ghat last month, and it has made my stay all the more effective and enjoyable.

Upendra Mahodaya taught me how to do all these things and it required a lot of patience



on his part because I asked him so many questions about everything! His mom, sister, and brother came yesterday to see Varanasi. He has been showing them around and is leaving tomorrow for eight days. I will be alone soon, which is why it was imperative that I learn everything quickly.

One day, I landed by chance at the Sanskrit Bharati office in Godowlia, ended up going with Prithviraj Mahodaya to the Dasashvamedha Ghat, and actually taught a spoken Sanskrit class! It was fun and the location was beautiful. We were in a building about 200 years old, on the top floor, with a stunning view of the Ganga and the ghat. I made friends there and they told me I could come back anytime.

I met a swami there also. As Prithviraj Mahodaya, Swamiji, and I were leaving, I mentioned that I wanted to get a rudraksha japa mala. Swamiji immediately said that he had a new one that he would give me the next day.

I asked Prithviraj Mahodaya if we could search for an ashta-dhaatu (eight-metal) ring because it is supposed to have a beneficial effect on body ailments and mental agitations. We entered the Vishvanath Mandir gali and I was filled with a sense of medieval times. The narrow, ten-foot wide cobblestone street wound tightly, and the proximity of the two sides shut out the sun. In the background droned the daily bargaining, vehicles, and occasional mooing from a cow or bull.

We finally reached a shop selling little trinkets, including rings. I found a cool ashta-dhaatu ring with which I felt an immediate

connection, as silly as it may sound. While we were searching for rings that fit, we were conversing in Sanskrit, and when we started talking to the storekeeper, we learned that he had also learned to speak Sanskrit, albeit ten years ago. He said he was particularly interested in Sanskrit drama and appreciated our fondness for the language. He gave us a four-rupee discount and I thought getting a ring with a little gold in it for only Rs. 30 was a pretty sweet deal by any standards.

I am making tons of contacts wherever I go because I speak Sanskrit and am from America. This is actually how people introduce me: “This is Varun Khanna, from America, and he speaks Sanskrit.”

Interestingly, as I acquire experiences and items here, my interest in using the items is slowly decreasing, because I’m learning what it means to be in the present. It’s not easy and I’m just beginning, but it’s much more rewarding than being caught up in the past or future, which you can neither change nor predict, respectively. This learning itself is what interests me—to focus, to be in control in the present—not the items I am accumulating. I am not interested in what I was before, nor what I will become, but who I am now.

My current courses include Ayurveda and studies about Kashi, but most importantly, I’m learning how to live. And I’m loving it.

## April 8: Household Work

Today was quite possibly the most adventurous day of all. I woke up, performed my morning routine, and got down to business. I was going to wash my clothes by hand (and alone for the first time), buy supplies for the apartment, bargain for groceries, and cook lunch on my own. I was alone and forced to do everything on my own, but I wouldn’t have wanted it any other way. This is how one learns—by being pushed into situations where there is no choice but to perform.

I soaked my clothes and went grocery shopping. I used my imitation Bhojpuri accent of Hindi and got a decent bargain (I had rehearsed). I was home in 45 minutes with mustard oil, flour, bottled water, and Parle-G biscuits (the best!).

I went to the soaked clothes in the bucket and scrubbed forcefully with a hard brush, removing the soapy water and rinsing them with clean water from another bucket. I have such newfound respect for this work! Imagine squatting the whole time, without a seat—just you, the bucket, the water, and the ground. Most people here have been washing this way since they were kids, but I was using muscles I have never had to use in my life! At the end of just six pieces of clothing, my back and legs were sore, but it felt good to finish.

Now for food—by this time, it was 1 p.m. I quickly took a shower, unpacked all the groceries, peeled and cubed the potatoes, chopped the parwal, and started cooking on the single burner. I had to wait for the veggies to be done before I could make the rotis. We seriously live in luxury in America, and I realize it more and more every day. We have running water all the time, electricity all the time, stoves with four burners, and some stuff we don’t even know what to do with! I made the rotis—yes, successfully—and ate. I was so hungry that I finished everything I made, which was food for two people. By this time it was 3 p.m. and I was so tired from the chores that I couldn’t concentrate on my studies—so I fell asleep.

I have a newfound respect for people who do the household work. Essentially the homemaker is the ultimate manager of time, resources, and people, though without recognition or title. What humility one must have to be a true homemaker! I realized how much work my mom did to take care of me and my brother. But I could truly understand this only after being in similar shoes. And today, I got a mere taste of what it means to take care of a household. So thanks mom (and moms everywhere)!

I now also have a greater appreciation of married life. One cannot possibly hope to take on the task of caring for the house and managing a job at the same time, and doing a satisfactory job of both, especially if there are kids involved. I had a tough enough time taking care of myself. It is written in our Vedic scriptures that men and women have different tasks in a household, acting as a team, for neither can hope to accomplish all the tasks by oneself. There is great wisdom in these words.

offered our prayers and paid our respects to the motherland. I was deeply touched by this experience, and I recommend a visit to this temple for all who come to Varanasi.

Our next destination was Varanasi's Cantonment Railway Station or "Cant Station" for short. It is huge, even bigger than the city's airport. The station is packed with parked cars, ticket booths, food/drink booths, buses coming from all different parts of the city, rickshaws entering and exiting with passengers, and people! Luckily, everything is visible from outside, so we didn't have to go all the way in, but I needed to see it because this is where I'm going to be leaving Varanasi from and I didn't want to be lost on the day I leave.

It was way too hot and we were too tired, so we went back to Godowlia and parted ways, probably to meet only in a year or two. But friends made in India are friends made for life, without any expectations; this is one thing I greatly appreciate about Indian culture.

The weather here is getting extremely hot. I don't know the exact temperature, because I don't get the newspaper or watch TV, but it feels like 100°F. And the locals tell me it only gets hotter. In May, temperatures reach 115-120°F, and with heat index (dry heat, not humid) it feels like 140°F—which means it's impossible to go outside, and if you do, you will literally start to evaporate.

Imagine, there are people who live in small tents outside—and I don't mean a few, here and there. I mean a whole lot of people. I wonder: How do they survive the summer? I am told that a lot of them don't. This is the state of our oldest city in the world. We are the ones causing this upsurge in heat by polluting our land, water, and air. Pollution doesn't stop just by telling everyone to stop polluting. A good number of people polluting are illiterate or barely educated, and unable to comprehend the harmful effects of pollution. I talked to a guy who came from Switzerland 18 years ago and has been living here ever since. He told me that over his 18 years here, the weather and atmosphere of Varanasi have changed drastically. He is worried because despite his strong body and love for this city, he does not feel that he can stay much longer due to the

severity of air pollution.

I read that in olden days, Varanasi was a woodland, full of greenery, lakes, and rivers—a perfect haven for the spiritual seeker. But now it is reduced to what will soon become a wasteland if people don't start caring about their environment. The only way I can see this being done is through law enforcement and redesigning the infrastructure. Now if only the police force wasn't so corrupt. Here, it takes only a few rupees to get off the hook. I found out that many policemen actually stop you with the expectation that you will give them some money; it has become their way of earning daily bread.

Right now, all I know is, during the day my room turns into a toaster. And it's beginning to get uncomfortable, because I happen to be the toast.



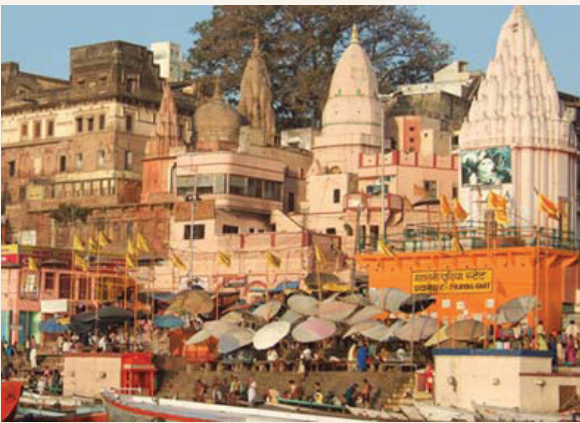


But instead, in modern times, there is so much competition instigated between the couple—who earns more money, who does more work, who contributes more to the house, who does this better, and who does that better.

I cannot thank my parents enough for carefully maintaining a peaceful household throughout my life, with neither infringing on the others' duties, nor trying to prove that one was better than the other. They maintained a perfect harmony that I can only hope to emulate in the future. It is because of their stability and selfless effort that our house was always a welcome place to come home to, always a place of respect, dignity, gratitude, and support. I believe that my mother and father created a haven for our family, and I can only wish such peace and protection upon everyone.

### ☞ April 15: Moving to Kabir Nagar

Today I moved from Nagwa to Kabir Nagar, a small colony across the street from Durga Kund. It's a great place to be—it has electricity, running water, and a homely atmosphere. It's also a convenient location to catch a bicycle rickshaw to Godowlia or BHU, and I can get anything on the main street.



### ☞ April 18: Exploring Varanasi

Today I saw pretty much every important and touristy location in Varanasi. First, I went to Godowlia to meet Giridhar Mahodaya, and from there we went to the Gayatri Mandir. We received prasad there and I gave some to the rickshaw driver. Prasad is a wonderful concept: People may not like what you are offering them to eat, but tell them it's prasad and they put aside all their distaste and dislike. After all,

prasad is divinely blessed—there's really no way of saying no to that.

We found ourselves at Sampurnananda University next, a Sanskrit University. It is a huge campus, similar to BHU's, but not on as grand a scale. It is beautiful; there are trees everywhere, and everything is written in Sanskrit. People come there to become scholars in Sanskrit, after all.

As we were walking through the campus, we passed an old man with a baseball cap and a walking stick, wearing worn-out everything else. Giridhar Mahodaya informed me that this man's profile and photo had just been in the newspapers because he had walked 55,000 kilometers from Maharashtra to Varanasi in 18 months! Though we tried really hard, we could not resist talking to him. So, we walked up to him and asked him where he was from. He said "Maharashtra," and we looked at each other with crazy expressions like three-year-olds who had found some secret buried treasure in a sandbox.

Our next stop was the Bharat Mata Mandir, a sanctuary dedicated to the ancient land of Bharat, fittingly located in its oldest lived-in city. Bharat, of course, was way bigger then than what is modern-day India. It also spread across modern-day China, Nepal, Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Singapore to the east; Pakistan and Afghanistan to the west; and Sri Lanka to the south. It included the mighty Himalayas and River Ganga, stretching from ice to tropics. It was the most fertile land, teeming with resources, and the cradle of an ancient, complex civilization that figured out the facts of the world and life through introspection and contemplation, that modern-day science is still struggling to understand.

The mandir is quiet and it houses a 20' x 30', 3D, clay model of ancient Bharat. In its detailing, even every mountain in the Himalayan range is labeled. It is fascinating. This model is surrounded by a railing that keeps spectators at a two-foot distance. There are stairs going down that lead to a tiny viewing window set at the very tip of Mother India, exactly at eye-level. It is interesting to note that the window is set at the base of the landmass, representing the feet of Mother India—so it felt like a mandir after all. We



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**HARI OM**



# Vedanta 2010



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

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

## ELIGIBILITY

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

## REGISTRATION

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

## DATES / ACHARYAS

The course will commence 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**

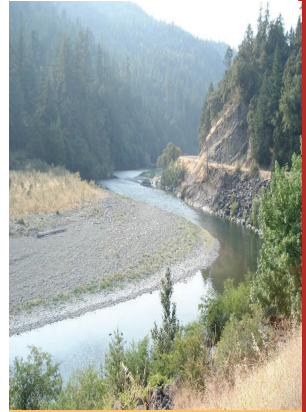
Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya

### **July 2011**

Acharya Smt. Sharada Kumar

### **August 2011**

Puja Guruji Swami Tejomayananda



## TO REGISTER

Complete the online form at

[www.chinmayamission.org/piercy](http://www.chinmayamission.org/piercy)

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

### **For more information:**

[prabodh@chinmayamission.org](mailto:prabodh@chinmayamission.org)

(707) 207- 5011

## TEXTS

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

**Swami Shantananda:** Dakshinamurti Stotram, Sat Darshanam

**Swami Ishwarananda:** Shrimad Bhagavad Gita

**Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya:** Upadesha Sara, Atma Bodha, Drg Drshya Viveka, Panchadashi Ch. 1, and Upanishads (Ishavasya, Kena, Katha, Mundaka)

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



# Dharma Sevak Course 2010

## August 7-20, 2010



Conducted by  
**Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda**

Text for Study: *Tattva Bodha*

### Registration

Includes lodging and boarding, and excludes transportation: \$1,200 per person. Due to CMW's one-year residential Vedanta Course, seats for DSC are limited; first-come, first-served. Register online [here](#).

### Deposit

Your place will be reserved and confirmed when your minimum \$100 per person deposit (\$103.30 via PayPal) is received. Cancellations made 60 days prior to the course qualify for a full refund of the deposit, less any applicable credit card/PayPal charges.

### Cancellations

Cancellations within 14-60 days prior to the course qualify for a 50% deposit refund. Within 14 days of the course, no refund will be issued.

### Transportation to/from Piercy/SFO

The nonstop chartered bus departs from SFO on Saturday, August 7, at 2 p.m. Meet at Arrivals (lower level) of the North Terminal, United Airlines, Door #5 before 2 p.m. The chartered bus departs from Krishnalaya on Friday, August 20, at 5:30 a.m. and reaches SFO ~ 11:00 a.m. The additional charge is \$90 roundtrip. If you will be driving to/from Piercy, directions are on the Krishnalaya website.

To get more information or to register  
(online registration is available), go to [www.chinmayamission.org/krishnalaya](http://www.chinmayamission.org/krishnalaya).  
For specific questions, e-mail [info-krishnalaya@chinmayamission.org](mailto:info-krishnalaya@chinmayamission.org)  
or call (707) 207-5011.



## Simple Teachings in Simple Words

One-liners by Pujya Guruji  
Swami Tejomayananda

*Knowing how to think is more important  
than knowing what to think.*

*Some smile to forget; some forget  
to smile.*

*If your heart is full, you don't feel that hungry.*

*Respect, don't suspect.*

*If you always do what you always did,  
you will always get what you always got.*

*An altar in life alters our life.*

*Success is a Self-fulfilling prophecy.*



## Where is the Pain?

by Anonymous



Student: A patient complained to a doctor that no matter what part of the body he touches, it pains. The doctor replied, “The pain is in the finger.” It sounds like there is a puzzle piece missing here.

Shruti (scriptures) and yukti (logic) both say I am ananda svarupa. But as a jiva, are we happy and experiencing pain now and then, or we are in pain all the time and get some relief now and then? Is it true that there is an inherent pain in us and therefore what we touch eventually gives pain?

Teacher: Who is the jiva? I, the ananda svarupa, who has conditioned myself to be BMI, is therefore affected by the world of BMI, which is OET. Thus, to the conditioned one, all experiences depend upon the quality of the mind. When the mind has happy thoughts, identifying with that mind the conditioned self (jiva) will naturally feel happy. And when the mind has pain-ridden thoughts, identifying with those thoughts, the jiva feels pained. Joy and sorrow come to the mind as the effects or expressions of vasanas, but the joyful and sorrowful personality is born only when the Self as-if identifies with these thoughts. Think: The hot pan is not the cause of the burning pain. “Holding” the hot pan is the cause of the burning pain.

If pain was inherent in us, it should not

disappear in deep sleep and samadhi. Therefore, the cause of pain is only ignorance of one's true nature. When I know who I am and thus do not identify myself with the BMI, then the world of BMI, which is OET, neither pains me nor gives me an illusion of joy. Just as the happy thoughts dance in me, appear and disappear in me, so, too, the painful thoughts appear and disappear in me. Yet I, like space remain untouched by cool, fragrant winds as well as stormy tornado winds.

Student: There is pain when things go wrong, yet I know that the pain is not because of the situation. The situation seems only to be an excuse for the pain to express. But the pain is always in the background.

Teacher: V alone expresses as the world of BMI and OET. Pain that arises in the mind in any situation is not independent of the situation. You are independent of both the situations, mental and physical. Therefore, to be painful or not painful alone is your choice. Then what is wrong if the pain arises in the mind? If you can accept the physical situation, then why can you not accept the mental situation? Or else, even if your identification with the physical situations may not be there, but the identification with the mental situations will keep troubling you. Know that you are the knower of the BMI and therefore not the BMI. Think!

Pain shall always remain as long as you are holding on to something that is capable of giving pain. In the background, you alone are, and not the pain. Please "see:" Is the pain other than you? You are the constant factor as thoughts appear and disappear in you.

Student: Is the above true or is it my mind giving excuses for the pain and for its tendency to be miserable?

Teacher: Let the mind give excuses—why worry? As long as you know who you are, why worry what the BMI and OET have to say about you?

for a few days, based on our class this week. If Ishvara is everywhere, all-pervasive, and Ishvara is within us, then why do we ask Ishvara for anything? Why do we pray? I am not sure about whom I am praying to anymore.

Teacher: Ishvara is an inseparable cause of creation. If Ishvara is compared with ocean, the individuals are like waves. When an individual feels small, powerless, and confused, it worships Ishvara who is, compared to an individual, vast, all-pervading, all-powerful, and all-intelligence. The Ishvara concept helps an individual surrender his pain, sorrows, etc to that Ishvara who is more powerful than the individual.

But when the individual desires to know and experience one's own true nature, then it contemplates upon the nature of Brahman (water) which is the very self of both, Ishvara (ocean) and the individual (wave).

Student: When I sing Hanuman Chalisa or Shiva Stuti, to whom am I singing? Why do we ask Ishvara for anything then?

Teacher: Stotrams or stutis are sung in praise of deities. The attitude behind the worship will always differ from one devotee to another because each person worships according to his own beliefs about God. The main purpose of these hymns is to temporarily forget the world and feel inspired to contemplate upon the higher and diviner aspects of the deities.

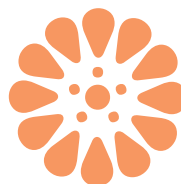
Student: Then if I am observing everything around me, including my BMI, as part of a movie, then isn't Ishvara also part of this movie?

Teacher: Yes and no. As long as you consider and experience yourself as an individual (wave) other than rest of the world, then there is something called Ishvara (ocean). When you come to know and experience yourself as the Self (water), then Ishvara (ocean) is not other than you.

## *Why Pray?*

by Anonymous

Student: I have been reflecting on something





# *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Chetana Neerchal

*I am in a  
streetcar named Desire  
on this fantastically beautiful  
Autumn day.  
The yellow flutters,  
the red glitters;  
my hands reach out  
to touch  
what I see.  
The glass of the sealed windows,  
an unseen wall,  
prevents contact.*

*I am in a  
streetcar named Desire;  
desires unraveled  
by this Autumn breeze;  
desires that burst  
like the pomegranate seeds;  
that want to hop, skip and dance  
with the steps  
of the wind and the leaves.*

*Crimson berries quiver,  
the wind is almost real inside.  
The streetcar stops.  
I get off and come to work.*

*Stilled, inside the sealed windows  
of that streetcar,  
are today's  
desires.*

*Why should tools worry about how the  
technician is going to solve his problem and do  
his job?*

*Be a mere tool in His hands.*

- Pujya Gurudev



*If we surrender ourselves completely into the  
hands of the Lord and seek refuge in Him  
alone, He takes charge of our life.*

*The Lord is taking care of us even now, even  
when we have not surrendered. But because we  
do not realize this, we keep carrying the burden  
of life on our own shoulders.*

*Devotion to God is the true sign of intelligence.  
The Lord will guide our minds out of confusion  
and onto the right path if we take refuge in  
Him as Arjuna did.*

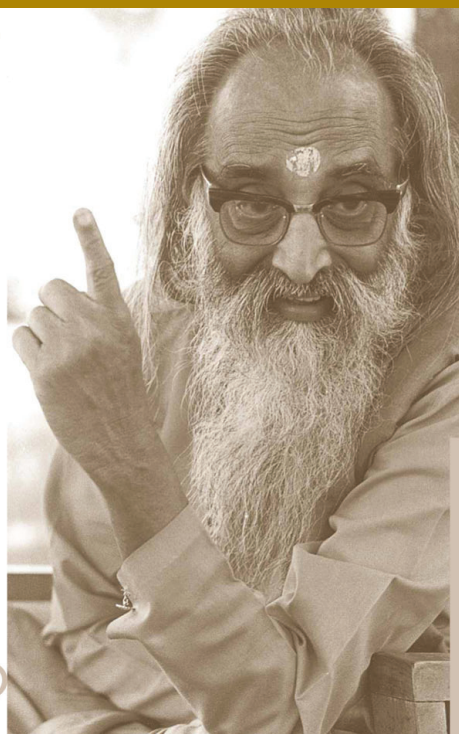
- Pujya Guruji

*In the silence of Meditation*

## *There I Confess!*

"I do seek strength,  
Not to be greater than my brother,  
But to fight my greatest enemy  
MYSELF,  
Especially when I groan,  
With the baser in me."

7 | Demand Astakam



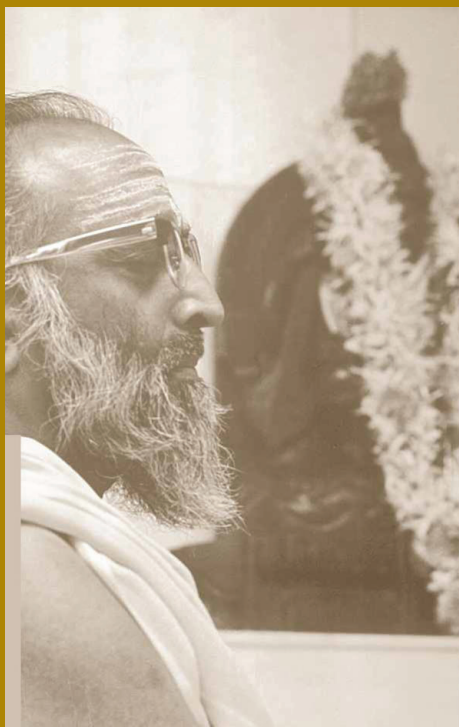
*In the silence of Meditation*

## *There I Sing!*

"Let me learn the lesson  
You have hidden so well  
In every leaf and rock,  
In the every shine and gloom,  
In every face and action,  
In every success and failure."



Demand Astakam | 6



*- Designed by Renjith (CHYK)*





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strengthening their lives in every endeavor.

## **Mahasamadhi Camp 2010 Update**

by Raj Mantha



Our Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Camp 2010 is already over 60% full! We are enthused by, and grateful for, the early responses, which make task-planning smoother, especially in the areas of food, rooms, and transportation. Among the registered, we are looking for talent to showcase, so please contact us.

While registration has been humming along, the daily menu has also been finalized, complete with taste testing, into a variety of a Gujarati, South Indian, Punjabi, Mexican, and Chinese cuisine. The children's and youth curricula are almost complete, and the entertainment segments have started taking shape. From decorations to the bookstore, to the inaugural *pothi yatra*, all plans and orchestrations are afoot. For questions or information: [msscsevak@gmail.com](mailto:msscsevak@gmail.com), <http://chinmayamahasamadhi.com>.

## **Chinmaya Chitrakoot in Dallas**

by Ashok Dandekar

Chinmaya Mission Dallas-Fort Worth has purchased an existing church property in the southwest Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex to cater to the Bala Vihar needs in that region. Pujya Guruji has blessed the new ashram as "*Chinmaya Chitrakoot*" and it will be inaugurated on May 8 with a grand *puja* for Shri Chinmaya Jayanti.

The building area is 21,000 sq. ft., and it has ample classrooms, an assembly area for 300 persons, and a hall that can accommodate 600 people. The new property is 22 miles southwest of the *Chinmaya Saaket* ashram. Renovations will soon begin to make *Chinmaya Chitrakoot* ready for Fall 2010 classes.

CMW is pleased to offer hearty congratulations and best wishes to our CM Dallas-Fort Worth Family!

## **Chinmaya Gurukul in Alpharetta**

By the Lord's grace, Pujya Gurudev's blessings, and Pujya Guruji's guidance, Chinmaya Mission Alpharetta purchased a 6.5-acre lot in the Alpharetta, Georgia area in January 2010. The property is conveniently located for all suburbs of Atlanta.

Currently, the small ranch house on the property is undergoing renovation in preparation for the inaugural ceremony to be conducted by Pujya Guruji on July 9. Pujya Guruji has blessed the new ashram with the name, "*Chinmaya Gurukul*," where Lord Krishna will be the main deity.

## **Pranava Ganesha Mandir at Chinmaya Vibhooti**

by H. K. Hinduja

The work on *Pranava Ganesha Mandir* at *Chinmaya Vibhooti* is proceeding with good speed. The civil work on the temple is nearly done. We have now started the cladding of stone and the interior, which will take around 18 months. External *shikhar* brickwork and decorative cement and plaster work have also already begun.



The temple has a generously sized *garbha griha* and a large *mandap* with an octagonal dome. The *likhita japa* notebooks will be

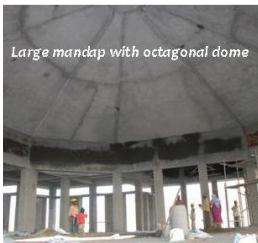




deposited below the *garbha griha*, but they can be viewed from the *pradakshina* path and lower level, which will house a special “meditation cave.”



The temple is expected to be ready in the last quarter of 2011. The rapid progress has been possible because of all devotees’ good wishes and continuous support through donations and *likhita japa* offerings. There is still sufficient space for many more books, so all Mission devotees worldwide are requested to restart their *likhita japa*; we have another 18 months to go. We look forward to your continued support. To find out how you can support our *Pranava Ganesha Mandir*, contact your local center or e-mail CCMT.



## Joyous Rama Navami Celebrations

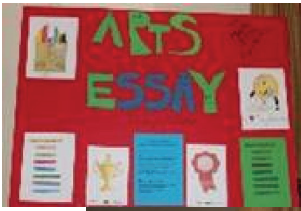
Report submitted by CM Los Angeles

*Shri Rama Navami* was celebrated with great participation and enthusiasm at the new *Rameshwaram* ashram of CM Los Angeles. It included prayers, music, dances, and

children’s essay and art competitions. The celebrations commenced on March 16 with the nine-day *parayana* (continuous reading) of *Tulasi Ramayana* by Swami Ishwarananda (resident *acharya*) and devotees, 9 a.m. to early afternoon daily. *Vishnu Sahasranama* chanting by adults, and Indian classical singing by the children’s *Shruti* choir filled the evenings, March 19-21. The *parayana* concluded on March 24, *Rama Navami* day, with a grand *Shri Rama Puja*. The altar was decorated to match the joyous mood; flowers adorned the deities and *shloka*-chanting and bhajans by the *Chinmaya Swaranjali* reverberated in the temple. A Carnatic vocal concert was performed by Anirudh Venkatesh, with Arjun Narayan on the *mrdangam* and Shiva Ramamurthi on violin.

The depth of young talent was seen, read, and heard on March 27 at *Rameshwaram*. From elementary to high school children they dazzled everyone with their enthusiasm, presenting music and dance numbers from mid-afternoon until evening, and sketching/ coloring or writing on the theme, “We Are the World.”





The mood of every devotee was tranquil, reverential, and devotional. The marble walls behind the temple idols glistened like the crystalline icy walls of a Himalayan cave. The decorative and fresh white, green, and red flower garlands shone more beautifully with the continuous chant of “*Om namah Shivaya*” and the calming aroma of incense. The peaceful bliss and mesmerizing smile on the radiant face of Lord Shiva, who was adorned with a yellow and purple flower garland, graced every heart.



A father walked in with his preschooler and prostrated himself at Lord Shiva’s feet. The son first watched his father and did the same. They both rose and left in silence. This scene repeated throughout the evening with many devotees, like an unbroken thread of devotion.

## Mahashivaratri at CM Houston

by Vinod Sharma

Over 2,000 devotees celebrated *Mahashivaratri* at CM Houston’s *Shri Soumyakashi Shivalaya* temple, February 12-13, despite the freezing weather conditions that were no match for the warmth of their devotion.

The *puja* commenced Friday morning with *mahanyasa-purvaka Rudrabhishekam*, a ceremonial bathing of the *Shiva-lingam*. The priests’ powerful Vedic chanting energized the steady stream of devotees of all ages throughout the day. The evening featured *laghunyasa-purvaka ekadasha Rudrabhishekam*. Melodious *bhajans* enhanced the *shodashopachara* (16-step) *puja* invoking Lord Shiva. In the final hours of the evening, devotees immersed themselves in the rich silence of meditation. The prayers culminated with the *maha-mangala arati* at midnight.



A *maha-mrtyunjaya homa* was performed in the *Chinmaya Smrti* hall on Saturday, February 13. The ceremony offered prayers for the peace and good health of the whole community. Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty (CM Houston) gave a spiritual discourse on the *Shiva Manasa Puja* on Sunday, February 14, expounding on how Hindu festivals teach



harmonious living, and energize and inspire in a way that other pastimes cannot. The holy festivities of *Mahashivaratri* were indeed a fulfilling experience of spiritual rejuvenation and bliss.



## Color and Fun at *Holi*

Report submitted by CM Los Angeles

The *Holi* celebrations of CM Los Angeles were held at Mile Square Regional Park in Fountain Valley on February 28. With over 1,300 children and parents gathering on the bright, sunny morning, it had to be one of the largest, if not the largest *Holi* celebration, in Southern California.



Kids participated with laughter and joy in the varied games organized for them by volunteers, including a sack race, freeze dance, knock the cans, ball toss, tug of war, three-legged race, and more. The adults played a game of cricket with Swami Ishwarananda and Acharya Mahadevan.

After a sumptuous lunch the central part of the celebrations began with fanfare. People threw color on each other with merriment and everyone was soon streaked in greens, blues, yellows and purple. Everyone looked alike by the end! Despite the size of the gathering and an event-filled program, the celebrations were free of incident and rancor, symbolizing how the CM LA family united, “bound to each other with love and respect.”

## Walk for CORD

by Gopala Dwarakanath



During the *Chinmaya Dham Yatra* 2009, we *yatri*-s had the great opportunity to visit and experience many aspects of the Mission’s work, all of which left lasting impressions. The CORD (Chinmaya Organization for Rural Development) program was especially memorable, wherein one was able to see the great benefits for both, the giver and the recipient. We visited the CORD Sidhabari, Chinmayaranyam, Coimbatore, and Tamaraipakkam projects, and heard the life-changing experiences of many sevaks, including Padma Shree recipient, Dr. Kshama Metre, one of the program’s pioneers and CORD’s National Director.

With the 501(c)-3 nonreligious, nonprofit incorporation of CORD USA, Inc. in 2009, our ability to raise funds in the United States is greatly enhanced, allowing a wide range of donors to contribute and avail of matching fund programs.

CMW is proposing a coordinated, regional Walk-for-CORD on a fixed date, on a yearly basis, by all regional centers across the USA. A coordinated, regional effort will allow us

to enhance fundraising, create a broader awareness of CORD, minimize expenses through bulk purchasing of T-shirts and other materials, and centralize registration and marketing through the CORD USA website.

Based on the CORD walks held by various centers in 2009, people have shown great interest in supporting CORD India and have become inspired to learn more about the scale of activity that has been going on for the past 25 years. Visit [CORDUSA.org](http://CORDUSA.org) and the links thereon to see the amazingly transformative, powerful, and beneficial programs under CORD.

To join hands and get full guides and templates on conducting local walkathons, USA centers should contact [dwaraka@chinmayamission.org](mailto:dwaraka@chinmayamission.org) or [cordusa@chinmayamission.org](mailto:cordusa@chinmayamission.org). [Dr. Gopala Dwarakanath is a CMW Director and the President of CM Boston.]

### First CORD Walk in Los Angeles

by Megan Reddy



CM Los Angeles conducted its first CORD Walkathon on February 28 in which over 150 CM members participated. Through pledges and a few large sponsors, CM LA's first CORD walk raised \$23,000.

The center's *acharyas*, Swami Ishwarananda and Acharya Mahadevan led the two-hour walk, which began bright and early at 8 a.m. in Fountain Valley's Mile Square Park. The walk path was lined with CORD images and factoids, and had stations where youth and volunteers donned in bright yellow CORD T-shirts supplied walkers with water and nutrition.

The inspired adults and children of all ages who united and walked for a great cause had the goal of raising awareness for CORD, which serves social and humanitarian needs in local communities in the Indian subcontinent. CORD was first started in 1985 by Pujya Gurudev in the state of Himachal Pradesh and has grown to annually impact 20,000 people directly and 150,000 people indirectly in many states of India, as well as in Sri Lanka. Over 650 villages have been helped by CORD and the numbers continue to grow.

Volunteers had gathered early to prepare the park and the walk path to make this event a success. Everyone was all smiles during this noble endeavor, enjoying their orange juice, granola bars, and bananas.





## CORD Sidhabari Celebrates 25 Years

CORD National Director, Dr. Kshama Metre wrote: “With Pujya Gurudev’s blessings, and Pujya Guruji’s support and guidance, CORD Sidhabari celebrated 25 years of service on April 10, 2010 by performing Pujya Gurudev’s *paduka puja* and surrendering all *seva* at his lotus feet.

Pujya Gurudev inaugurated this project on April 10, 1985, after which the first batch of newly admitted nurses-in-training offered a beautiful *bhajan* that resounded with the shower of his blessings and reverberated with the echo of his love for the development of rural India. May this rural development work bloom further with Pujya Guruji’s blessings, and may it enable and inspire CORD to reach out to many more underprivileged and marginalized people in the country.

The past 25 years have been full of learning, joy, and challenges. This *seva* evolved into CORD in 2003, and continues to grow under Pujya Guruji’s counsel and encouragement. As we celebrated this day silently, we invoked Pujya Guruji’s love and care, along with the strength and wisdom to do our best to carry Pujya Gurudev’s blessings to many more people so they may discover their potential, unfold their innate strengths, and transform their lives.”

Pujya Guruji replied: “Heartiest congratulations on 25 years of rural development work in Sidhabari! Time flies! I can’t imagine so many years have already passed. You have nurtured the seed sown by Pujya Gurudev so very beautifully that by now we are seeing the tree and the fruits that are being enjoyed by all. May this tree have many more branches spread in India.

Please convey my greetings to all our workers. May Pujya Gurudev’s grace and blessings be always with you.”

### **Vanaprastha Camp in Chinmaya Vibhooti**

by Sajjan Singh

The *Chinmaya Vanaprastha Sadan* residential camp was held March 5-8 for 56 campers from Mumbai, Kolkata, and Rewa, in the salubrious environment of *Chinmaya Vibhooti*

in Kolwan, India. Under the *acharyaship* of Swami Prashantananda, other faculty included Shri S. Agrawal and Dr. Sajjan Singh.

Swamiji conducted morning and evening classes daily, on select verses from *Gita* Chapter 3 and select verses from *Sundarkanda* from *Ramacharitamansa*, respectively. He beautifully co-related both texts to *karma yoga* and elaborately discussed its benefits for seekers.



Shri Agrawal took the morning yoga class, which was highly appreciated by all. He also conducted classes on financial and social health with an emphasis on spirituality.

Dr. Singh spoke on emotional health, expounding on Sant Tulasidasji’s prayer of “*Shri Ramachandra krpalu bhaja mana,*” and elaborately explaining the spiritual and psychological connotations of each word.



The campers were greatly inspired by the art and technology of *Chinmaya Darshan*, the massive exhibit on Pujya Gurudev’s life and teachings, as well as the evening screening of an *Upanishad Ganga* episode. Smt. Pramodini Rao, director of Chinmaya Naada Bindu (CNB), the Mission’s new residential school of Indian classical music and dance that is housed at *Chinmaya Vibhooti*, met conducted a session on CNB’s activities and sang some beautiful *bhajans* in different *ragas*. The camp concluded at noon on March 8 with Pujya Gurudev’s *paduka puja*.

Here are some papaya factoids that were shared with the campers: Papaya is an ideal breakfast food. If taken after food, it helps digestion. It is high in Vitamin C, helps in the anti-aging process, and prevents stomach-related allergies. Eating cooked unripe papaya is good for lactation

in nursing mothers, while cooked ripe papaya enhances virility in men. Eating ripe papaya skin immersed in vinegar helps in spleen enlargement.

CVS will be conducting camps on “The Art of Graceful Aging” in June and July in Sidhabari, Chennai, and Salem in India. Contact [vanprasthnews@gmail.com](mailto:vanprasthnews@gmail.com) for details.

## The Pursuit of Happiness

by Surendra Dara

What is happiness? Depending on whom you ask, happiness is considered as a successful career, a loving family, good friends, material or spiritual richness, inner peace, or anything else. In a seminar organized by Chinmaya Mission Bakersfield, the Bakersfield Memorial Hospital, and the Good Samaritan Hospital on April 17, 2010, “The Pursuit of Happiness” was explained and discussed from philosophical and psychological perspectives.

As the founder of Laugh To Live, an organization that promotes happy and healthy living through humor, I was happy to see the experts in spirituality and mental health reinforce the concept of happy living and the fact that people can learn to be happy.

The event, held in Founders Hall Auditorium at Memorial Hospital, commenced with the opening remarks by Bakersfield gastroenterologist, Anil Mehta, who also conducts free meditation classes at Chinmaya Mission Bakersfield. He pointed out the causes and adverse health effects of unhappiness, and explained that meditation reverses these negative effects and promotes physical well being.



Luis Medina, from the *Bakersfield Express*, was the master of ceremonies and introduced the speakers: Paul McMahon, a clinical psychologist at Loma Linda University Behavioral Medicine Center, and Swami Ishwarananda, Acharya of Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles.



McMahon, in his talk entitled, “Happiness—Can I have some more please?” explained that our founding fathers considered the pursuit of happiness as an essential human right. However, people assume entitlement to happiness without the pursuit. Stress and anxiety affect a large population of Americans. A few deep breaths several times a day can help relieve stress. McMahon also presented the positive psychology approach developed by psychologist, Martin Seligman. It involves individualistic and altruistic approaches that people take to have a pleasant and meaningful life. In Seligman’s model, as explained by McMahon, each individual has psychological, biological, social, and spiritual parts. An important aspect of this model is that people can learn to be happy through activities that bring happiness to these four components of oneself. For example, cultivating strengths, thinking and acting happy, and recognizing and relieving tension contributes to psychological happiness. A healthy diet, exercise, and good habits promote biological happiness. Good social relationships and being surrounded by positive people can bring social happiness. Prayer, religious and charitable activities, and forgiveness can help one progress in spiritual happiness. McMahon also said that religiosity and happiness are highly correlated. With his cheerful demeanor and delivery style he engaged and entertained the audience throughout his presentation.

Swami Ishwarananda, author of *Conscious Living* and *Silent Search*, presented a philosophical perspective of happiness. Known for blending humor with his spiritual teachings, Swamiji said that the purpose of life is to be happy and that religion is more about finding the inner joy. He quoted the Bible, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Talmud*, and *Qur’an*, all of which emphasize the importance of happiness for spiritual well-being. He also compared what happiness means in different cultures. Achievement means happiness in the Western culture, whereas an upbeat attitude is considered as happiness in Latin America. Adhering to certain cultural



standards is seen as being happy in Japan, while in other Asian countries, happiness is considered as a blessing from heavenly sources.

Swamiji said that materialism has now come to contribute to unhappiness. Many parents are concerned about the academic success of their children, but do not teach them how to be happy. He said there are three kinds of happiness described in Sanskrit: *Sukha* is joy we plan for, *moda* is joy that happens, and *pramoda* is joy that we discover. While eternal Bliss is the best, the joy that happens is better than the joy for which we plan.

Swamiji recalled his guru Pujya Swami Chinmayananda's explanation that a disturbed mind is sorrow and a restful mind is happy. . . .

In Pujya Swami Chinmayananda's equation, happiness is the quotient of the number of desires fulfilled divided by the number of desires entertained. In general, fulfilling all desires is a difficult task. Even when some desires are fulfilled, more desires are entertained. As a result, happiness always remains a fraction, incomplete. Reducing the number of desires entertained is the key to increasing happiness. "Similar to the law of diminishing returns in economics," Swamiji said, "having more of the same thing reduces the happiness derived from it. A realized master finds inner happiness and does not depend on external sources."

Swamiji explained nine principles for a happy life:

- 1) You cannot be unhappy unless you wish to be.
- 2) Change what you can and accept what you cannot.
- 3) Do not worry about what others think of you.
- 4) Stop thinking about what is wrong with others.
- 5) Know that every addiction has unhappy consequences.
- 6) Know what is given to you will be taken away.



- 7) Bear inconveniences on the way to inner peace.
- 8) Enjoy your own company.
- 9) Peace is in the present moment: Cherish it.

Swamiji recalled how he, as a young software professional, was inspired by his guru. When he saw his then 70-year-old master engage a group of youth in two hours of nonstop laughter through his spiritual talks, he wanted to be like the master. This incident transformed his life and made him follow a spiritual path committed to spreading happiness for spiritual wellbeing of all. Chinmaya Mission's motto is, "To give the maximum amount of happiness to the maximum number of people for the maximum amount of time."

Swamiji conducted a guided meditation session, after which both speakers answered questions from the audience. The summary of this session was that unhappy events are part of our life, so we need to stay positive, help each other, and look for hope amid difficult situations. Being in good company and engaging in good deeds are an important start to in leading a happy life.

McMahon commented in the end that although both speakers come from diverse social, cultural, and spiritual backgrounds, the essence of the talks was essentially the same. Anil Mehta thanked the speakers, audience, and volunteers for making this another successful annual event.

Several participants gave a positive feedback on the seminar. Friends Helen Smith, Zada Mitchell, and Marcella Yoon, all in their mid-80s, found the information very helpful and said they really enjoyed the talks. Mitchell said that problems accumulate with age and older people should learn more about living happily. Smith added that a lot of people do not

think well of themselves and it is important to have a positive attitude.

“The information presented is great for myself, my family, and my profession” said Sal Arias, a gang prevention specialist. “The nine principles from Swami Ishwarananda are very useful.”

Otolaryngologist Gary Zerlin said that emphasizing the concept of happiness is important: “We are not our thoughts and we do not have to be identified with our thoughts.” His father, Leonard Zerlin, a retired aerospace engineer, found the lectures stimulating and liked the idea of meditation.

### ***Bhaja Govindam in Boston***

*Report submitted by CM Boston*

Swami Shantananda (CM Princeton) conducted a *jnana yajna* on Adi Shankaracharya’s *Bhaja Govindam* at CM Boston, March 15-19, 2010. Though composed centuries ago, this laudable and renowned poem is applicable even today in every aspect and field of life.

Adi Shankaracharya calls those people fools who believe they revel in material and theoretical knowledge alone, who live without devotion to the Lord (“Govinda”) and without striving to know the Self. He points out various ways to lay the foundation of spiritual seeking, such as through scriptural studies and devotion to God.



For each verse, Swamiji’s explanations made this timeless classic apply to contemporary life. The different tones of the text, from harsh to gentle, constantly try to awaken us from our complacency and ignorance. Swamiji’s simple yet profound talks taught us the ultimate goal of Vedanta and the importance of combining knowledge with devotion for a GPS to a righteous life.



**CHINMAYA MISSION  
HALTON REGION**

## **16<sup>th</sup> Annual Walkathon "Walk For CORD"**

### **WHEN**

**May 29, 2010**

**10 AM - 3 PM**

**Bring your friends  
family, & furries**

### **WHERE**

**Spencer Smith Park  
Burlington, ON**



**Please RSVP!**

**Rain or Shine We Walk!!**

For more information please call  
or visit 905-570-1120

[www.rural-development.ca](http://www.rural-development.ca)



# Global CHYK Camp 2010

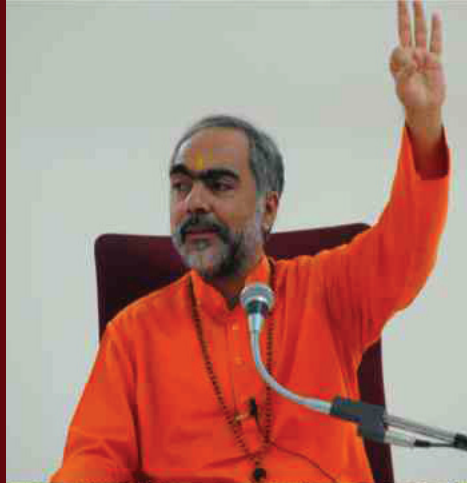
Inspired by  
Swami Swaroopananda

Date:  
24<sup>th</sup> Dec 2010  
to 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2011

Venue:  
Chinmaya International  
Residential School  
Coimbatore,  
Tamil Nadu,  
INDIA

Cost:  
US\$250

For further information:  
[take-the-big-step@gmail.com](mailto:take-the-big-step@gmail.com)  
or your local Chinmaya  
Mission Centre



Take the  
**BIG**  
**P**  
**E**  
**T**  
**S**

**Taittiriya Upanishad**

All great achievement demands that we take a  
**Big Step.**

To do this, we require  
**courage,**  
direction and a deep understanding of ourselves.

The Taittiriya Upanishad was taught to students in the  
Vedic age to give them this clarity and to ensure that every  
step they took once they left the Gurukula was a  
**Big Step** in the right direction.

This timeless and profound knowledge is now available to us –  
all we have to do is to **step forward** and be available for it.

Start the change this December...

Take the Big Step



# *Chinmaya Mission*

## *Centers' Festival Celebrations*

### *CM Chicago*



### *CM Fairfield*



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### *CM San Diego*





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## *CM Toronto*



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Blessed Chinmaya Family,

Happy Shri Chinmaya Jayanti!



## Chinmaya Mission Chicago 2010 Vedic Heritage Youth Camps



CONDUCTED BY  
ACHARYAS OF CHINMAYA MISSION

**June 21 – 27, 2010**

**God Symbolism &  
Religious Ceremonies**



(Grades KG – 12)

**YAMUNOTRI CENTER**

**Phone: 847-740-1215**

30877 N. Fairfield Rd. Grayslake, IL 60030

Camp Coordinator: Archana Anant  
(847) 207-2055

**July 19 – 25, 2010**

**Glories of Goddess -  
The Divine Mother**



(Grades KG – 12)

**BADRI CENTER**

**Phone: 630-654-3370**

11 S. 80 Rt. 83, Willowbrook, IL 60527

Camp Coordinator: Saroja Ravi  
(630) 548-3448

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**1 child \$200 - 2 siblings \$375 - 3 or more siblings \$450**

*Fees include camp materials, before/after camp care, lunch/snacks*

*Attend both camps and pay only 50% for second camp!*

*Free accommodation and local transportation for out-of-town children 10 years and older*

### **Camp Timings: 8:30 am – 4:30 pm daily**

*Daily activities include prayers, satsang and instruction by your favorite camp acharyas,*

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*Cultural Program on concluding day & much more! Make friends for a lifetime!*

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Special Upanayanam Ceremony will be conducted for camp participants ages 5+  
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**Please Register by Mail/Online**

### **Contact Information**

**Website: chinmaya-chicago.org - Email: camp@chinmaya-chicago.org**

Shanker Pillai (630) 789-6607

Ashok Dholakin (708) 349-6396

Suresh Kumar (630) 548-9272

Ashok Bhatia (847) 680-4735

Shubh Manvakhani (847) 680-8555

Rajul Bhalala (847) 302-2383