

**Hari OM**  
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“O Mother, please purify my mind that runs riotously into the sense-objects. Help me to fix my mind at Your lotus feet only. So long as the mind is wandering, seeking sense-gratifications, Mother, can man ever find happiness in life?”.

*Source: Hymn to Ganga*

“The mind is ever dynamic. It cannot remain idle even for a moment, except in sleep. So long as it exists, it must act. . . Diligently it is now minding sense objects, and as such, it is experiencing jerks, restlessness, sorrows, and dejections of a million varieties. . . The agitation of the mind is its own pain condition. A peaceful mind gurgles with happiness. Man ever seeks, through all his activities, everywhere, at all times, happiness. But so long as his mind is dashing forth seeking sense gratifications, how can it ever find satisfaction and joy?”

*Source: Commentary on Hymn to Ganga*

“It is these four—desire, attachment, I-ness, and my-ness—that disturb us and destroy our peace. . . When we inquire into what we really want, it comes down to more than just objects. If we wanted objects, then when we got them, we should be happy. But we are not. We want objects because we want to enjoy, and the desire to enjoy is really the desire to be happy. . . A wise person gives up the desire for objects, understanding fully well that what he seeks is true and lasting happiness, which he cannot get from objects.”

**Right Thinking**

# SPIRITUAL TRAILS

## Communing with Nature

by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

*From Solitude, Mananam Series; originally published in  
My Treks in Uttarkhand by Swami Chinmayananda*

*Nowhere does man express himself as honestly as he does in a diary. And the diary of a spiritual aspirant is bound to contain basic truths that throw light on the dark recesses of our own personality. More than 30 years ago, in 1948, a young spiritual aspirant traveled barefoot throughout Uttarkhand, India on a rare pilgrimage of discovery. At the end of each long, tiring day, he meticulously entered his thoughts and experiences in two small, clothbound books. Often going without food, sleeping wherever he put down his bundle for the night, lashed by the cold northern winds, he established a deep and lasting communion with nature. His pen becomes dipped in sheer poetry as he describes the Himalayan splendor around him. His grumblings, too, are always edged with characteristic tongue-in-cheek humor, with never a trace of bitterness. The narrative is interestingly interspersed with his own sketches of the routes, villages, or temples along way. This young aspirant was Swami Chinmayananda.*

## Embarking on the Pilgrimage

In the evening, [I] took a long walk and had half an hour's meditation. Himalayan retreats have a special something about them that induces meditation. Wherever one sits for *dhyana* (meditation), one easily gains a peace and satisfaction that one misses even at Rishikesh. After returning, I went for a long walk alone among the tall, awe-inspiring pine trees. At first I felt terrified, just looking at their awesome majesty. Then I stepped into their midst. . . .

At 4:30 a.m., we started out. Leaving Jamuna River at Ganganain, we tramped along a road running perpendicular to the river's flow. At this turn, we saw the last of the Jamuna. After tramping along a fairly good footpath for two and a half miles, we reached a section that was about a mile long and had many ladder-like ascents alternating with level roads. Leaving this, we came to a steep ascent of one and a half miles, which, because it runs through a dark forest, was cushioned with fallen leaves. The ascent was no joke. Even a healthy man must pant ere he can proceed half a furlong.

And yet the going was pleasant because of the solid silence in these vaults of nature. On the top, we came to a pass called *Phalla ki Dar* (Phalla Pass), where there is a small grassy mound for one to sit and be refreshed. The sight was gorgeous all around. The vegetation was thick. Tall trees were heavily laden with leaves. Shrubs were short and stout with vines and tendrils weaving themselves into a network among the trunks of the spreading giants. Here, I tried to run into the wilds off the road, but on either side the forests did not permit me to enter into their wombs . . . .

From this pass, it is half a mile to the jungle called Phallarcha Danda. It was a pleasant and joyous experience to be in this jungle. I wanted to leave even my friend, Sri Gautamji, who seemed to be afraid of the awe-inspiring silence and so stuck to me even more. As I was barefoot, I could shake him off easily. But when I started trekking down the heights, precipitously cutting across the serpentine footpath that runs bending upon itself, I had a lead. It is a lovely, exhilarating experience to be in the forest alone with the silence. You seem to perceive the silence, dandle it, and come to be silence yourself. The thicker and deeper the silence, the more and louder would Sri Gautamji talk. Not everybody can take silence in their stride. It can be as unnerving as incessant chatter.

## Serenity among the Snow Peaks

Yesterday itself, before starting from Darali, we heard that today was *Sankranti*. It is a great day for

the local people, as great as *Dipavali*. So, again, we feel His grace. How else is it that we reach Gangotri just in time for a dip in Gangaji at her very source, on *Sankranti* day. Famous! All God's grace! I have to forget all my pain and tiredness and carry on.

Early at 4 a.m., we were packed and on our way, determined to cover the 13 miles to Gangotri. It was a heavy stretch. But I must admit that these 13 miles are fairly well-maintained, even though in individual sections there is enough to complain about, especially if one is barefoot.

As we progressed, we came across another stretch of ten yards of glacier, like a cataract, silent and stiff, standing in wonderment at the sudden realization of the beauty of the granite walls, layers over layers. Deodars, with their branches arranged in symmetrical whorls along their long, stately trunks, look like many-handed gods, encouraging man with their outstretched hands to scale greater and greater heights of the voiceless realms. To cease all activity, to penetrate the turmoil and turbulence of one's mind, rent every now and then by the cacophony of thoughts and the lightning flashes of pleasure and pain, to turn one's gaze upward to the serenity that lies beyond them all. . . .

Following the right bank of the river we moved forward steadily. Suddenly, at a turning through the huge rocks that had rolled down in a recent landslide, we caught a glimpse of a *dharamshala*. . . .

We washed ourselves in the Ganges here and felt happy. On the opposite banks are the *kutias* (huts) for the *sadhus* (renunciates). In the evening we visited these reputed mahatmas with some token sweets. On this mount between Kedar Ganga and Bhagirathi dwell the greatest known ascetics of Gangotri. Here, the *kshetra* (kitchen) is left open only for three months in the year. Everyone must then return and go down to the plains. But two mahatmas live here all the months of the year. That is, two are known. Many are unknown, but certainly believed to be living and meditating upon the Infinite and developing their intuition, the only faculty by which man can feel, know, live, and become the immortal, undivided, and indivisible Infinite. . . .

#### **Timeless Moments with Renunciates**

Phalahari Baba is one of them. He lives in a small hut, to enter which the visitor must crawl through a door three feet by two feet. The floor is covered with the soft glittering sand of the Ganges. The room is 12 by 12 feet; in the middle of it is a fire glowing, its smoke escaping through an aperture in the roof. No windows. Rough, unlevelled, mud-smeared walls. There is a deerskin spread on which he, all of six feet, can scarcely sit bent double. . . .

The Baba sat on the sandy floor in *asana* (yogic posture), perhaps meditating. To his right smoldered the fire. In spite of the aperture in the roof, the atmosphere was smoky. We opened the door and crawled in. I asked the Baba if we could come in. He looked at us from his corner. There was surprise and then a flash of annoyance, perhaps at the disturbance. Then he nodded. We went in and sat near him, squatting on the floor. Shri Phalahari Baba is an *akhanda-mauni* (one who has taken a permanent vow of silence). He asked us by signs from where we hailed, from where we were coming, when we intended on returning. We answered. Then Baba instructed the priest by signs to put a pot of water on the fire. He tended the fire, made tea, and gave the tea to us.

The Baba has a wonderfully beatific smile, pure and guileless, like a child's. His eyes throbbed with a divine glow. When our priest explained that Baba has gone down much in health, he wrote out in the sand that he had been observing a fast, without even water, all through the *chaitra* month, which is why he may be looking a bit weak. After all, he stated, it is the nature of all flesh to be now healthy, now sick, now fat, now lean. It goes on. We are not concerned with these transformations. We are the indestructible, supreme Spirit, Shiva Himself! *Shivo'ham, Shivo'ham!*

After tea, we washed the vessels for him in the Ganges, prostrated, and returned. Before we left, he wrote in the sand, "Please come again." We have promised to visit him again. With burning eyes, watering from the smoke, and feeling light-hearted and strangely filled with a deep peace, we stepped out.

The Ganges hummed her immortal tune and in our new found inner balance, we forgot all existence, losing ourselves in ourselves, in That which is everything about us, beyond us, beneath us, above us, and all around.

But the priest, with his soft, quiet cough, brought us back to reality. The Deodar needles, the sharp dried grass, the stones, and the hum of the Ganges. . . .

A few yards from Shri Phalahari Baba is a lighter cottage where dwells the other *vairagi sadhu*, Shri Raghunath Dasji. We entered his cottage. We stepped into a covered veranda, and a small door, five feet by three feet, took us into a room with a fire, ventilator, and thatched ceiling. This Swamiji, too, was meditating in one corner. We did *namaskaram*. He turned around, sat facing us, and asked from where we had come. His voice had a funny catch to it, like the sound of one who talks after a long spell of silence. We were with him for ten minutes. He spoke not a word; we spoke not a word. He sat looking steadily into the embers of his fire, as we sat facing him. It was the most eloquent ten minutes. In that silence, the attitude of Babaji, the room the fire, the begging bowl and two other vessels leaning against the mud walls, the three one-foot square pieces of bark along the wall for visitors to sit on—everything assumed a special significance. If we did not receive its meaning, it could have only meant a weakness in our own understanding. Real life is in meditation and in renunciation.

Soon we took his leave and tramped out. Here, too, had the priest not informed us that we had to go and purchase a few things before the shops closed, we would never have known that we were overstepping our limits by staying so long! Just a while, it seemed that time had stopped still and the world had ceased to be. . . .

#### **In a World of His Own**

Next we visited the *kutia* of Shri Swami Krishnashram, some 100 yards away. It was an all-wood single room with a narrow, covered veranda open on all three sides. The room had just one door, six feet by three feet. The room was seven feet by four feet, and in front of the door, facing outside sat the swami, motionless. His arm crossed over each other and the palms rested between the thighs and the calves. The arms were swollen, perhaps because of keeping them in one position for too long. He sat in a tray the length of the room, covered with dry grass. The swami was naked and absolutely motionless but for his eyes, which seemed alive and danced every now and then. Often they were held in a perfectly steady gaze, looking at nothing in particular except the space in front of him. His eyes proclaimed that his thoughts were in a world of their own, a world that had nothing to do with the world of the senses, or a world where things were perceived, felt, and understood as real and solid.

He is a *mahamauni* (observer of the vow of silence), not at all interested in the happenings of the world around him. And so, such people do not talk about [the world]. Their experiences have no words; they are a voiceless bliss, transcending, and infinite. In the white heat of intensity, no words in any language of the world can express their emotions and feelings of bliss.

Dark, with a silver-streaked beard tied into a knot, a chest that seemed 48 inches, a stomach shrunk into the waist, long legs folded tight and stiff, he looked like some idol hewn out of a black granite mountain. His eyes were bloodshot, but held unusual poise and balance. And it was as if they held tender love and sympathy for the millions of deluded, suffering humans who, not knowing their real nature, get sidetracked into fleeting pursuits of happiness, only to get bruised with disappointments and despair. We lovingly offered our token packet of sweets and sat down in the veranda. The Baba looked straight through us into the beyond. Thrice, the range of his vision shrunk to fix on us, but only for a flickering fraction of a second. The few moments spent in his divine presence were moments of such intense inspiration and experience that I will never forget them in this lifetime. . . .

This Swami Krishnashramji previously lived here right through the year. Now, he lives here only during the season, and the rest of the year in Uttarkashi. We returned. Had two hours of meditation on the banks of the Ganges, sitting on a base outside the Shiva temple. Wonderful! No words to express the

inner peace I enjoyed, the concentration I achieved, the entire world forgotten. Forgotten are all worldly contacts, for here I have come to live in myself. . . .

For the first time tasted a bliss in meditation that I know is just one iota of what one can have from deep, long, steady, and powerful meditation. My only prayer to my Guru Maharaj and to Shankara is that by their grace may I never fall, may I drink deeper at the fountain of eternal divine nectar.

Later in the day, we went to another *vairagi sadhu* who lives here all 12 months of the year. He lives on the same side of the river as the *dharamshala*, one mile upstream. A path leads up along the right bank of the Bhagirathi. Heavy snowfall this year brought down the loose mountaintops at many parts, obliterating the path. By sheer perseverance, we reached the cave.

The cave was one room, roughly 15 by 10 feet, with a side room, dark and unventilated, so its size was not known. This was a natural cave, the roof and wall of one side being the hooded outward projection of a rocky hollow. In this room, at one end was the kitchen where a disciple, Goswami Lakshman Das, was cooking. Smoky room. On one side along the built wall, back toward the Bhagirathi, facing a Ram-Lakshman-Sita-Hanuman temple sat the *vairagi*, Shri Goswami Ganga Das. He is a boy of no more than 18 years—no beard—yet one of the surest *bhaktas* (devotees of the Lord) I have seen. He came to his Guruji, Shri Goswami Ramgopal Das, some seven years ago. During all these years, he had not gone down even once, except once to Gangotri, where he had to go to take the footpath leading to Gomukh. He never wished to go down either.

Circumstances are weaving themselves into a down-dragging network. This year, the snowfall was so heavy that he was buried in his cave for ten days; For eight days and eight nights, the snowfall was continuous. For those ten days, he could not go to Bhagirathi for his bath. He had to take a hot water bath and then do his *puja*. He even feared for the life of his body, and so he wished to go down and collect some offerings from his *bhaktas* to build a temple for Ramji.

He gave us a continuous, inspiring talk for three hours on *bhakti*, quoting the scriptures and the classics, Bhattrhari, etc. He knows Sanskrit and Hindi well. All his education and knowledge he attributes to *Guru-krpa* (Guru's grace). He has never been to any school, so in our Hindustan, he will be considered as one of the millions of illiterates!

This boy, "illiterate," remaining for seven years in a cave, to all Western psychologists, would appear to be mysterious. He exhibits none of the crippling effects of solitude. He is large-hearted and cheerful, polite and courteous, modest, happy, and peaceful. He lives here unknown to the world, oblivious to the stress and strain of the marketplace. Yet, what a full and grand personality! All Knowledge, all Bliss. The real essence is within. Shut off the attractions, collect the wandering thoughts, and dive deep within. That is the real life.

### **The Crown of Creation**

Early, by 5 a.m., we were on the road. Walking a furlong over a velveteen, dew-drenched, grassy mountaintop, we struck a footpath that ran right over the hill through a thick jungle. Reaching the top of this hill, we pursued the same path and it took us through one of the loveliest stretches of green extravagance and flowery splendors we had ever encountered. There were the same grassy flowers of yesterday, but in extent and glory, they outshone our wonder and joy of the day before. This nine-mile stretch up to Maggu elevates, educates, and enthralls the pilgrim as never before. It runs over grassy hilltops; the Himalayan ranges stand at attention in the distance; the Deodars have their arms raised in salute. At a respectable distance, our procession wound along, deep valleys on both sides. Carpeted with green, strewn lavishly with yellow flowers, interspersed by a supreme touch of artistry, with shy violet and modest, unsullied white blossoms. . . .

Although the route was nine miles, it seemed to us as one of the shortest stretches we had ever done. The footpath after the Kunkalyaki Dar (Pass), though with numerous ups and downs, burst onto a view of blazing happiness. When it ended, there was a deep sense of regret. One wished it would go on

forever and ever. . . .

The guidebook told us of a knife-edge path, precipitous sides, where a slip means the end. But the route was not as difficult. The path was about two and a half feet wide. The sky was so low, you felt you could almost reach out and touch it. It rolled away, forming a vast, blue canopy. The nearer mountains were deodar-clad. The early morning sun played on the fresh whiteness of the snow peaks. Together they formed a chorus of welcome. Where else in the world can one have such an experience?

The sun rose from behind a wondrous peak on our right, painted the entire sky a deep gold, and then splashed a vivid blue shade in long stripes, sweeping over the endless peak that rose up into the roofless sky. As we marched along this winding ridge, falling into the depths on both sides, with an amazing variety of flowers forming dazzling patches of white and yellow studded with violet, we felt that we were on the roof and crown of the creation and that we were, in essence, one with the reigning spirit of pure beauty and thrilling silence. And that in substance, the entire world of the senses is one undivided essence of absolute Existence, absolute Knowledge, absolute Bliss. . . .

This is not to say the least of what one feels on the Maggu ranges. There is no language in the world that has words powerful enough to express such deep, voiceless, undiluted, inner experiences of joy. The joy of a hungry, weeping child as it is gathered by the mother and fed at her flowing breast, or the bliss of lovers alone near a river on a bed of flowers meeting after a long separation, or the happiness of a father who hears of his only son's success in a far-off land when in fact the son had been feared dead—all these joys are no comparison. For they are incomplete and finite, and cannot be compared with this infinite, immeasurable Bliss that rejuvenates man and shatters into smithereens all his marketplace-values in life. . . .

Maggu Chatti was in a valley, to reach which we came down a steep, stony descent, crossing avalanches at more than six places. We had a cup of tea here and then started on a most tiring, steep, and stony descent, although it must be admitted that whoever it be (probably the local people) have tried their best to make it comfortable. But in rocky hills, through deep valleys, between giant trees, across roaring falls and clapping rivulets, no road can remain intact for long. But for the fallen leaves, the track would have been useless; every time we came across grassy patches, we thanked our luck. Here, in the deepest, fiercest forest section, I was alone for an hour. Any rugged stretch is a path. Nature is formidable with her eerie noises. Birds, leaves, rivers, twigs cracking underfoot, distant calls of shepherds, all falling thickly on the exploding silence. Woven into this intricate pattern, how can one call one's life one's own? There is the humility of an absolute surrender.

### How Saints Come Marching In

by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

*Transcription of talk given on Guru Purnima in Mumbai, India*

On the most auspicious day of *Guru Purnima*, Lord Narayana Himself incarnated in the form of Maharishi Veda Vyasa. *Guru Purnima* comes in *shravan-masa*, or the rainy season. On *Guru Purnima*, you can see the rains and the full moon, shining bright and resplendent with its 16 *kalas*.

Before the rainy season comes the severe summer season, and the entire land becomes dry with heat and people become lazy. Looking at the clouds, our mental peacock starts dancing, and when it starts raining, our hearts are filled with joy. Likewise, when our mind is empty of devotion, it becomes dry. But when the heart is filled with devotion, how joyous and happy we become! On *Guru Purnima*, Veda Vyasa Bhagavan showers devotion on us.

The moon spreads coolness. All people cannot look at the sun, for we do not have the strength to look

at its brilliance. We cannot bear the heat of the complete effulgence of the sun, although its light is essential for us. It is the light of knowledge and it eliminates the darkness of ignorance.

It is chanted, “*Namostu te Vyasa vishala-buddhe,*” or salutations to Maharishi Vyasa, the abode of wisdom. “*Yena tvaya Bharata taila purnaha, prajvalito jnanamayah pradipah*”: He spreads the light of wisdom throughout *Bharat* (India). People burn in the light of the sun during daytime, but at night their hearts are filled with joy looking at the coolness of the full moon’s light. Sometimes, the heat of the pains of *samsara* make us unhappy and irritable, but *santa darshan*, or vision of the saints, grants us deliverance from these pains of *samsara*. . . . In what words, then, to describe the greatness of the *Sadguru*!

In *Ramacharitamansa*, Goswami Tulsidasji begins his prayers by describing the greatness of the Guru. First, he offers *pranam* from afar to the feet of his Guru. Why from afar? Because, he says, he does not have the merit or capability to touch the Guru’s feet. To touch the feet of a great sage is a great privilege by itself. One should have the merits to touch a saint’s feet. Therefore, he says first is *pranam* from a distance.

Then, he bows down to the Guru. Because the Guru is the ocean of grace; he is Self-realized and above the level of body consciousness. It is grace and compassion by which they accept the ties of body-consciousness. One who is above body-consciousness and beyond the ties of karmas, for him even the Vedas do not dare prescribe any ritualistic disciplines. Such masters are beyond all social norms. Yet, in spite of their being free, they accept body-consciousness, and follow social norms, and live according to the disciplines of the Vedas. They are *Veda-atita*, yet they stay in human form for our benefit.

“*Nara-rupa hara.*” The Lord Himself comes as *nara-rupa* (form of man). The words of saints are like the rays of the sun, which destroys the ignorance of attachment. Their words are *maha-vakyas*.

Thereafter, Tulsidasji bows down to the toenail of the lotus feet of his Guru. He says in the Guru’s lotus feet lies the nectar of devotion and the power to destroy our fear of the cycle of birth and death. The toenail is the very abode of brightness, contemplating on which one gets *divya-drishti*. With this, the eye of discrimination is awakened and the darkness of worldly sorrows ends.

It is said that *siddha-purushas* (perfect or realized beings) apply black eyeliner in their eyes, with which they can see hidden treasures. If we also apply this *anjan* (black eyeliner), then all the secrets of the world are revealed, and these secrets are nothing but the attributes of the Lord Himself!

Tulsidasji says the dust of the feet of the Guru, of the God-realized master, is like *anjan*. Only after applying this he says he is ready to start telling the story of Shri Ramachandraji.

*bandau guru pada kanja kripa, gupta prabhat jahan jo jehi kaanika  
jatha su-anjana anji driga sadhaka siddha sujan  
kautuka dekhata saila bana bhutala bhuri nidhan*

These verses are filled with deep devotion.

A *sadhak* should first develop *sat-vasana* (purity of thought or desire for the Truth). When desire for attaining God arises, then alone the path of spirituality becomes easier. We have seen, in our life also, that without the *Sat-guru*, we have not been able to attain *Sat-gati* (the goal of Truth). We are not able to see the beautiful path ahead of us without a guide.

Maharashtra has given birth to many saints and sages. They have composed many *abhangas* and *padas* revering the greatness of the Guru. They have said that the greatness of the Guru is indescribable. Those who have experienced the Lord’s grace alone know how much truth lies in this statement.

Without the *Sat-guru*, we cannot attain any goal. First, we should surrender at the feet of our *Sat-*

*guru*, and come under his shelter and care. What is the importance of this? The *Sat-guru* makes his disciple like himself there and then. This is the greatness. There is no delay.

In *Das Bodh*, a question is asked: If someone gets the grace of a *Sat-guru*, then how long does it take that person to realize *Brahman*? It is said, “My dear brother! Once you meet a *Sat-guru*, you are *Brahman* instantly. How long does it take a river to become the ocean once it merges with the ocean? How long does it take to be awake when one wakes up from the dream? Not long. We all are sleeping in the world of darkness of ignorance.

The *Sat-guru* is *Brahman* himself. His greatness and difference from all other teachers is that other teachers give you knowledge of material things, and that too, not fully—because they fear the student will outshine them. But the *Sat-guru* is the one who makes his disciple like himself. “*Tat tvam asi*,” they say. “O Brother, I am *Brahman*, as are you!” Saying so does not take long. It is said that *paras mani* (mythical magic jewel) turns anything instantly to gold. Would this apply to the Guru? Certainly not. Because the *paras mani* may turn a thing into gold, but it cannot turn the thing into another *paras mani*. The Guru makes you like himself!

Can we liken the Guru’s gift of Knowledge to how the sun selflessly gives light to the world? No, because the sun gives light, but it also gives heat. The *Sat-guru*’s light of Knowledge does not spread discomfort or pain.

Can we then liken the *Sat-guru*’s to the delightful, cool moon? No, because the moon waxes and wanes, and it has dark marks all over it. The Guru’s nature is cool (*sheetal*) like the moon, ever resplendent, never waning.

The Guru’s greatness is such that it is said the Lord may get angry or displeased with us at times, but the Guru can save us. But it is said that if the Guru is displeased or angry with us, then even *Bhagavan* Himself cannot, and will not, save us. Such is the greatness of *Sat-guru*. It is truly God’s grace that Gurus do not get angry or displeased. They are the ocean of kindness.

In *Ramacharitamansa*, Lord Rama’s great devotee, Kaga Bhushundi, a crow, narrates his life story. He says that in his previous life, he was born in a family of low caste. When he got older, he went to the city of Ujjain, and there he met his Guru. He says: I was a Shiva *bhakta*. But I would not accept or tolerate a Vishnu *bhakta*. I was very egoistic in this respect. One day, when I was sitting and chanting “*Om namah Shivaya*,” my Guru arrived. Though I saw him, I closed my eyes and continued chanting, and did not offer *pranam* to my Guru. My Guru was a realized master, so he was free from anger. He did not get angry at me because of my misbehavior because where there is *bodha*, *krodha* cannot remain.

But how Lord Shiva got angry with me because of my disrespect toward my Guru! He appeared and stood ready to strike with His *trishul*. He said, “Your Guru may be calm and loving, but I cannot bear the *adharma* shown by you toward your Guru! May you turn into a python and remain in one place, without moving, like a *tamo-guni*, for all time!”

When his Guru saw Lord Shiva’s anger and heard the curse, he felt so much compassion for his disciple. He prayed to the Lord, requesting him to please grant a boon to curtail the severe punishment, for the disciple was ignorant in such matters. Lord Shiva was pleased to see that the Guru had not a trace of anger. He said the disciple would be a python (*ajgara*) only for 100 births, not forever. And because of Guru’s kindness, the disciple would be able to remember all his births and not feel the pain of each birth. Further, at the end of the curse, the disciple will be born in the home of a *brahmana* family in Ayodhya. In that lifetime, he will become a Shri Rama *bhakta* and become immortal. Such is the greatness of the *Sat-guru*! It cannot be described in words.

People, so blind with ignorance, could not recognize our Pujya Gurudev, who is God personified, and still run here and there. He is just sitting in front of us. . . .



When there is an unethical disciple, the *Sat-guru's* greatness is seen. It is so true that we came to see our saints and sages as great only when they were tortured by the wicked. Their true nature, their divine attributes, manifested when wicked people put them through tough ordeals, without which we would not have understood their patience, wisdom, grace, and kindness.

Even in the life of Bhagavan Adi Shankaracharya, he once said to a worshiper, "If it helps you complete your *yaga*, then I will sit here in *samadhi* and you cut my head off before my other disciples come and stop you from doing so."

Look how unhappy a *jiva* is! Ever in search of lasting happiness, ever unhappy, he struggles in the world and gets sorrows only. But such a *jiva* gains happiness just by someone's words, or a discourse or teachings! Even if people give him money, clothes, business, wealth, he cannot find the same peace in these material things as he can through a Guru's teachings and guidance, which remove his ignorance. And because of this, the *jiva* experiences true happiness.

The *jiva*, having experienced the sorrows of the world, approaches a Guru, and slowly, gradually gains the everlasting happiness through his Guru's teachings. On this pretext, today, I also offer my *shraddhanjali* to all our saints and sages.

Saint Tukaram Maharaj writes that the grace of saints keeps us ever Awake; how can we describe their grace? From my childhood, because of their influence on me, today I am sitting before you. Today is the opportunity for me to sing their glories before you.

Sant Tulasidasji, in his *Vinaya Patrika*, writes: Look at the *jiva*. When in ignorance, he differentiates, cheats, and lies, but he does not realize that he is doing anything wrong or unethical. If someone points it out to him, he says, "So what? This is how it is. Everyone lives this way." He does not understand his wrongdoings because of the influence of the material world. However, by the Lord's Grace, if he comes aware of his wrongdoings and selfish deeds, then his conscience is awake and he wants to get out of such habits. He wants to get rid of all his wrong deeds and wants deliverance from this whirlpool of filth. He has fallen in such a deep ditch, from where it is not even easy to go to a Guru or even recognize a Guru. So he can do only one thing: Pray to God.

Well, God cannot be seen, but he prays anyway. Just as a child in his crib starts crying when he is hungry, even though he cannot see his mother. He does not care; he knows that his crying will make his mother come running to him. Similarly with God/Guru. When we call Him, He will come.

Tulasidasji says, I had done many wrong things but someone said that Shri Rama is *Patita-pavana* (Savior of the fallen). Once I learned there is someone named *Patita-pavana*, all my worries ended. I am *patita* (fallen) and He is *pavana* (pure). So we both will make a nice couple. The pairs of opposites are a must. If there is a bad, there needs to be good too. If one is giver, then the receiver need be there. I have heard that countless sinners, like Ajamila, have been saved by the Lord. So, why not me?

How were they saved? Now, listen to the greatness of chanting the Lord's name. Whether you knowingly or unknowingly chant the Lord's name, you are saved from the furious hell of *samsara* (worldly existence) for sure. You go even beyond the heavens and become one with the Lord. Tulasidasji says, "If Lord Rama has saved all these sinners, then I too am waiting in line for my turn."

Sant Surdasji's *bhajans* are of different kinds. His are with form, the ones that describe the Lord's play. He also has *bhajans* that sing about the glories of the formless Lord. In Tulasidasji's writings, he addressed the Lord as *Patita-pavana*. But Surdasji is more severe in his prayers to the Lord. He says, "*Mo sama kauna kutila khala kaami*," meaning, who could be more vicious and evil than me! I am *kaami*, ever desirous of material wealth, and *kutila* (a cheat)!

Generally, when we see wrongs in others, we make much ado about it. We may add some extra lines to

make it sound more than it actually is. We always find more faults in others than ourselves. But a saint sees faults only in himself. A saint will forgive the faults of others, whereas a non-saint will give punishment for the wrongs done by someone. A non-saint will be lenient toward his own faults, but will not fail to punish others for their faults.

A *sadhu* will guide a *sadhak* on how to live the right way. We are *sadhaks* when we are aware of our faults that come in the way of our spiritual growth, when we learn to understand our own faults and try to correct them.

We are gifted with such a beautiful body to go and do good work in our life, to serve others so we may grow spiritually. With this human body what all can we achieve! Alas, how ungrateful we are. We have forgotten Who gave us this body. “*Jin tan diyo taahi bisirayo, aiso namak harami.*” Surdasji uses very strong words in this composition. He says we deceive the One who fed us. The Lord gave us this body to use for service to others and we use it mainly for our selfish wants. When we are in trouble, we blame God and say that He has forgotten us.

At one place, a man met with an accident with his scooter. He injured his foot and was unable to sit or walk comfortably. He said, “Swamiji, what wrong did I do? What sin did I commit to suffer like this?” I asked him, “What good did you do that you survived?” For a moment, that person was shocked. But he was a man with good heart, and he said, “Yes, you said rightly.”

We have to be grateful for what we have. We forget that Lord who has given us everything. The greatest sin is to forget the Lord who has gifted us with this human body: “*Jin tan diyo, taahi bisiraayo.*” This is the nature of a *kaami*, a person running after material wealth. Surdasji goes on to say that a *kaami* is one who runs after the filth of material wealth like a pig [runs after filth]! We may have anger and hurt pride when we hear someone say we run after objects of the world like a pig, [but it is thought-provoking statement].

Surdasji further says, leaving Lord Hari’s devotees, we serve instead those who have forgotten the Lord. Someone came for *satsang* for four days, but not the fifth. When asked why, he said his friend took him for a movie. I asked why he didn’t bring his friend. He replied that his friend doesn’t like *satsang*. If I spoke ill about movie-going, he would get angry, but he did not mind hearing or speaking ill of *satsang*. Actually, speaking ill of *satsang* is like speaking ill of a saint. He did not want to displease or anger his friend by saying no for the movie, but he did not mind if his friend spoke ill about *satsang*. Like this, we leave the devotees of the Lord and run after those who speak ill of God.

Surdasji says he is the biggest of all sinners and that there is no place in the world for God and sinner. No one wants to go near a sinner, and everyone runs away from the name of God. Crying and miserable, the *sadhak* roams here and there, not understanding where or which way to go. The nature of our true Self is Bliss, yet we are unhappy, wandering here and there seeking worldly objects.

*Sadhaks* have heard Sant Kabirdasji’s composition that says, “*Paani men meen pyaasi*”—a fish thirsty in water. Like this, he says, man searches for happiness though his very nature is Bliss. Because without Guru, there is no *jnana* (knowledge). “*Chelaa nis din phirata udaasi*”: The disciple [thus] wanders sorrowfully. You may study and earn many degrees; you may visit many holy places; but if you have no knowledge of your *Atma-svarupa*, then what good is it? You would still be roaming in search of happiness. Kabirdasji advises, “Listen, brother. It is very easy to meet the Lord.” Because He is the Self in you! If you receive this teaching from your Guru, there is nothing left but *Ananda* alone. Hearing this, a *sadhak*’s desire to meet a Guru increases.

Without meeting a Guru, without having the yearning to meet a Guru, there will be no deliverance from the sorrows of the world. Without a Guru, there cannot be knowledge of the Truth; the thirst and search for happiness will not end. One may ask how to search for a Guru. The Lord makes it possible. He will bring the Guru to you. It is said that marriages are made in heaven, so also, thunder and lightning. The Guru and *shishya* relation is also already destined, but it is very different from the

relationship of marriage. When you meet your Guru, you know it yourself that He alone is my Guru, and you are filled with Joy. Having His *darshan*, our sins are washed off and there is no sorrow left in our hearts. Brahmanand Swami has written beautiful verses—“*Aaja sakhii sad-guru ghara aaye. Mere mana aananda bhayo re.*” I pay *shraddhanjali* to them with my heart.

When we listen to the *Sat-guru*’s words, the *tamas* in us gets destroyed. Our doubts of many births get resolved. Through his teachings we gain bliss. Sant Jnaneshwar says, “*Samaadhi saadhan sanjivani naam shanti daya tama sarva bhooti*”—the *Sat-guru* gives us the *sadhana* for *samadhi*, and that is the name of the Lord. He also gives the teaching of peace, compassion, and equal-mindedness for all beings.

Sant Jnaneshwar says his Guru, Sant Nivrittinath Maharaj, gave them the teachings of the greatness of *Hari-nama*, as well as *sama*, *dama*, and *vijnana*. He says his Guru cleansed their *ajnana* in such a way that it dare not come back again!

In his compositions, Sant Jnaneshwar says once the mind is absorbed in chanting the name of the Lord, the Light of *jnana* will shine forth. You will develop love for God. And when you have love for God in your heart, then what does the world matter? Whether people praise you or abuse you, whether they make you happy or create sorrow for you, His love in your heart will protect you from all pains. “*Koi vando, koi nindo, koi kaise kaho re. Raghunaatha saathe preeti baandhi, hoya taise hoye re.*” Now I am attached to God; let whatever happen. Whatever has to happen, will happen. Like this, a *sadhak* becomes fearless.

How fearful we are of people saying “Oh! You have started going to the temple from now only! You are going to Satsang from now only!”

In one *satsang*, someone came to meet me and said, “Swamiji, I want to take *sannyas*. But I am thinking, what will people say?” I said to him, “You have not taken *sannyas* yet. Are people quiet now?” Even now, people will talk and ask why you are not taking *sannyasa*. Whether you take or not, they will always talk. Why bother about them? Lord Raghunath is with us. He will take care of all our problems. “*Chandra surya jimi jyoti stambha binu aakaasha re*”: The Lord holds the sky without any support, makes stones float in the water. Then, “*kyon na tare daas re*”? Then, why will He not save His devotee?

By chanting the name of God, you experience *saguna Bhagavan*. Once the mind becomes pure, praise and abuse do not affect the *sadhak* and he grows on the spiritual path. Sant Kabirdasji writes, let us go back to our own Self, the land of Immortality, from where we have come. What is that Self, our *svarup*? It is neither water nor air, earth nor space, moon nor sun, night nor day, Adi Shakti nor Shri Ganesha [any name or form]. It is neither Brahma nor Vishnu, nor Mahesh. Neither *brahmana*, *vaishya*, *kshatriya*, *shudra*, *Mughal*, *Pathan*. Neither has it a beginning or end, for beyond time it is. Kabirdasji gave us this message in these few words: “*Chalo vaha desavaa*” and this is the nature of the Self, our *nirguna-svarupa*.

The *jiva*, having done *sadhana*, gains knowledge of the Self (*nirguna jnana*) or vision of his *sakshat svarupa*, which is *ananta Paramatma*. His merging in *Ananta* (the Infinite) is *Atmanubhuti*, the experience of the Self as the Self.

Samartha Ramdas Swami writes that he, “went to see the end of *Ananta* and he forgot his own self.” He says, “When I see my Self, I see Bhagavan on both the sides. Here or there, He alone is. Thereafter, to say, “I am,” is difficult for me. That “I” became a burden. I went on to realize that I have become *Raamii*, or Lord Rama’s *dasi* (servant), and thus have become free from all bondages and merges into the One alone. Now I do not desire *moksha* or *mukti*. *Moksha* from what?

# REFLECTIONS

## CHYK West Cam-Tra-Con 2012: Perspectives from CHYKs of CM San Jose

by Vandana Nallamothu, Jaya Prasad, Dhruva Chandrasekhar, Sid Kaw

Growing up in northern California has been unique when it comes to the Chinmaya Bala Vihar and Chinmaya Yuva Kendra (CHYK) experience. To be clear, this is not in reference to participating in classes on Sundays or going to the occasional camp. Instead, we are always reminded that Pujya Gurudev's gateway to the West was through the San Francisco Bay Area. Soon after coming to San Francisco, he established the *Krishnalaya* ashram in Piercy, a three-hour drive north. It is the headquarters of Chinmaya Mission West and the only Chinmaya Mission retreat center in North America to date.

When the Mission grew substantially in the late 1980s, Pujya Gurudev blessed CM San Jose and the Bay Area with a new *acharya*, our beloved Pujya Gururji Swami Tejomayananda. And when Pujya Gurudev attained *mahasamadhi* in San Diego, it was Pujya Gururji who became the Head of Chinmaya Mission worldwide.

During the late 1980s and 90s, we were only Bala Vihar children, yet we were so enriched in our formative years. Many of us met Pujya Gurudev, grew up with Pujya Gururji, and experienced *Krishnalaya*. After several years of effort from a few individuals, a push from Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara), and the first successful California CHYK Camp in 2011, CHYK became vitalized in the Bay Area.

The CHYK phenomenon has started manifesting in many other CMW centers over the past several years. In light of the growing needs of CHYK West, the North American wing of Chinmaya Yuva Kendra, Pujya Gururji granted a week of his time at *Krishnalaya* to properly train CHYK coordinators from all across North America. This CHYK West Cam-Tra-Con (Camp-Training-Conference) was held June 12-17, 2012.

**You, Mission, and Gurudev:** Our foundation for the training conference was given by Pujya Gururji in his discourses on "You, Mission, and Gurudev." This theme was also seen as a clever metaphor for *jiva*, *jagat*, and *Ishvara*, reminding each and every CHYK of the importance of introspection and the Source of all, Pujya Gurudev.

**Sacred *Krishnalaya*:** Most of the attending CHYKs were visiting the sacred ashram of *Krishnalaya* for the very first time. We could all tangibly feel how Pujya Gurudev's presence still resonates—from the echoes of his booming voice to the dynamic energy he infuses to continue to inspire in his students. Nestled in the redwood groves of northern California, the ashram glows with spiritual life and energy. To be in *Krishnalaya*, unplugged from technology, and away from the hustle and bustle of ordinary life, is a refreshing change of pace, to say the least. One favorite pastime was stargazing in Piercy's crystal clear skies. One CHYK commented, "I am reminded of how tiny our existence really is; it is truly humbling and awe-inspiring."

**Pujya Gururji:** We were blessed to be in the presence of Pujya Gururji. For Pujya Gururji to create time in his incredibly busy schedule to lead the Cam-Tra-Con for five days was for him to throw his full support behind the CHYK West movement. And we all drew on his energy. As he spoke of leadership, he called upon the Vedantic principles of successful leaders. CHYKs offered *bhiksha* to Pujya Gururji throughout the camp and sat with him for some personal time after each *bhiksha*. One CHYK said, "It was just such an intimate setting. He openly discussed career satisfaction, families, interracial relationships, and any questions we peppered him with."

Of course, Pujya Gururji's indomitable humor prevailed throughout the camp. We were so drawn to his presence that many of us skipped the popular bonfire activity to be with him instead.

In summarizing Cam-Tra-Con, Pujya Guruji gave us the Six A-s to practice:

**Aspiration:** To have energy and zeal, to strive for higher and higher goals and lead to the Ultimate

**Aptitude:** To introspect and be aware of one's potential and talents

**Ability:** To put effort in the right direction; "you make yourself available; then God will make you able"

**Attitude:** To have vision, purpose, the right means, and firm determination to reach the Highest

**Accountability:** *Alasyam hi mahashatru*; to never be lazy; to "use it or lose it"

**Altar of Worship:** To always act in the spirit of self-surrender to God/Guru; to offer oneself, and therefore one's all, to the Lord

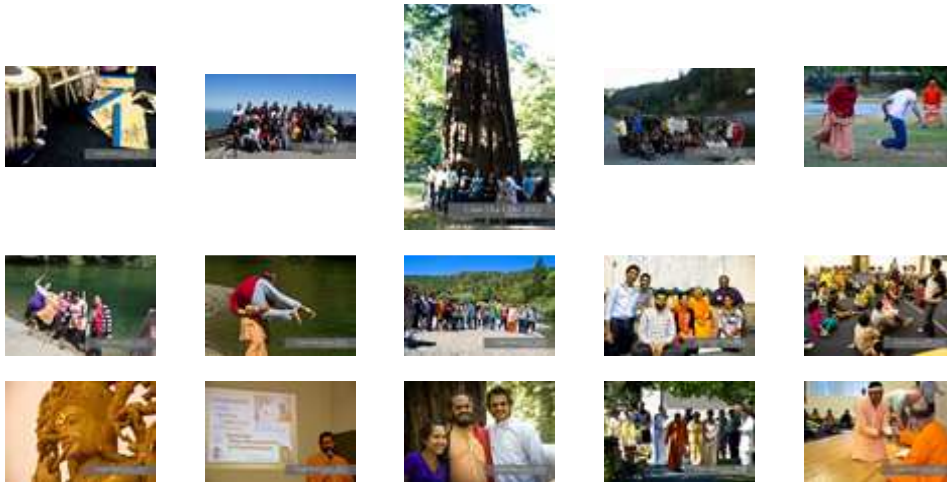
**Training:** Along with Pujya Guruji, we actively engaged with Swami Mitrananda (CM Chennai), Swami Sarveshananda (CM Dallas), Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara), Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya (CM San Jose), Acharya Sharada Kumar (CM Ann Arbor), and Brahmacharini Arpita (CM St. Augustine).

The training workshops were conducted by the *acharyas* and ranged from "Qualities of an Inspiring Leader" to "Managing Time and Priorities" to "CHYK in University," to name a few. As National and Deputy Directors of CHYK West, Swami Sarveshananda and Vivekji, respectively, shared their working experiences with the CHYK West Steering Committee and offered guidance as mentors. Swami Mitrananda, Director of All-India CHYK, is a truly dynamic orator and teacher. When he spoke, we were in complete attention. Looking back on our training experience, the true beauty was not that we sat, listened, and took notes. To the contrary, it was how we engaged, shared, thought, agreed, and even agreed to disagree.

**Conference:** Inspiration was the "currency" of the camp, as people traded innovative ideas and encouragement over every meal and during every activity. We traded tips and tools on developing local CHYK groups, and received advice from fellow CHYKs hailing from nearby Chicago and Houston, to across the pond in the UK, to name just a few centers being represented. Every CHYK and center had different input on what does and does not work, providing for invaluable perspectives.

We discussed the importance of our generation working with local CM centers, and explored many ways to do so. The Sanskrit term *satsanga* means "good company." Well, five days with committed and passionate CHYK leaders from across the country meant that we had great company! We talked about leaders being those that inspire others, but here we had the unique dynamism that arises from leaders inspiring other leaders. One CHYK remarked, "The sheer dynamism, passion, and energy were tangible throughout the whole camp."

**Moving Forward:** Entering the camp, nine individuals represented CM San Jose. Leaving the camp, a community of more than 50 CHYKs were united in their experience and vision for the future of CHYK West. Attending Cam-Tra-Con undoubtedly reignited the passion that each of us already harbored for Pujya Gurudev, Pujya Guruji, the Mission, and one another, and provided us with the most current strategies and teachings to spread that passion to others. As youth, it is our responsibility to carry forth the visions of our leaders into the future, and the energy that arose from this group of driven individuals gave us the purpose and reason to do so. Not only did we generate concrete ideas for Mission fundraisers, CHYK marketing, university outreach, and more, but we were connected with the resources to carry out and assist each other in these efforts. Furthermore, as we learned during our time here that it is just as important for leaders to lead through daily example, as it is for them to coordinate and organize. With our renewed strategies for living a pure life, we can continue to shape ourselves, and in the process, hopefully help others do so as well.



### The Principle and Practice of Meditation

*Notes from Study Group discussions during the Meditation Camp conducted by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda at Piercy in June 2012; transcription by Deepa Rai; contributions by David Brown, Lynne Matous, Ben Passarelli*

The goal is lofty—to learn to live in meditation 24/7/365. This camp is a most blessed opportunity to study under the tutelage of Pujya Guruji. Here, we can get away from the daily hustle-bustle to spend time on introspection and self-improvement, learn about meditation, have discussions with like-minded individuals, and recharge our spiritual batteries.

For many of us, *shravanam* (listening) and *mananam* (reflection) may be do-able, but *nidhidhyasanam* (extensive contemplation) is challenging. Our Study Group *acharya*, Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya (CM San Jose) reminded us: “While here, remember your objective, and put all of your efforts in that direction. We all have done *shravanam* and *mananam* in our daily living, but to practice *nidhidhyasanam*, you need solitude. Make use of this quiet time while you are here. This is indeed the best ‘parking lot’ you will have for the practice of meditation. You can cut yourself off completely from communication and focus on self-growth, self-reflection, and your objective. Spend time wisely in contemplation and meditation.”

Prabodhji summarized Pujya Guruji’s teachings on the purpose and practice of meditation. To quiet the mind so that we have fewer distractions, build concentration and alertness to focus on the primary objective of experiencing the Self. To eliminate likes and dislikes, achieve purity of mind by removing erroneous notions about the world of objects, so that we see God in all and love all uniformly). *Vairagya* (dispassion) is needed to enable transformation of the mind and intellect. Sow the seeds with extensive practice to abide in the Self.

The essence of the meditator is like the clay pot that does not realize its own essence is clay. We need to discard what we are not and assert what we are. *Upasana* (worship), *japa* (repeating the Lord’s name), and *karma yoga* (selfless service) are all aids to help us in meditation. *Upasana* and *jnana* are distinct. The words *sat*, *chit*, *ananda* should not be viewed as attributes of *Atman*, which is indescribable. We can use these words only as indicators and we should go through the process of using these words to eliminate all ideas that are not real. The natural consequence of following scriptural injunctions and *sadhana* is that it allows the individual to realize the Self-evident. It just happens. One’s *svarupa* (essential nature) becomes self-evident. Similar to the sun when covered by clouds, the *Atman* is ever present; but is unknown because of lack of right attention. The Self-realized person lives in the world not as a *jiva*, but as *Brahma-svarupa*, fulfilled as the Self. Such a one does not get caught

up in any conditioned identity, and is not affected by the ups and downs of the changing world.

Prabodhji elucidated that if a person is happy on his own, we leave him alone as a bachelor. But over the years, if we see he is unhappy, we tell him to get married and focus on that one person. In a healthy relationship, he will grow in independence, and learn the difference between aloneness and loneliness. When he sees that he can be happy alone also, he starts lessening his dependence on the things and beings of the world. What he needed 20 years ago is not what he needs today. In the same way, if we are not ready for meditation and solitude, then the scriptures first provide us with instructions for dynamic action, as Arjuna received in *Bhagavad Gita*. If we follow these instructions, we become ready for meditation.

Meditation appears to be an activity, but it really is not. Because of our tendency to be active and engage in action, the scriptures provide injunctions for activity, but only those that eventually lead to an inner state of inactivity, or non-doer-ship and non-enjoyer-ship. The injunctions are meant to quiet the mind for natural withdrawal from body and sense identification. Pujya Gurudev said withdrawing the mind's attention from the world of objects, emotions, and thoughts, and turning one's attention to the Self, is the attempt at meditation. Realization of the Self takes place when the mind is sufficiently quiet. Meditation in its absolute sense is not practiced, for it is a state of being. Applied practices quiet the mind to allow meditation to, as if, "happen."

On the seat of meditation, thoughts may come and go, but do not give importance to them. Simply witness them as one would a military parade. Invoke God's/Guru's grace and surrender all identifications. Sit for meditation as a *sannyasi*, not as a manager, worker, mother, father, doctor, or any other identity. When one sits as a spiritual seeker, the thoughts that assert will be spiritual, making it easier to turn attention to the Self.

When the mind is restless, the body is restless, so start with controlling the body and identification with it. Sitting still is a major achievement. Observe the breath. When the mind is restless, the *prana* (breath energy) is also restless. When the mind wanders to some thought or physical distraction, just be a witness. Do not suppress or react; just be aware. When the mind is deprived of the food of thoughts, it will become quieter. Mind the mind, for its likes and dislikes lead to thought-identifications. Don't get lost thoughts. Let the thoughts get lost in you.

Having quieted the mind, shifting its attention to pure Consciousness is the most challenging aspect of the practice of meditation, because the mind is so in love with (attached to) objects. Therefore, developing *vairagya* (dispassion) is critical to sustaining the witness state, or *sakshi bhava*.

Obstacles on the seat of meditation come from external and internal distractions. *Laya* (sleep) comes because of various reasons, external and internal. Lack of energy (food, rest, etc.), habits, past impressions of countless lives—all have an impact. A quiet mind has a tendency or habit to fall asleep; the power of discrimination to talk the mind out of sleeping is needed. Holding the breath for a long time can also be used to wake up the mind.

*Vikshepa* (restlessness, agitation) of the mind arises when certain thoughts are given undue importance, due to *vasanas* (past impressions). To correct this, one needs to develop alertness to recognize the mind's wanderings, and the vigilance to detach and bring it back to quietude.

*Vikshep Kashayam* refers to undigested or suppressed thoughts. We build impressions or *vasanas* through our actions by thought, word, and deed. Impressions in the subconscious sometimes surface during the practice of meditation. Instead of reacting to them, one should just be aware of them and let them go.

*Rasa-svada* is the sense of peace or joy that can arise in meditation, and identifying with it creates the sense of enjoyer-ship. So long as there is duality of an enjoyer and enjoyed, the state of meditation has not been reached. Objectifying peace or the feeling of joy makes it other than you, the subject, and

keeps you away from the state of Oneness, of pure Consciousness. The Self is Peace itself, in which there is no duality of subject (you) or object, no thought, and not even a need to assert or say, “I am *sat-chit-ananda*.”

In one’s practices, one must “hasten slowly,” as Pujya Gurudev says. To hasten is to live an inspired, enthusiastic life of longing to know the Truth. To go slowly is to be patient and careful, in complete surrender to the Guru, without getting excited.

The disciplines of *yama* and *niyama* are for the spiritual seeker’s disciplines for oneself and in interactions with the world, respectively. Imbalances in sleep, food, work, habits, likes, dislikes, etc. create obstacles in the practice of meditation. The *abhyasa* or practice of constant alertness vigilance is important.

The meditator is not the body, senses, *prana*, or pure Consciousness. The meditator is the *jiva* identified with, and therefore limited by, the *upadhis* or conditionings. The *jiva*’s limitations of fear, anger, anxiety, etc. lead him to seek something more permanent.

The Self-realized master is one in whom the darkness of ignorance has been dispelled. He is the *jivan-mukta* (liberated while living in the body). The happiness most people experience is from a fraction of purity in the mind. Imagine the state of those who live in, and act from, a completely pure mind; their state is indescribable.

Pujya Gururji referred to one’s life being a “Discovery Channel,” wherein everything one does matters in the success of Self-discovery, including how one eats and sleeps. Meditation gives the correct vision for right thinking and alert living. Right thinking is the vision of a realized master, as expounded in *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 6. The exalted man of wisdom who has mastered his mind is one who sees all things and beings as his own Self.

There are many types of people. The *suhrt*, or “well-wisher” helps others with no expectations. The *mitra* is the lifelong friend who helps in pain, joy, tragedy, comedy. An *ari* can be a friend one moment but an enemy the next. The one who is *udasina* is indifferent or neutral. The *madhyastha* is the mediator or moderator. One who has *dveshya* is one who dislikes for no particular reason. The *sadhu* is the person of goodness and nobility. The *papi* is the one who is bad with all.

Prabodhji summarized that wise seekers learn to disentangle themselves from the world’s conditionings and distractions. This may require conscious effort in the beginning, but gradually it comes naturally. Even *sadhus* and sincere seekers have to evaluate themselves on a regular basis. Depending on one’s situations in life, everyone can start with whatever little they can do, so that in future years there is no regret of what they could have done. Waiting for everything (time, place, environment, mindset) to be perfect to start one’s spiritual practices is almost like waiting forever, for such perfectly conducive elements are not the norm. Therefore, every seeker should start now, even if only in small ways.

*The following is a transcription of the Q&A session with Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya.*

**In times of trouble, it is hard to meditate.**

At such times, surrender to the Guru. Pray to see the Lord’s grace and pray to feel His presence. Practice *vairagya* so that you gradually see the insignificance of difficulties. When you remember your Guru during these difficult times, you are actually invoking His grace to help you remember His teachings when you need them the most.

**I sometimes wish my Guru were here to help me with difficult dilemmas. In such times I ask, “What would my Guru do?” and then do that. Am I superimposing my ideas on my Guru?**

If you have truly listened clearly and imbibed your Guru’s teachings, these teachings would have become part of your thinking and so, His teachings would be coming through you. Surrender all right, wrong, good, bad to the Guru. Another measure to see if your decisions are God-centered or Guru-centered would be to ask yourself, “Am I letting go and allowing even those decisions that are not



always convenient to me?”

**If meditation is so easy or simple, why aren't there more enlightened people?**

[Meditation is being. Being is simple; it is our nature. To stop becoming is what is difficult for us.] It is possible to experience glimpses of the state of Awareness, but it is not sustained because of insufficient *jnana* or *vairagya*. Developing the latter takes time and consistent effort with a burning desire to know Truth.

Pujya Guruji said the practice of meditation is difficult, but we should not give up. We will not be successful as long as our identification with the *jiva* is intense and disturbances outside the seat of meditation overwhelm us. The practice of detachment outside the seat of meditation is vital. Watch and avoid likes and dislikes. Past impressions are strong and it may be a long struggle and a lot of self-evaluation to help us drop or reduce our likes and dislikes, to gain purity of mind. Without detachment, we will still hang on to our old identity.

**Why are we being instructed not to enjoy the rare moments of bliss in meditation? We have given up so many pleasures already, why can't we enjoy this one pleasure?**

It is okay to enjoy the bliss, but there needs to be an understanding that even this joy of bliss will pass and therefore one should not become dependent on it. Ultimately, enlightenment is a state of being, but by attaching to feelings of joy and peace, one objectifies this awareness; there is a separation between the enjoyer and the enjoyed. So yes, do enjoy the bliss of meditation, but do not stop there.

**What is the difference between *kashayam* (disturbances) and *vikshepa* (agitations)?**

*Vikshepa* is more superficial; *kashayam* is deep-rooted. *Vikshepa* disturbances are challenging, but not as challenging as *kashayam*. *Vikshepa* are distractions—external, such as noise, heat, etc. and internal, such as preoccupation with some issue at work or home. *Kashayam* are deep-rooted and can come as random, unexpected thoughts. Such thoughts may be shocking to us, and at times, quite disheartening, for they are based on our past lives and leftover impressions from past interactions. *Kashayam* are distractions that more bothersome and distressful than *vikshepa*. The instruction is to just ignore them and be a witness; to chant the Lord's name when these thoughts arise. Without reacting, surrender such thoughts to the Lord and continue the practice of meditation with *sattvik shraddha*.

**What is *sattvik shraddha*?**

It is faith based on scriptural proclamations. With knowledge, *vasanas* get burned so that they become only roasted seeds. We should acknowledge that we will continue to have limitations and setbacks, but they should not dampen our spirit to move forward. We need to keep up the practices; the transformation is slow, but sure. We should evaluate ourselves using smaller yardsticks. Are we more proficient than we were three years ago? Know that our journey is a work in progress. It is frustrating when we think we are not making any headway or that there appear to be too many instructions, but don't be in a hurry. Slow, but sure. Hasten slowly.

**What are levels of abidance?**

Actually, our focus should be on the goal of first receiving the knowledge of Truth. *Yoga Vasishtha* talks about levels of abidance, which depend on one's four-fold qualities of *yama* (internal discipline), *niyama* (external discipline), *shraddha* (spiritual faith), and *mumukshutvam* (intense desire for liberation). Abidance increases as these four-fold qualifications increase and impurities are removed. We should focus on our own spiritual unfoldment, and not on the unfoldment or levels of abidance of others.

**Absence and Presence**  
by Chetana Neerchal

Praying for  
relief  
from  
afflictions  
of  
body and  
mind.

Would I ever  
think of you  
my friend,  
in their  
absence?

Seeking  
peace,  
seeking  
faith,

even in  
their  
presence.

seeking  
acceptance,  
seeking  
gratitude,

for  
their presence.

**Glory of Chinmaya Bala Vihar**  
by Neha Rajan (grade 9)

When a community has been built up as strong as a diamond, principled by Vedantic teachings and inner connections to succumb to any force, there is little that can break it down. Chinmaya Bala Vihar in our New Jersey community has been carefully crafted in the same way. Natural ebbs and flows link and anchor each student to his peers and teachers in lasting friendships and sublime reverence.

I have found it humbling to watch Chinmaya Bala Vihar students grow into young intellectuals and humanitarians with the bright eyes looking into a glowing future. Now, with a chance to offer *seva* as an assistant teacher in Chinmaya Bala Vihar, I feel great pride and joy in seeing our students full of so much enthusiasm, kindness, and willingness to learn throughout the year.

The subject matter for the year being “Hindu Culture,” my co-teacher and I created holistic activities to allow students to experience culture outside the classroom in addition to studying it. The activities included two field trips, traditional performances, and even movie night with our resident *acharya*, Swami Shantananda-ji. The first trip was to our beloved *Chinmaya Vrindavan* ashram in Cranbury, where the students performed a Vedic *puja* to Lord Ganesha. This noteworthy experience gave a new perspective on worship, one of the most fundamental cornerstones of Hinduism, as they learned how to perform a traditional *puja* and what the significance of each offering is.

The second field trip to an assisted-living community for seniors taught the glory of *seva* and how to put values learned into action. We realized the power of singular and collective efforts, and how much power they have in making a measurable difference. We were welcomed generously into the facility and the students specialized in different activities, such as coordinating a game of Bingo, playing musical instruments, or simply spending time with the seniors. For many of the students, this was one of their first *seva* opportunities. It was heartwarming to see how much joy was in the air and that such trips could inspire a legacy of humanitarianism in our lives.

I look back on my first year of teaching in Chinmaya Bala Vihar with much fondness. I was blessed to be with an amazingly animated senior teacher in room full of eager minds.

## The Heavens Celebrate Pujya Guruji's Birthday with a Sound and Light Extravaganza

by Brahmacharini Arpita

I have been very fortunate to be with Pujya Guruji many times over the years to celebrate his birthday with other Chinmaya Mission members. However, this past June 30th in Virginia was, for me, the most amazing and wonderful to behold. Who would have guessed that the Lord would use a fantastic electrical storm to give Pujya Gurudev's beloved and devoted son such a fittingly magnificent surprise birthday celebration!

A small number of devotees had gathered on the night of June 29 at Acharya Anant Sarma's residence, where Pujya Guruji was staying during the Virginia *yajna*. Dark clouds began to fill the sky and rumble with thunder while Guruji ate dinner with several guests. Strangely, the lights flickered off and on several times. Then, just as Guruji finished dinner, the electricity went out not only in the house, but in the entire city and beyond—it was a complete blackout.

The hosts and devotees hurriedly got out flashlights and placed dozens of lit candles around the room. With heavy rains, high winds, and traffic lights out of order, none of the guests could leave the house. Guruji kindly remained sitting and talking with everyone in the living room while the candles glowed softly in the mysterious darkness. Powerful cracks of thunder and lightning repeatedly flashed overhead, illumining earth and sky as bright as day. Uncanny how similar it was to the description of Nature at the time of Bhagavan Krishna's birth; it was an amazing sight.

Though the hour got later and later, Guruji wouldn't retire for the night until the guests could leave safely. So, around 11:15 p.m., he sat on the floor with us and called for the harmonium, saying, "Let us chant the name of the Lord." We were thrilled!

We encircled Guruji in the candlelit room like excited children listening to some wonderful secret. Our hearts were uplifted with the beautiful *bhajans* he sang. Then, one after another, he requested other devotees to lead devotional songs as well. We wondered if we would be lucky enough to be with Guruji at midnight for his birthday; I am sure it was a silent wish in each one's heart.

Sri Gopalakrishnan, one of the local center's main organizers, was keeping close watch on the exact time and excitedly began his *bhajan* at two minutes before 12 o'clock. Then, on the stroke of midnight, he burst out with "*Janma dinam idam!*" At the same time, to our great surprise, Dr. Potaraju suddenly pulled a beautiful, fresh flower garland out of a bag and lovingly placed it around Guruji's neck. The garland had been meant for the following day's public program, but for some unknown reason, Dr. Potaraju had felt compelled to bring it with him that night. All the devotees joyously sang the birthday song for Guruji, with hearts bursting of love and gratitude for the incredible gift of his divine presence in our lives and on this auspicious occasion.

Perhaps because we ourselves could never have orchestrated such a grand celebration for Guruji, the Lord and Pujya Gurudev took over that night in an extraordinary way to honor him with Heaven's own incomparable sound and light extravaganza—with dozens of candles, no less.

Finally, after several more songs, the rain had subsided enough for the guests to be able to depart. As Guruji got up to wish everyone a goodnight, and devotees offered their loving *pranams* to him, we thought there could be nothing more to make the occasion more sacred. But then, it suddenly occurred to us that Guruji was spontaneously standing in the posture of Pandharpur's Lord Vitthala, with his upper palms resting on his hips. Another divine coincidence? In fact, someone said that Guruji's birthday this year happened to be on *Vitthala Ekadashi*, which marks the culmination of the sacred, 15-day foot pilgrimage known as "*Pandharpur Wari*," wherein devotees dance in ecstatic procession from Sant Jnanadev's *samadhi* in Alandi all the way to Lord Vitthala's temple in Pandharpur.

We could hardly wait to sing Lord Vitthala *bhajans* for Guruji, which we did the next morning, with Guruji taking over the lead himself toward the end and letting another devotee finish it with a

triumphant flourish. And behold! Just then, Uma Bhatnagar, who had just arrived from California, stepped forward to garland Guruji with a stunningly beautiful mala of white carnations, interwoven with a sash of glittering letters that proclaimed, “Happy Birthday, Guruji!”

It had been a perfect night that began a perfect day, a most blessed experience for everyone present. With Pujya Guruji, even an occasion meant for his sake and honor he manages to turn around for other people’s greater joy and blessings. Such is the nature of Divinity and of a true Mahatma. With loving *pranams* at Pujya Guruji’s holy feet . . .



## FEATURES

**Meditation: A Universal Cure for Every Epidemic**

Q & A with Swami Brahmananda by Prarthna Saran



*Pujya Swami Brahmananda is one of the most prominent and senior direct disciples of Pujya Gurudev. He is Chinmaya Mission’s Regional Head of Karnataka, India, and resides at the CM Bangalore ashram. Swamiji is renowned in India for his Vedanta discourses, and renowned worldwide for his audio recordings of Sanskrit chants (Bhagavad Gita, stotrams, Vedic hymns) and Sanskrit, Kannada, and Hindi bhajans (CDs available through [Chinmaya Publications](#)).*

**Q:** Swamiji, meditation is now being taught as a part of curriculum at many universities in the East and West. It is considered as a de-stressing tool by management gurus the world over. Spiritual masters say the state of meditation, or Being, is the pinnacle of spiritual evolution. How far do you think the practice of meditation can help those who have had no other spiritual warm-ups?

**A:** Meditation is a technique adopted by our *rishis* to quiet the mind. Whether you are an ordinary student or a spiritual seeker, sit down in a place and try to quiet the mind. The benefit is immeasurable. Bhagavan Krishna says in *Gita* Ch. 2, “*Svalpamapyasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayat,*” meaning, a little effort put forth in this direction will give you immense peace. So, there is no question whether anyone can try these meditation techniques.

**Q:** It is said that the *Brahma-muhurta* (early morning, 3-6 a.m.) is the best time suited to meditation. Do you think that one can sit for meditation even at night when one is not rushed for time?

**A:** The Lord is freely available 24 hours. You can meditate anytime. But are you ready? Can you sit down for one hour without going to sleep? Without thinking of your office work? When the mind is ready for meditation sit down and meditate.

**Q:** *Vastu Shastra* gives certain guidelines on where and how to situate the *Deva-grha* (*puja* or worship room) in one's home. Where do you think it should be ideally situated?

**A:** According to *Vastu Shastra*, the *Deva-grha* should be the northeast section. Usually, all the altar deities should be facing west, so that the worshiper is always facing east when he sits for worship.

**Q:** Does food have a direct or indirect bearing on a seeker's thoughts and spiritual aspirations?

**A:** Yes, the food you partake has tremendous effect on your thinking pattern. Therefore, seekers are advised to eat *sattvik* food.

**Q:** Some people chant various mantras to multiple deities before meditating. Is this right? Or should one focus the mind and mantras only on one's *Ishta-deva* from the start?

**A:** Before marriage, some boys have many girlfriends. After marriage, they live with one spouse only.

**Q:** Some seekers experience a light or steady flame in the center of their brow when they steady their mind. Why does this happen? Does it indicate a state of steadfastness or purity?

**A:** Anything you see or hear on the seat of meditation has nothing to do with the purity of the mind. Any object you see or remember is all the play of your own mind. To see any object, you need not close your eyes and sit for meditation. Don't give serious thought when you see any such object on your seat of meditation.

Some people keep their *Ishta-devata's* form in their mind at the time of meditation. This is okay; as a beginner you need one form or the other to tie down the mind. Pujya Gurudev used to say that in a pole vault, the one who wants to jump higher takes the help of the pole, but when he crosses the high bar, he has to drop the pole completely.

**Q:** Seekers who try to focus or turn their mind inward sometimes feel dizzy or get a headache. Others experience a strong pull to the centre of the forehead. What do these symptoms indicate?

**A:** On the seat of meditation, one should totally relax. If you feel dizzy or a strong pull at the centre of the forehead, it means you are not relaxed. Blood circulation should continue from top to toe.

**Q:** Some seekers who turn inward in deep concentration experience incessant waves of energy rising from the base of the spine to the head. The movement is serpentine or like electrical waves, and cannot be controlled at will. When they cease, they leave the mind very quiet and meditative. Is this what is described as *kundalini shakti*? What is the effect of its rise in a spiritual seeker?

**A:** As a sincere seeker, when you sit and meditate regularly, naturally your energy level will rise. At this juncture, you should be very, very careful. You should not waste your energy by cursing others or encashing it for petty gains. The quieter the mind, the higher the energy rises. You will experience a higher peace as this happens.

**Q:** Swamiji, one gathers from your talks that it is primary and imperative for a practitioner of meditation to live a truthful and ethical life so that the mind does not get splintered and unfocused. What are some ways to quiet the mind?

**A:** Only by conscious living, and keeping a continuous watch over the mind, can one quiet the mind. For details, please read Pujya Gurudev's book, *Meditation & Life*.

**Have You Met . . . Swami Dheerananda?**  
*by Anonymous*



**What inspired you to dedicate your life to this work?**

I love this question because it rejuvenates my joyous memories of my Master, Shri Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda-ji. It is divine Consciousness—*Chinmaya*—that attracted me, and keeps inspiring my life and work.

I am what I am because of my Guru, and whatever work I do is a joyous offering to Him. May His divine grace and blessings flow through us to the world around us.

**How did you first meet Pujya Gurudev?**

The Guru comes to you. Shri Gurudev came to our home in the year 1968. From the first time, I saw Him as God, because my parents instilled the strong belief in me that God is coming to our home. As a child, I strongly believed that Gurudev was indeed God. After listening to Shri Gurudev, my belief got reinforced with the understanding that one who is devoid of PFT—the ego—is that divine Consciousness, *Chinmaya*.

**What aspect of serving in Chinmaya Mission do you like most, and what have been some challenges serving here in the US?**

I enjoy teaching Vedanta. And I love teaching Chinmaya Bala Vihar. I love teaching because teaching is thrice learning.

Teaching Vedanta to adult seekers in America is the same as teaching in India.

Most of the seekers at the center here are of Indian background. But teaching Vedanta to children here is a challenge. We have to prepare more and have an open mind for new, spontaneous ideas. Bala Vihar not only helps us have an open mind, but also helps us sharpen our wits.

**What did you gain by becoming a *sannyasi*?**

I received the blessings of my Guru. On May 8, 1993, Shri Gurudev held my hand firmly and made me cut his birthday cake with him. To this date, he lovingly takes care of me and firmly holds my BMI to make it work!

**What message would you give *sadhakas*?**

Shri Gurudev is our glorious Ideal. We can, and we must, follow his ideals, taking help of the pointers in our Chinmaya Mission Pledge and Chinmaya Mission Motto.

## NEWS

### Swami Shantananda's Medical Update

*Based on report submitted by Sivaprasad Pandyaram*

Devotees gathered to pray for and serve Swami Shantananda (CM Princeton) as he underwent gall bladder surgery in July 2012, and thereafter spent weeks in silent recuperation. Despite the intense pain and discomfort, Swamiji remained ever jolly and smiling.

All devotees took great care to not visit the hospital unless requested, and post-surgery, practiced utmost discipline in keeping the ashram clean and quiet, with enough volunteers to stay in service of Swamiji day and night. Swamiji has been recovering smoothly and has resumed a lighter work schedule.

E-updates were circulated among the Chinmaya Family on a regular basis. Those who have known Swamiji for the past two decades have known that in spite of numerous health issues, Swamiji has always traveled and worked long hours, faithfully following his teaching schedule without canceling or delaying organized programs.

### Two Mega Events at Chinmaya Vibhooti

Chinmaya Vibhooti is pleased to welcome the Chinmaya Family Worldwide to two mega events in 2013: Pujya Guruji's camps on Shrimad Bhagavatam. The Hindi camp will be held February 16-23, 2013 and the English camp will be held December 24-31, 2013. Families who would like to attend or be yajamans/sponsors (in person or by proxy) for either of these once-in-a-lifetime events, should contact [Chinmaya Vibhooti](#) directly.

The world-renowned scripture of Shrimad Bhagavatam, also known as the Maha-Purana of Maharishi Veda Vyasa, is a series of lively, interactive dialogues and teachings between illustrious, enlightened spiritual masters and highly qualified seekers of knowledge.

Inviting all listeners, Pujya Guruji wrote, "Come listen and learn the art of facing your life and realizing your dreams. Learn from King Parikshit the heroic way of departing from this world with a mind absorbed in God."



The text is a profound amalgam of bhakti and jnana. Its consummate essence is for the reader/seeker to grow and immerse himself in pure love for God. In seeking to understand human life in its completeness and totality, Bhagavatam considers all aspects of human life, the world, the Reality underlying all creation, and the mutual relationships among them all. A unique feature of reading or listening to Shrimad Bhagavatam not only blesses the listener, but also all his ancestors.

7-Day Camp Registration: \$100/person, nonrefundable

Bhagavat Saptah Yajaman Offerings: Hindi Camp \$1,100 - English Camp \$2,100

Bhagavat Utsav Yajaman Offerings (Shri Rama Janma, Shri Krishna Janma, Rukmini-Krishna Vivaha):  
Hindi Camp \$500 - English Camp \$700

To register or sign up as a Yajaman, e-mail [Chinmaya Vibhooti](mailto:Chinmaya.Vibhooti@gmail.com) or call (+91) 968-989-1959. Checks should be made payable to "Central Chinmaya Mission Trust" and mailed to Chinmaya Vibhooti, Post Kolwan, Taluka Mulshi, Dist. Pune 412 108, Maharashtra, India.

### Reveling in Ramayana by Sameer Pateria

Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya (CM San Jose) conducted a five-day jnana yajna on Kishkindha-kanda of Tulasi Ramayana at Chinmaya Mission Alpharetta's Chinmaya Gurukul ashram, July 16-20, 2012. In addition to the 120 to 150 enthusiastic adults, around 20 kids of various age groups also came to enjoy the discourses, which were rendered elaborately, verse by verse and word by word. Everyone listened attentively to the spiritual significance of each of the different characters introduced in Kishkindha-kanda.

Prabodhji conducted guided meditation and discourses on Adi Shankara's Pratah Smaranam each morning. He also offered a Q&A session on meditation and Vedanta. Included was a strikingly clear explanation on the difference between merely sitting quiet in a dark room, a calm mind contemplating on Vedantic topics, and the unfolding thought process during meditation that uses the support of Upanishadic knowledge.

The yajna was followed by a weekend family retreat in northern mountains of Georgia. Conducted in a retreat center at the foothills of Cedar Mountain, "Mind the Mind" was a thoroughly welcome and wonderful retreat on Amritabindu Upanishad. The discourses were rendered with stunning clarity and all the 90 attendees fully enjoyed every part. The peaceful and picturesque atmosphere of the venue provided an added charm and beauty to the entire retreat. Chinmaya Bala Vihar teachers of Alpharetta conducted classes and workshops for the children. The retreat ended with everyone wanting more, eager to return anytime soon. When several people expressed their gratitude and joy to Prabodhji, he quipped that a seeker's joy of learning scriptures increases because of the temporary "karma sannayasa" the seeker has taken and the resulting boost of sadhana chatustaya the seeker has received. "It is all the glory of Pujya Gurudev who made this available to us. We need to carry it forward and do our part."





## Chinmaya Yamunotri's Youth Camp 2012

by Shubhi Mansukhani

Chinmaya Mission Chicago's Chinmaya Yamunotri ashram hosted its fourth annual week-long Vedic Heritage Camp for children and youth. The day camp was successfully conducted and concluded on June 24, 2012 by the grace of the Lord and the blessings of the Guru Parampara. This year's camp theme, "G.I.T.A.: Gratitude Is the Attitude," brought 120 children, grades KG-12, into the serene surroundings Chinmaya Yamunotri. The teachings focused on expressing gratitude and values in daily life.

The camp was ably conducted by Swami Sharanananda (CM Chicago), Acharya Geetha Raghu (CM Atlanta), and Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara). The acharyas were assisted by Sheela Srinivasan of CM Niagara and CM Chicago sevaks. The classes featured G.I.T.A., stories from the Mahabharata, and values from Gita, Ch. 13, the concepts of which were brought home through games and activities. The campers also learned bhajans, Guru Paduka Stotram, and yoga.

The daily morning yoga session was a big hit with both, children and adults. The children performed a special puja to Maharishi Veda Vyasa on one morning. Each afternoon they relaxed and enjoyed various games, sports, and arts and crafts. They thoroughly enjoyed the session with extempore speeches on different fun and spiritual topics and the fun fair event (with bounce houses and dunk tanks) held toward the end of the camp.

The camp concluded with a grand cultural program presented by all the campers to show their families, friends, and community members what they had learnt over the week. The last day concluded with lunch, which was prepared by the same dedicated sevaks who had patiently planned and cooked all the sattvik vegetarian meals throughout the camp.



## CHYK West's First Annual National Junior CHYK Camp

by Maneesha Asundi

CHYK West's first National Junior CHYK Camp (NJCC) debuted in 2012 and offered a sublimely holistic experience for the 75 high schoolers who flocked together June 3-6 in Brownwood, Texas to be guided under the auspices of Swami Mitrananda (CM Chennai, Director of All-India CHYK), Swami Sarveshananda (CM Dallas, National Director of CHYK West), Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya (CM Austin), and Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara, Deputy Director of CHYK West).

The camp was an ideal platform for junior CHYKs to meet and network with like-minded peers youth. Click to see photos: [June 3](#), [June 4](#), [June 5](#), [June 6](#).

The daily routine began with a morning infusion of yoga and meditation, with Surya Namaskar and other meditative techniques to nurture focus in the mind. A "thought massage" in meditation induced an awareness and gratitude to every limb of the body. Visualizing and reveling in one's chosen image of the Lord, and awareness of breath, helped strengthen devotion and focus.

The camp's daytime activities provided an integrated approach for kids to understand the unique camp theme: "Life is a jungle. Are you game to survive?" Group discussions, games, and outdoor activities help reinforce the teachings they marveled at in the acharyas' talks. All the activities helped build the campers' concentration, team spirit, and leadership skills.

Swami Mitrananda challenged the youth to become fearless and provided anecdotes of how history's heroes developed courage. He spoke on how fear binds, stunts growth, and inhibits one to remain in one's comfort zone. He dared them to take a leap of faith—literally and figuratively. Zip-lining and archery were two activities that reinforced classroom learning to reveal how dropping inhibitions allows one to experience one's higher potential and the inherent joy of one's innate freedom, in all experiences.

Swamiji's exposition on yajna bhava, or "team spirit," brought to light the values of caring, cooperation, goal setting, trust, communication, respect, listening skills, and more. He reminded them of Pujya Gurudev's core vision and values to build an effective team. He said the five core values embedded in the Chinmaya Mission Pledge—love, respect, courage, discipline, and service—individually and collectively characterize an effective team, and strong teams will take care to nurture these values through continual practice and spiritual study.

Swami Sarveshananda's session, "Take a chill pill," provided practical tips to manage stress. He emphasized having a good sense of humor to take one through life's difficult situations. Group discussions included the exercise of campers identifying sources that trigger stress and the methods of how to cope with them. Most groups listed parental expectations, peer pressure, and sibling relationships. For time management, solutions included focusing on actions not results, choosing to think positively not negatively, joking often, taking ownership rather than blaming others, practicing meditation, and keeping a healthy body. Swamiji reinforced that instead of falling into the trap of comparisons and unhealthy competitions, one can focus on improving one's own past records. Quoting, "The road to perfection is always under construction," he emphasized Pujya Gurudev's teachings of accepting falls gracefully and learning to glide through life's experiences.

Svadharm—the million-dollar question—was answered by Swami Mitrananda by encouraging the campers to find their inherent hidden talents rather than burying them. He asked them, "What were you born with? What was your calling?" and concluded that one lives an uninspired life, despite wealth and fame, if one does not know how to aspire to one's svadharma. The latter allows the journey and the destination to be enjoyable. He cited Lord Krishna's teachings in the Gita of pursuing one's innate calling over scrambling for material glory or success in trying to copy others' talents or goals. The campers engaged in a healthy within their groups to help crystallize their own understanding.

Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya taught campers the significance and power of performing pujas, which invoke the Divine within us. He systematically used the image of a purna kumbha to expound how the coconut represents the five sheaths, how the threads symbolize the 72,000 naadis or passages that keep the pranas alive, the kalasha and water that denote the seven subtle chakras, and the mango leaves and flowers that are symbolic of man's mind and senses. He said when one performs pujas with an elevated understanding, one automatically invokes reverence and positivity in all actions, interactions, and responses.

Acharya Vivek Gupta instantly connected with the campers through "Vedanta Unplugged," a class to seek Vedantic teachings in modern day arts of movies, music, and media. He taught how dropping preconceived notions and keeping an open mindset allows one to tune into life's teachings, become fearless, and remain balanced. Vivekji encouraged having faith in oneself and "unleashing" Divinity through ongoing satsang and studies—whether through retreats, study classes, books, movies, music, or other media—to discover one's true Self. A discussion on movies with Vedantic messages helped the campers see how learning is endless when one has the right mindset.

While CHYKs conducted a college seminar session for the campers, non-CHYK volunteers were fortunate to have a spontaneous satsang with Girishji on meditation and with Vivekji on relation-less relationships.

The camp's talent show was a treat for all audience members, without a single dull moment. Even the

acharyas participated. Vivekji demonstrated the art of juggling oranges and didn't miss an opportunity to remind spectators how to balance the modifications of the BMI while being a witness who observes these changes!

On the last day, a panel discussion with all four acharyas allowed the campers to address their questions and concerns on cultural identity. The NJCC campers headed home on their respective buses richer in their ancient heritage and better equipped with essential life skills. By Pujya Gurudev's blessings, CHYK West hopes to make the NJCC an annual tradition every summer.



### Pujya Guruji's Visits Chinmaya Avantika by Vidya Ramanathan

The members of Chinmaya Mission Ann Arbor were blessed have Pujya Guruji visit the Chinmaya Avantika ashram during his brief trip to Michigan. Guruji arrived on June 22 for a satsang with over 500 devotees.

The evening began with a surprise early birthday celebration for Guruji. CM Ann Arbor commemorated his 62nd birthday by offering 62 contemporary and spiritual titles in the form of a namavali. During this, over 100 Chinmaya Bala Vihar students came to give their pranams, an donation offering, and chocolate. Guruji was tickled to see how freely and kindly two-year-olds were giving him their chocolates!

Guruji's inspiring discourse followed on the importance and power of karma, bhakti, and jnana yoga in spiritual life. CM Ann Arbor devotees cherished Guruji's program and stay, and eagerly await his return.



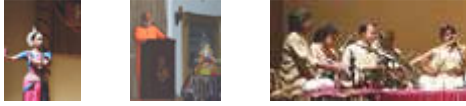
### CM Los Angeles Launches Kalanjali by Nimmi Raj

Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles launched its cultural wing, Kalanjali, on June 2, 2012 with a dance recital at the Chinmaya Rameshwaram ashram. Kalanjali is aimed at uniting the greater CM LA family at more events of cultural significance, and nurturing and presenting Indian culture.

In his brief address to over 200 members and well-wishers gathered, resident acharya Swami Ishwarananda pointed out that all the arts are about self-expression, and at a more profound level, about the inner Self, the Divine. Verse, canvas, sculpture, and dance, he said, all progress consecutively with added dimensions for expression.

Kalanjali's inaugural presentation featured the medium of Odissi dance by Shibani Patnaik. IN her

choreographed piece of Samsara, she explored the journey of the jiva through the cycle of birth and death to final liberation. The accompanying team of talented musicians from India—Bijaya Barik (mardala), Rupak Parida (vocal), Ramesh Das (violin), and Jabahar Mishra (flute)—added greatly to the quality of the program, rousing great a round of applause on conclusion.



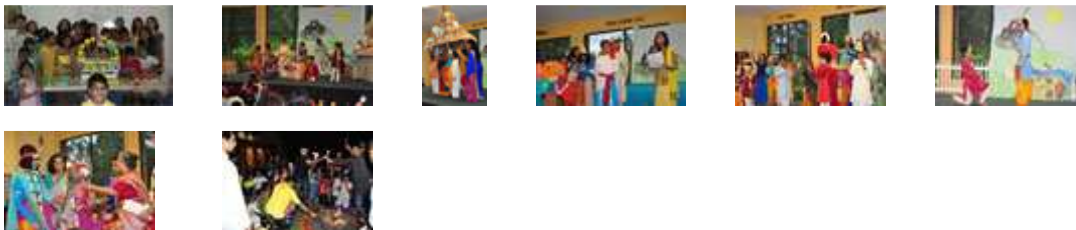
### Kids' Summer Camp at CM Orlando by Sree Nambiar

Chinmaya Mission Orlando organized a fun-filled, spiritually enriching three-week summer camp for children, June 10-28, 2012. The camp theme of “Krishna Krishna Everywhere” was a magical treat enjoyed by all the 40 attendees, ages 3-17 years.

Each morning began with prayers, yoga, and Vedic chanting. The days were filled with joyful activities that included like stories, arts and crafts, movies, and games. The children built beautiful craft creations, such as a small temple for Lord Krishna, peacock feather pens, and japa mala bags. The children enjoyed recreating the experience of breaking the butter hundi that was filled with candies. Each day, volunteer moms brought a fresh, delicious, home-cooked lunch for the children.

The highlight of the camp was the evening campfire, during which the children performed plays based on the divine lilas in Lord Krishna’s life. These included His birth; the lifting of Mount Govardhan; Kaliya mardanam; chant of, and dance to, Madhurashtakam; and Lord Krishna's divine message to Arjuna. The evening ended with campfire roasting, followed by a movie and sleepover.

Each camp day concluded with children picking a treasure from the treasure box, followed by aarti. The entire camp was a beautiful and enjoyable experience for one and all.



### Ramayan Mahotsav by Pujya Guruji in Virginia by Srikumar Gopalakrishna

Chinmaya Mission Washington DC celebrated a *Tulasi Ramayana Mahotsav* conducted by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, June 24-30, 2012. A festival in every sense, the event included morning talks on *Kaivalya Upanishad* by Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya (CM San Jose), Guruji’s evening talks on *Tulasi Ramayana*, *bhajan* programs, *satsangs* for CHYKs and adults, and a *Paduka Puja* and children’s cultural program on the concluding day, which marked Pujya Guruji’s 62nd birthday.

The weeklong program was held in Herndon High School in Virginia, close to the new CM property which is to house the soon to be constructed *Chinmaya Somnath* ashram. The auditorium hosted the adult discourses; multiple classrooms were used for childcare; the lobby featured daily themed decorations,

an information desk, and a bookstall; and the cafeteria offered meals to all devotees.

Chinmaya Bala Vihar students led the invocation at the inauguration on the morning of June 24, during which the Frederick, MD chapter performed a dance drama depicting the life of Sant Tulsidas. This was followed by Guruji's *pravachan*, which continued each day, from *Bala-kanda* to *Uttara-kanda*. Guruji filled every space and every heart with overflowing devotion and wisdom as he took everyone on a journey through the glories and stories of Lord Rama.

Each day of the *mahotsav* featured paintings by Devyani Kavathekar on scenes from the Ramayana. These were introduced for silent auction each day by Guruji. Each evening concluded with *aarti* to Lord Rama and Pujya Gurudev.

Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya's morning discourses on *Kaivalya Upanishad* offered the depth of *jnana* and the devotion of *upasana* of Lord Shiva (the presiding deity of CM Washington DC's Maryland and Virginia ashrams). Lord Shiva's chanting of *Rama-nama* as the essence of the thousand names of Lord Vishnu; Lord Hanuman, the avatar of Lord Shiva, serving Lord Rama with exemplary devotion; Lord Rama's prayers to Lord Shiva at Rameshwaram; Sant Tulasidas's blessings from Bhavani-Shankara to compose *Ramacharitamansa*—all these aspects of the *Ramayana* brought forth beautifully during the *Mahotsav* the love and glories of Lord Rama and Lord Shiva.

Acharya Vivek Gupta designed the children's program from which several hundred children benefited through the structured and fun-filled environment that was supervised by CHYKs.

CM devotees from across USA, and some from abroad, attended the *Mahotsav*. Aside from the resident *acharyas* of CM Washington DC—Swami Dheerananda; Acharyas Vilasini Balakrishnan, Anant Sarma, Pramila Poudel, and K. Sadananda—additional visiting *acharyas* included Swamini Shivapriyananda, Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya, and Brahmacharini Aparna Chaitanya. A special *acharyas' satsang* was offered on June 28, when many of them shared their personal experiences with Pujya Gurudev and Pujya Guruji.

In addition to the daily *pravachans*, Guruji conducted *satsangs* for the center's *sevaks* from various chapters, and met dozens of devotees, adults and children, during the *bhikshas* daily informal gatherings. Guruji also blessed the *Chinmaya Somnath* site with his visit.

Chinmaya team spirit could not have been clearer in the tests Mother Nature put forth on June 29 and 30. The massive thunderstorm that hit the DC metroplex took down power in a million homes and the school where Pujya Guruji's birthday celebration preparations had been completed. The next morning did not bring a miraculous restoration, and it being a weekend, with Internet and phone lines down, most people were unreachable. By mid-morning, several hundred participants reached the school asking for information on the celebrations, but the school had been declared as shut down by the county.

The morning program was canceled, but in this time of distress, divine grace manifested through a series of events, wherein the principal of a nearby school came in person to open the facility and allow usage without a formal contract. Within hours, access to the facility was obtained and Pujya Guruji's approval for a revised program was received. *Sevaks* entered the shut-down Herndon school to collect whatever celebrations possible using only flashlights. Within a few hours, the team had transported items to the new school auditorium.

In spite of these obstacles, over 700 people arrived from all around the metroplex, with less than four hours' notice via email, word of mouth, and Internet. Much of DC area still had no power or phone service for that day, and many roads had tree debris and traffic lights out of order.

Everything planned a year in advance had changed, and yet everything unfolded smoothly. The entire day's program was accommodated that evening, including Pujya Gurudev's *paduka puja*, two lovely

cultural programs by Chinmaya Bala Vihar students, special birthday videos for Pujya Guruji, and Pujya Guruji's concluding discourse of the *yajna*. The week was a truly remarkable source of inspiration for all the attendees, *sevaks*, and members.



### **Satsang with Pujya Guruji at CM Flint** by Uma Botta

Pujya Guruji visited Chinmaya Mission Flint's *Chinmaya Tapovanam* on June 21, 2012, where he was welcomed with much love and the traditional *purna kumbha* and *aarti*. CM devotees from CM Flint, Ann Arbor, and Niagara came to see and hear Pujya Guruji.

Guruji began the *satsang* with soulful *bhajans*. He spoke on his original Sanskrit compositions and the importance of spirituality to nurture noble thoughts and a pure mind. Guruji emphasized that spirituality is not an activity. Just as honesty cannot be demonstrated as a show-and-tell, for it is a virtue not an act, so, too, spirituality is a way of life and not any specific act.

Concluding the event, Acharya Sharada Kumar (CM Ann Arbor) conducted the *Guru Paduka Puja* in the hall of over 100 devotees.



### **Rewind the Mind** by Diana Gordon

Swami Ishwarananda (CM Los Angeles) conducted a special meditation retreat at the *Chinmaya Gokul* ashram of CM Bakersfield on Saturday, July 28, 2012. Approximately 50 people of a cultural diversity gathered; some were attending a CM event for the first time.

This outreach workshop included subjects like "Finding a Purpose," and resulted in positive feedback from attendees who said they are looking forward to returning for CM Bakersfield's weekly classes.

The "Rewind the Mind" workshop guided participants on four meditation techniques: yogic breathing, mantra chanting, visualization (*upasana*), and contemplation. Swamiji also instructed on the technique of *yoga-nidra* as a way to re-educate the subconscious mind. He explained that it is to be used in conjunction with, not in lieu of, regular meditation practice.

CM Bakersfield looks forward to offering many more such events for the local community.





## Amazing Grace at *Chinmaya Govardhan* by Brahmacharini Arpita

After a long seven-year wait, CM St. Augustine was filled with ecstatic devotion and gratitude in welcoming Pujya Guruji again at the *Chinmaya Govardhan* ashram, May 20-24, 2012.

Guruji took two informal Q&A *satsangs* daily, completely satisfying devotees with his extraordinarily insightful yet simple answers to life's spiritual and mundane dilemmas. He also gave evening talks for three days on *Madhurashtakam*, a popular hymn composed by Shri Vallabhacharya. Guruji's in-depth interpretation of this apparently simple text was amazingly profound. Truly, his words and presence wrapped the listeners in the aura of Lord Krishna's divine sweetness and love.

Guruji gave the final seal of blessedness on the ashram's newly installed Shrinathji *murti* in the main shrine, and three *dhyana-murtis* (Lord Garuda, Lord Ganesha, and Lord Hanuman. The latter resides in a special shrine in a 70-ft. bamboo grove.

On the last day, devotees experienced a unique experience. Amid the blessed joy of chanting "*Shri Krishna sharanam mama*," Pujya Guruji led all devotees to the little woodland creek on the ashram grounds and there he sprinkled sacred sand from Vrindavan into the waters and renamed the creek as "Yamuna." While Guruji waved the lamp in worship, devotees offered flowers into her waters and sang *Yamunashtakam* in her honor. The Yamuna River in Vrindavan is most sacred to the *lilas* of Bhagavan Krishna and is regarded as the embodiment of pure devotion. *Chinmaya Govardhan* is now blessed to have such a body of holy water also.

The joy of the event was multiplied through the presence and help of numerous visiting CMW *acharyas*: Swamini Shivapriyananda, Swami Prakashananda, Swami Sharanananda, Brahmacharini Aparna Chaitanya, Brahmacharini Robyn Thompson, Brahmachari Eric Dee, Acharya Vilasini Balakrishnan, and Acharya Shailaja Nadkarni. Devotees and newcomers from St. Augustine, Jacksonville, Orlando, Miami, Atlanta, and Alpharetta filled every inch of the ashram's living room/lecture hall, kitchen, and library for Pujya Guruji's evening talks. Delicious catered lunches and dinners were kindly sponsored by Chinmaya Study Group families from the Jacksonville area.

*Chinmaya Govardhan* saw four days of immense spiritual joy and fulfillment with Pujya Guruji's presence. Here, the Lord and Guru spread the umbrella of divine grace for everyone to take refuge under as they were drenched in the rains of pure knowledge and devotion.



## Vote for Devotion

by Shweta Agarwal

“God has many forms and many names, but God is one.” This surprising quip came from my six-year-old daughter while driving home after her last day at the Chinmaya Mission Bakersfield summer camp for children. This weeklong camp, conducted by Swami Ishwarananda (CM Los Angeles), featured the theme of “Characters of *Ramayana*” for younger children and “*Nav-vidha Bhakti*” for the teens.

Swamiji bestowed knowledge throughout the week with great lucidity and humor. His stories of Lord Rama, and His virtues and ideals, were woven together with teachings on the nine modes of love divine, with threads of mystical *masti* [playfulness]. The sacred and serene camp atmosphere was enhanced with the children’s learning of *bhajans* and chanting.

The camp was a huge success for the small Hindu community of Bakersfield, bringing together 70 children that studied in their appropriate age groups. The curriculum was tailored and simplified to teach kids as young as three years old. While the mornings were dedicated to quiet, learning time, the afternoons were delightful treats with fun-filled activities that included arts and crafts, extempore speeches, indoor and outdoor games, and a fun fair with water slides.

Vaibhav, a 7-year-old said, “My favorite part was making the painting of Hanuman carrying the Sanjivani mountain.” Viren, a 12-year-old, said the camp was enlightening and fun. And Anusha summarized it all with, “It was FUN-tastic!”

It was a divine sight to see all the campers dressed up in their best Indian outfits for a *Shri Rama Puja* on one of the days. On the final evening, they presented *Ramayana* skits on stage, demonstrating how much they had learned in such a short span of time.

By the Lord’s grace and Pujya Gurudev’s blessed inspiration, Sudha Bhatt led the volunteer team of organizers, *sevak*s and youth helpers, who worked tirelessly to make the camp a memorable success.

“As a mother of three children and a career professional, I always wondered whether I would be able to teach my kids anything about our rich culture and religion. My doubts were cleared after they attended the camp. In a week’s time, I can see changes in my house. From *Curious George* to Hanuman stories, from Dora songs to *Raghupati Raghava*. I am very grateful to Chinmaya Mission for organizing this camp and feel so fortunate to have the center so close to home.”



## Renovated Chinmaya Rameshwaram Temple Opens

by Nimmi Raghunathan

Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles, in a grand ceremony, rededicated itself spiritually to the teachings Pujya Gurudev on this year’s anniversary of his *mahasamadhi*. The center’s newly renovated temple was formally offered for this occasion on August 4, 2012. Amid blowing conches and the *chenda melam*, Swami Siddhananda (CM Philadelphia) inaugurated the temple with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in the presence of CM LA’s *acharyas*, Swami Ishwarananda and Acharya P. Mahadevan.

The temple at *Chinmaya Rameshwaram* is home to the deities of Lord Shiva and Shri Rama *parivara*. The temple now has state-of-the-art lighting that include star-like twinkling lights on the roof and a high-domed ceiling, all done with a firm eye on energy saving. The temple was upgraded in doubly



quick time thanks to the efforts of volunteers spearheaded by Dr. Srinivasa Iyer, a septuagenarian and engineer.

The morning began with rituals conducted by Pandit Sivaramakrishnan, supported by the ashram's *puja* volunteers. The day's worship included *Ganesha Puja*, *Navagraha Puja*, and *Guru Paduka Puja*. Dr. D.V. Pillai, president of CM LA, expressed his joy in his opening address. Dr. Iyer detailed the timeline of renovation work and displayed visuals. Swami Ishwarananda quoted from *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* about the meaning of the heart to reinforce how mind and body follow effectively where the heart is. He said *hr* means to be drawn in, *da* means to give freely and completely, and *ya* means is to sustain, and be in contemplation of, what the heart has been drawn to.

An eagerly awaited feature of the event was the *bhajan* session by Swami Siddhananda. He led all the devotees into various levels of elation through his soulful renditions that brought them to sway and clap along.

The event was coordinated by Ravi and Hema Vishnubhotla and concluded with lunch *prasad* for all.



### Pujya Guruji Teaches *Ganapati Atharvashirsham* by Manu Madhok

Chinmaya Mission Minneapolis-St. Paul members were blessed by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda's visit over Memorial Day weekend. This tenth anniversary of the center was made so much more memorable because of Pujya Guruji's presence and his *jnana yajna* on *Ganapati Atharvashirsham*, May 28-30, 2012 at the *Chinmaya Ganapati* ashram.

Pujya Guruji was welcomed with *purna-kumbha* at the ashram. Before commencing the *jnana yajna*, Guruji completed Lord Ganapati's *alankara* with a *janevu* and beautiful jewel-studded garland. The ashram shrine was filled with the divinity and devotion of Pujya Guruji and all devotees revelled in his melodious bhajans and talks.

Each day's program followed the schedule of an informal *satsang* with Guruji, *bhajans* by local devotees, the chanting of *Ganapati Atharvashirsham*, and Guruji's discourses. All the attendees were mesmerized with Guruji's eloquent explanations, filled with wit, humor, and practical applications. Several Chinmaya Mission families and children had the opportunity to meet Pujya Guruji for *satsanga* during the three days.

CM Minneapolis also flourished with the visit of Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara) in July, when he spoke on raising children in America, dating, and practical means for happiness, home, and work. He also conducted an overnight camp for kids with the theme of GITA (Gratitude Is The Attitude), which greatly inspired children and the volunteers.



***Natya Shastra* Workshop of Chinmaya Naada Bindu**  
by Ramaa Bharadvaj


Chinmaya Naada Bindu (CNB) was pleased to organize and host a successful workshop by renowned scholar Dr. Pappu Venugopala Rao, August 11-12, 2012. The two-day, ten-hour workshop on *Natya Shastra* was similar to the one Dr. Rao previously conducted for ABHAI (Association of Bharata Natyam Artists of India) in Chennai. It was an event that sold out several weeks in advance. Attendees marveled at and thoroughly enjoyed Dr. Rao's humorous and scholarly flair.

The *Natya Shastra* workshop was presented as part of CNB's "Monsoon Dance *Gurukul*" at *Chinmaya Vibhooti*, which has been described as "heaven on earth" by Padmabhushan C.V. Chandrasekhar and compared to the prestigious *Jacob's Pillow* setting by Padmashree Dr. Sunil Kothari.



# Announcements

## Bhagavatam Camp with Pujya Guruji



Chinmaya Vibhooti invites you  
to the following two mega-events  
by Pujya Guruji  
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*- Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda*

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**Saptah Yajaman offerings:**  
Rs 51,000 or US\$ 1,100 for the Hindi Bhagawata camp  
Rs 1 Lakh or US\$ 2,100 for the English Bhagawata camp  
**Utsav Yajaman offerings per occasion (Shri Rama Janma/Shri Krishna Janma/Rukmini Krishna Vivah):**  
Rs 21,000 or US\$ 500 for the Hindi Bhagawata camp  
Rs 30,000 or US\$ 700 for the English Bhagawata camp  
Cheques/DDs to be in favour of CENTRAL CHINMAYA MISSION TRUST  
The camp donation is applicable to all Saptah and Utsav Yajamans who wish to attend the camp

**Inquiries & Registration**  
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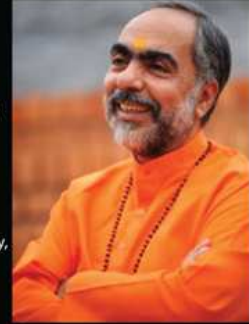
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## Balvihar Magazine Rate Increase

### Balvihar Magazine New Rates - Effective July 1, 2012

Due to increased cost of paper, printing, freight and overhead expenses, the new BalVihar Magazine rates have been increased to the following:

1 Year	\$50
2 Years	\$80
3 Years	\$120
5 Years	\$200
15 Years (Long term)	\$500
Long term subscription as gift to a relative/friend in India	\$75



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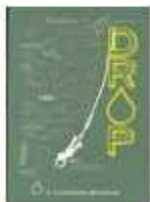
ISBN: 9781608270095 Chinmaya Book of Ashtottaras and Aratis



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ISBN: 978-81-7597-540-8 By Swamini Vimalananda



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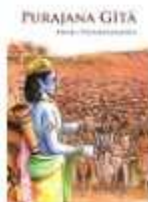
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Tapovan Prasad Celebrates 50 Years:

- Message from Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda



**SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA**



17 December 2011

All Chinmaya Mission Centres and Acharyas

Dear All,

Hari Om!

Our magazine *Tapovan Prasad* is entering the 50<sup>th</sup> year of its publication in January 2012. Throughout this Golden Jubilee Year, it should be our endeavour to give wide publicity to the magazine. For this, a special video presentation of four minutes duration has been prepared. It will be forwarded to all the centres, along with other publicity material.

The video presentation is to be screened at *jnana yajnas* and all other events where people gather in large numbers. One person can be appointed to collect the subscriptions at the book stall or other specified place. Since *Tapovan Prasad* is a window to all our Mission activities, it should be circulated widely.

With Prem and Om,

P.S. For more details, please contact the Tapovan Prasad office.

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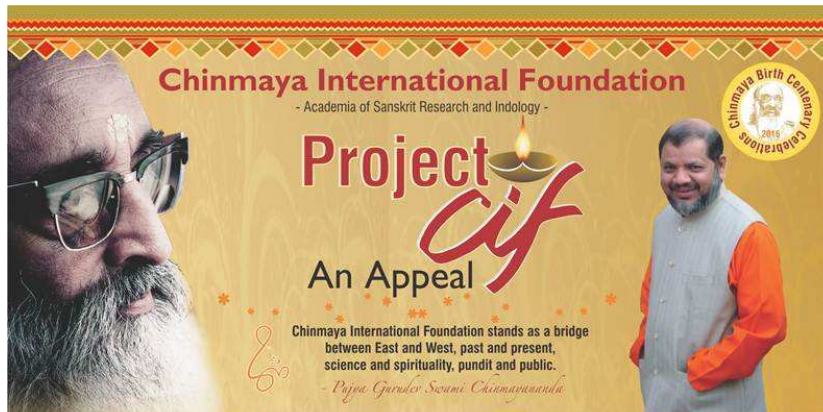
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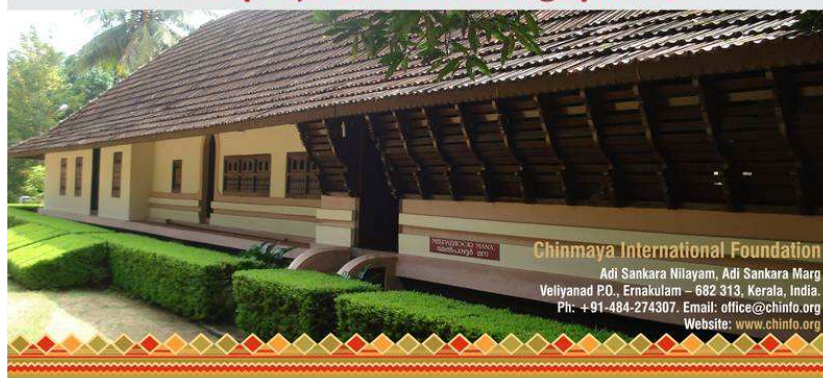
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## - E-Vedanta Course

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### ABOUT CIF

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

### REGISTRATION

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

E-COURSE: US\$100; POSTAL COURSE: US\$175  
VISIT [WWW.CHINFO.ORG](http://WWW.CHINFO.ORG) TO REGISTER  
OR GET MORE DETAILS.

## - Easy Sanskrit Course



The poster is a vertical rectangular card with a light beige background. At the top, there are decorative golden floral motifs in the corners. The title 'Easy Sanskrit Online Study Course' is written in a large, bold, dark red font. Below the title, the text 'Blessed Self,' and 'Hari Om! Salutations!' are written in a smaller, dark red font. The main body of the poster contains several paragraphs of text in a dark red font, describing the course and its benefits. At the bottom, there are two more decorative golden floral motifs in the corners. The text is centered and easy to read.

# 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!

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

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

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

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Questions? E-mail [easysanskrit@chinfo.org](mailto:easysanskrit@chinfo.org)