

Hari OM

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Vedantins practice samadhi, or meditation, not to attain a state of total forgetfulness of the world outside, but to get firmly established in the knowledge that the world as we see it is unreal and the Atman, the Self, alone is real. . . . Samadhi is nothing but the transformation, conceived through listening and reflection, of the thought flow of the mind into the very nature of Brahman. Samadhi is of two kinds: 1) *savikalpa* (with form or attributes) and 2) *nirvikalpa* (without any form or attributes).

Swami Tapovanam Maharaj

A liberated one (*jīvanmukta*) is one who has realized the infinitude of his existence as the Self, even while living in this world. . . . When the transformation is complete and the individualized egocentric *jīva* has rediscovered its pure nature as the eternal Self, it crosses over all delusions. . . . The mental impressions gathered in his individualized existence all through his entire past constitute the ocean of delusion or ignorance. Through the process of meditation, when the yogi reaches the effulgent experience of the Self, he has, no doubt, crossed all non-apprehensions of Truth and, therefore, also all his misapprehensions about himself.

Swami Chinmayananda

The knots of the heart are cut asunder with the knowledge of Brahman. . . . The supreme, infinite, unconditioned Brahman alone appears as the finite and conditioned *jīva*. The transcendental Brahman is the very Self of the seeker. . . . The notion that this body is the Self, is the knot. . . . Ignorance of the Self causes the illusion that the sentient Self is the inert body. Ignorance is thus the primary knot of the heart. . . . Identifying with the body, man thinks himself to be a finite, miserable creature. He wants to be happy. He feels that by gaining name, fame, power, objects of pleasure, friends, and relations, he will become happier, and therefore he desires them. Desire is the second knot of the heart that arises from ignorance. . . . Desire-prompted action is the third knot. . . . All the knots are cut simultaneously [with the knowledge of Brahman].

Swami Tejomayananda

SPIRITUAL TRAILS

Dexterity In Action

by Pujya Gurudev Svami Chinmayananda

The wise men of ancient India understood very clearly that the one and same Supreme is expressing Itself in this pluralistic world in a variety of ways. To propitiate the One means worshipping the many; and to serve the many is to adore the One. To recognize the infinite variety of forms and functions, to satisfy the emotional demands of the seeker, and to cater simultaneously to his intellectual hunger, the rishis devised ways and means to worship by venerating various deities.

When the whole universe is only a minute part of His infinite glory, it is only natural that from a grain of sand to the Creator himself, everything in this universe reflects that supreme Power. Deification in India only means recognizing the presence of the universal Lord in all objects around.

Thus, to an intelligent seeker, gods and goddesses are nothing but chosen symbols of Life, and the seeker worships them through dedicated work in his own chosen field of activity. Integrated in our day-to-day life, the theories and principles of Hinduism become simplified into three major factors: the worker, the work, and the field of work.

If I am a scientist, science is my deity; and diligently applying myself to scientific pursuits is the best way of pleasing my deity. I practice it in the laboratory, the mosque of my devotion. If I am a sportsman, my sport is my object of worship, and the sports field, my church. As a student, study is surely my goddess, and dedication to study is the only means of propitiating her; thus the study room becomes my temple.

This type of application to the work in hand brings about a hitherto unknown dexterity in action, which the *Bhagavad Gita* describes as “yoga.” Where can we come across a more beautiful exposition of work?

When I have leadership qualities, the best way of life for me would be to pursue the leadership of society, rather than to suffer as a servant. If I am commercial-minded, business would be my chosen vocation. When the spirit of service dominates my mental makeup, I can find happiness and satisfaction only in service. Above all, if I am spiritually inclined, it is up to me to pursue that tendency and walk the path to my own spiritual unfoldment. This was the unparalleled purpose and idea behind the caste system.

“The fourfold caste has been created by Me according to the differentiation of *gunas* and karma. Though I am the author, thereof know Me as a non-doer and immutable” (*Bhagavad Gita* 4.13).

Embodied as we are in human form, we bring our three-faceted equipment (the body, mind, and intellect) into all actions. These are the major parts in the machinery of experience in man. Full efficiency in any work can be attained only when this entire equipment is entirely tuned up. Where the body is at work, the receptive and responsive mind of the worker should be, and his alert and discriminating intellect should assume full command of both body and mind.

Such three-fold concentration is otherwise referred to as single-pointedness, and it is indeed very hard to attain. To achieve this, a great deal of sincere and regular practice is needed. The means of achieving this are found in the various injunctions of every religion.

A most scientific and elaborate treatment of the subject of polishing and integrating the personality is found in the scriptures of the Hindus—the great Upanishads.

The *Gita*, which gives a clarion call to Arjuna to shed his delusory misconceptions regarding his duty and relationship with the outer world, encompasses in its wisdom people and situations of all types and of all times. Hence, it is that the “Song of the Lord” is valued by students all over the world, in all periods of history. It has words of comfort and solace to those who approach it with the right intellectual attitude of complete readiness to understand it, and the willingness to live up to it.

The *Gita* often stresses the importance of one’s own duty (*svadharma*). But what is one’s own duty? When we are born, we bring with us tendencies and inclinations from the past (*vāsanās*), and these are the primary factors for our choices in actions, achievements, and losses in life.

One’s duty must spring from one’s own character (*svabhāva*). In other words, the superficial must reflect the profundity in us. Almost always, one is able to intuitively sense what sort of life one should choose. By selecting a path of action according to one’s character and living it in a spirit of dedication, one slowly exhausts the *vāsanās* inherent in the personality. Thus, the heavy burden gets lighter and lighter.

On the other hand, in working against one’s own inborn tendencies, life becomes a burden, and all cheer and joy vanish. To act against the grain of one’s own *vāsanās* would be performing contrary action (*para-dharma*).

“Better is one’s own duty though destitute of merits, than the duty of another well-performed. He who does the duty ordained by his own nature incurs no sin” (*Bhagavad Gita* 18.47). Today, the concept of duty, with all its implications, is well worth our close and careful consideration. Duties and activities multiply, by magic, as it were, in a thousand ways in modern times. Buried though these are, curiously enough, they still fall under four well-recognized ancient categories:

1. Studies and allied fields catering to the studious intellects: the *brāhmanas*
2. Power, politics, and so on, to satisfy those born with a flair for leadership, the *Kshatriyas*
3. Commercial minded businessmen: the *vaishyas*
4. Those dedicated to the service of mankind: the *shudras*

It now becomes our responsibility to conduct an inquiry into ourselves and ascertain to what type we belong. Before we let ourselves strive in any field of activity, we must clearly discover where our deepest interest lies. To the one who has closely examined his personality, the field of action from which he can derive maximum joy and peace will be readily revealed. Having chosen the field, it is up to us to pursue it in a spirit of dedication, and reap the harvest of outer success in life and abiding peace within.

Lord Krishna advises the seeker not to waste the precious present moments in fruitless dreams and fears, but to bring his best into the present and live vitally every moment. The future shall then take care of itself.

Who, then, is a true man of action, a dynamic *karma yogī*? Who can be a yogi in his actions? Descriptions of a true *karma yogī* are found throughout the *Gita*. After explaining the import of duties, Lord Krishna explains the first prerequisite of a yogi as follows: “The right is to work only, but never to claim its fruits. Let not the fruit of action be thy motive, nor let thy attachments be to inaction. Steadfast in yoga, perform actions abandoning attachment, ever balanced in success and failure. Evenness of mind is called

yoga” (*Bhagavad Gita* 2.47-48).

This evenness of mind is an unavoidable and essential prerequisite in all successes. It is not only sufficient that a true worker should act in the world established in equanimity, but also that he should strive constantly to keep up this pose in himself amid changes and temptations in the world around. This can be achieved only through the total elimination from the personality of all impurities, of all egocentric attachments and false imaginations, all vain expectations and daydreams of imagined fruits-of-actions, and all anxieties and fears regarding possible future calamities. These in their totality create the veiling that rises between the worker and his work, clouding his discriminative intellect. Hence, these should be completely eradicated from the mind. With these preoccupations, we are actually losing the immediate moments, which alone are given to us to act, strive, earn, and achieve. To work free of these would be to ever work in enlivening inspiration; and inspired work guarantees the greatest returns.

The leaders of society have the subtlest duty in life. They take upon themselves the difficult and subtle duty of guiding the masses. They should be able to work always with inspiration and dedication. Even to such dedicated men of action, Lord Krishna puts in a word of warning so that they may not bring about harm through blind overenthusiasm.

A society is not built overnight through magic incantations. Time and tradition alone can build the strength and beauty of society. It functions under the influences of the world-pattern around and the personality plan within. This should not be all of a sudden stemmed in its flow and violently diverted into some new direction of action and purpose. The art of guiding mankind without disrupting the existing harmony is well brought out by Lord Krishna in his note of warning to the leaders in all fields. A true leader should fall in line with the generation by setting an example himself, and slowly and steadily guiding his generation to act in the right direction.

“Let no wise man unsettle the mind of the ignorant people who are attached to action; let him engage them in all actions, himself fulfilling them with devotion” (*Bhagavad Gita* 3.26). It is dangerous to unsettle the faith of the generation all of a sudden. Violent revolutions deform the character of individuals. The world’s history is not wanting in examples of leaders who, in the excitement and overenthusiasm of following newly discovered ideals, have miscalculated the strength of the masses, and have consequently found themselves crushed by the avalanche of emotions and passions already let loose by them in the masses.

Hence, Lord Krishna says the best way to bring about a renaissance is by the leaders themselves expressing the divinity in them and thus attracting followers to them. By precept and practice, the masses should be gradually guided toward the right path.

In case one wants to be a just leader and bless his generation, his first attempt should be to cultivate equanimity and poise within himself—qualities that will raise him above the dualities in nature, such as, honor and dishonor, likes and dislikes, love and hatred.

Such a *karma yogī* crosses over and reaches beyond the shackles of the *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* (three textures of thought: serenity, activity, and inactivity). From such a noble person emanate the divine qualities of harmlessness, truth, renunciation, fortitude, and so on. Having transcended the dualities, he is equally disposed toward friends and enemies, the indifferent and the hateful, the righteous and the unrighteous.

When such noble leaders come forward to act in a spirit of cooperation and self-dedication, they release the community not only from poverty and sorrows, but also from

ignorance and superstition. To arrive at such a balance within ourselves and work in a spirit of dedication, we have to necessarily free ourselves from the attachment to objects around. “The same in honor and dishonor, the same to friend and foe, abandoning all undertakings, he is said to have crossed beyond the *guṇas*” (*Bhagavad Gita* 14.25).

As a leader, even after entering the vaster field of work, one should not neglect one’s obligatory duties. Many are such duties—those demanded of his social status, domestic situation, and so on. Lord Krishna points out to Arjuna the noble life of King Janaka, who set up a glorious example for his own generation to follow. Because “whatever a great man does, that other men also do (imitate). Whatever he sets up as the standard is that which the world follows” (*Bhagavad Gita* 3.21). The leader should keep this in mind at all times and should engage in perfect actions that are well worth imitating. Illiterate masses who listen to the thundering eloquence of leaders on platforms may not often understand the full import of their ideals, but they feel and appreciate the behavior and attitude of that leader in society. These millions copy the decorum set as a standard by the leaders—not by their words, but by their actions; and we know that these millions constitute the country. Thus, the rebuilding of a society or a country can be achieved only through the integrated characters of its leaders. The true and vibrant personality, capable of such achievements, has been beautifully depicted by Lord Krishna: “Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in the yoga of knowledge, giving alms, control of the senses, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, straightforwardness, nonviolence, truth, absence of anger, renunciation, peacefulness, absence of crookedness, compassion to beings, non-covetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickle-mindedness, vigor, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of pride—these belong to the one born for the divine estate, O Bhārata” (*Bhagavad Gita* 16.1-3).

When, after due consideration, one has taken the leader’s role, one’s first allegiance should be to the ideals for which one stands. The ideals should be such that they inspire the masses to sink their mutual differences, work together, strive with enthusiasm, and bring out dynamism in their endeavors to build unity and harmony. Amid the apparent diversity of work performed by each, there should not be any discordant notes. Each action should be so perfect that it brings in more and more peace and harmony around. Only such actions can constitute right service and come to reflect true dedication.

Through such actions, one gets rid of the accumulated burden of *vāsanās* within. Through one’s constant attunement with the higher and the nobler, one’s personality is chastened. And such a polished personality is the right vehicle to work in the world of change and endless problems, achieving success and happiness for generations.

**Guruji Speaks on Pujya Gurudev's Life, Work,
and Teachings**
by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda
*Transcribed talk by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda at
the Sandeepany ashram in Mumbai, September 2007*

Chinmaya Mission is now a world-renowned organization, and my attempt is to explain to you what this Mission is! To start with, I will have to speak about Pujya Gurudev, who is the founder and the inspiration behind this Mission. I’ll give a brief sketch of his life because the details are available in different book forms.

He was born in the year 1916 in Kerala and studied there up to his college degree. Then he went to Lucknow. I heard from him that he went to Lucknow only because he could do two degrees simultaneously there. He graduated with both, a literature degree and a law degree, from Lucknow University.

One incident that he told during his lectures and satsangs in Uttarkashi was about when he was a law student. They were discussing among themselves to interview a very great barrister of that time, named Barrister Supru; those of an older time will know him. He was a very great barrister, very strict and serious. The question was who would go and interview him. Gurudev volunteered. If you read about his life from childhood, school days etc., he was a leader from the very beginning. He went to the barrister rather hesitatingly because in those days, these seniors were quite serious and strict, so you could not speak to them easily. Gurudev said that when he went to him, the barrister gave him only a brief interview. He was seated at his desk and Swamiji could gather the courage to ask only one quick question: “What is the secret of success?”

The barrister looked at him and said, “Work like a horse and live like a hermit.” On hearing this, Gurudev ran away from the place immediately. You can see that Gurudev got the message right at his student stage. And if you look at the rest of his life, he really did work like a horse and live like a hermit; and you, and the world, already know about his success.

After that, he joined national politics as a freedom fighter under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhiji. As you know, any freedom fighter was a target of the British at that time. It was easy for them to catch them and put them in jail. Gurudev was also captured and he also went to jail. As we have heard, his health was not good, so the jail authorities just left him outside, and a Christian lady passing by took him and nursed him back to health. Gurudev said that she remembered her son when she saw him because his nose resembled her son’s—so, even a nose can save you! What can save you, you do not know.

Gurudev always had great interest in understanding life and its various facets, in being able to identify with all different strata of people. As a journalist, he also wrote articles under the pseudonym, “Mochi,” which means cobbler.

He saw the aristocratic life, but it never fascinated him. On one hand, he had many doubts and questions about religion, yet there was always the thirst to know what the Truth is. One may feel that he was an atheist, which may be true in some sense, but not completely, because if he was, he would not have inquired.

As a journalist, he went to Hrishikesh to Swami Sivanandaji (*Shivānanda*). If you look at Swami Sivanandaji’s life, he was the most wonderful person and a sadhu, for he had goodness in his heart. He always encouraged and blessed anyone who had even the slightest inclination for spirituality—that was his nature. He was also highly learned and well educated, and he attracted many intelligent university graduates and such students.

Gurudev went there as a skeptic, but whatever work he undertook, he did it sincerely. If he was an ordinary journalist, he would have gathered his data for the article, written it, and forgotten about it. But it did not happen like this, for there was an unexpected transformation. He was so inspired by what he saw and heard, and realized that these sadhus were not wasting their time and lives, that they were not escapists or cheats. It was a different life altogether. And so, he decided to become a sannyasi! His father also blessed him to do so, and Swami Sivanandaji gave him *sannyāsa* along with some other young *sādhakas*.

Swami Sivanandaji named him Swami Chinmayananda. When we hear “Chinmayananda,” we see how Pujya Gurudev is true to his name. *Chinmaya* is pure Consciousness, Knowledge—nothing but Awareness—and *Ānanda* is Bliss.

Gurudev’s thirst for knowledge was unquenchable and he wanted to learn more and more.

With Swami Sivananda's blessings, he went to Uttarkāshi and found the great Master, Swami Tapovan Maharaj. He was true to his name of Tapovan—austerity personified.

There, at the feet of Swami Tapovanji Maharaj, our Gurudev learned mainly the Upanishads. Swami Tapovanji was getting older and his health was slowly failing. The *tapas* with which Gurudev learned the Upanishads itself is a great story. This also I heard from Gurudev. Tapovan Swamiji said I will not teach you in English or Malayalam (the mother tongue of Tapovan Maharaj and Gurudev). He said, "I will only teach in Hindi or Sanskrit." So Gurudev used to learn everything in Hindi and take down notes in English. In fact, I have seen some of his notes from that time. Tapovan Swamiji also later told him, "You have studied the Upanishads. Now you can study the *Gita* on your own. If you have any doubts, then you can ask."

When the study was completed, one day, Gurudev was watching the flow of Mother Ganga, sitting on a rock at its bank. A thought flashed through his mind as though Mother Ganga was speaking to him: How I flow from here down to the plains, nourishing and nurturing all, in the same way, this *jñāna-gaṅga* also must flow.

It is true that those who are real, genuine seekers of knowledge will find their guru and their way. This was Pujya Swami Tapovanji's view—that those who are serious will come and find out. But Gurudev thought that first people should be made aware of the existence of such knowledge, and then those who are such seekers will stick to it. Gurudev received blessings from both, Swami Tapovanji and Swami Sivanandaji, and embarked on his journey to spread this knowledge.

Gurudev's first *jñāna yajna*, strangely, was in Pune, Maharashtra. How a sannyasi born in Kerala, having completed post-graduation in Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow), and having studied in Hrishikesh and Uttarkashi, started his *jñāna yajna* in Pune, is a mystery. But he did so with the blessings of, and per the advice of, his Guru. He went around the entire country of India on foot and then he started his work.

He used to say humorously that his Guru had said that you should continue your work only if at least five people are there on that first day. To his great luck, there were five people on the first day, including himself. It was the only Upanishad *yajña* in those days and it lasted for 100 days. In those days, Swamiji used to come to the plains, complete the *yajña* and return to Uttarkashi. When people asked him why 100 days, he would jokingly say, "Because nobody else called me in those days. But after 100 days they called." Thereafter, it became 70 days, 50 days, then 20 days. In Mumbai, I attended his 21-day *yajña*, which was his first national *yajña*. That was the longest *yajña* I attended. Later his *yajnas* became ten days, then seven, as the work started expanding. Like this, slowly, slowly, the Mission has grown. The rest is history. . . .

We read and study such biographies, and are always interested in knowing more and more details, facts, figures, incidents with different people, events, and episodes. But when we read Pujya Gurudev's life, what was it? What was his work? His teaching? Without going into just details of many incidents, what do we learn from all his actions? His responses? I began thinking about this and shared it with other Mission acharyas. Some very interesting and striking points came to our mind. Since we are in Chinmaya Mission and we are going to serve, we must know these things clearly. And even otherwise, it is the life of a great person, so it is worth understanding. If we look at Gurudev's life, there are many incidents from his birth to his *mahāsamādhi*, but what there is to learn behind these events should be understood.

His Life

About his life, what are the striking features? First is his spirit of independent thinking. As

a child, whether he observed a puja ritual or went to school/college for education or participated in the national movement, he always had independent thinking and an inquiring mind. You know that famous statement he would say in his discourses: “Don’t believe anything just because I am saying it,” or “Don’t believe anything just because a *dādivālā* (bearded man) has said it.” He would add, “The longer the beard, the greater the suspicion!” And he would say, “Think! Think! Only when it rings in your mind can you accept.” This is the spirit of independent thinking; it is not narrow or fanatical.

Second, he never accepted anything just like that. He kept questioning—as a student, as a journalist. And in his Vedantic quest, it was his questioning that took him such a long way. There are many people who simply go on questioning and arguing, but his questioning was actually the path of inquiry, to find the Truth.

The third quality that comes from such inquiry is honesty. When he was convinced about something, he changed. When he was committed, he did something about it. For example, he went to Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj to expose sannyasis, but when he realized it was not so, he changed his thinking and became so committed that he actually took *sannyāsa*! Other people just go on questioning and arguing, and they have such egos that even when they come to know that what they were thinking is not correct, their ego doesn’t allow them to accept it.

I had the great privilege of being with him continuously for at least four years in America, when he would go for summer camps and family camps. Because of his failing health, he was allowed to teach only one class in the family camps, and the other classes for adults I used to conduct. In Michigan, in 1993, a family new to the Mission attended that camp. They were quite happy and impressed, and everything was going on well. One day, I don’t know what happened, but that man, a doctor, came to me a little disturbed. He said that something about Gurudev disturbed him—some act. He said Gurudev is a great man and I don’t want to lose my faith, but why is it like this? Sometimes, our mind feels like that of its own. The doctor asked some senior Mission members, who tried to explain and justify, but somehow he was not satisfied, so he came to me.

I said, “Doctor, you do one simple thing. You just write a letter to Gurudev and tell him, ‘Somehow I am disturbed.’ That is all.” He asked, “I should write this?” I said, “Yes, I guarantee you will get a reply.” I knew that if I said anything, it would not satisfy him. And so he wrote, and for a long time, I didn’t hear anything from him. Gurudev’s *yajna* was in Washington DC, and then he went to San Diego, and there, he attained *mahāsamādhi*.

When I was in San Jose, before shifting to India, I got a call one day. That doctor called and said, “Swamiji, I cannot tell you the greatness of Swamiji [Gurudev]! As you said, I did write. And he replied to me. He said about what I mentioned, ‘You are right! I was wrong!’ Can you believe it?!”

It was his personal observation and view, yet Gurudev said he was right. That person was so moved. For quite a few years, he worked in our hospital in Bangalore when they moved to India. Once you come to know that you are wrong, to accept it is not very easy. Gurudev’s honesty and nature was such, even toward the end of his life.

And what to say of his courage and fearlessness! Once it is decided that this particular thing is to be done, then have the courage and fearlessness to do it. Chinmaya Mission’s name is such that any *brahmachārī* can go somewhere and say he is from Chinmaya Mission, and people give him so much respect. In the early days, when Gurudev started his work, British rule had just come to an end. So many people were orthodox or in a most confused state. But Gurudev’s courage of conviction and fearlessness could not be matched. So many were opposed, but he did not become bitter; he just went on doing his work. Remaining steadfast in your work without becoming bitter is a great quality. And if

he felt that things were not right, he himself apologised.

His *samarpaṇa*, or dedication, was as given in *Bhagavad Gita*: “*Tat kurushva-madarpaṇam*,” or, “Whatever you do, dedicate everything to Me.” I was with him when he was asked, “You are building so many ashrams. What will happen to them and all the work after your departure?” His answer was simple: “I felt like doing this work, and I did it for the Lord. After this, if,” and he pointed to me and many other people, “they want to continue, then they will continue.”

In an organization, changes constantly happen. After Gurudev’s *mahāsamādhi*, so many people left, so many people thought the Mission will break down. But Gurudev had said that the Mission came as God’s will, and it will stay as long as God wills, and it will also go only when God wills. This is total surrender.

He would plan his itinerary a year in advance. Toward the end of his life, he would write, “If health permits, it will begin.” I had heard him say this. He had given dates to many Mission centers for programs in 1994. He would make his itinerary and place it before the Lord, as though he would get a nod from *Bhagavān*. How he used to get the nod, I do not know. But in 1993, he said, “This year I am not getting that nod, but you go on doing it anyway.” And in 1993, on the 3rd of August, he attained *mahāsamādhi*. He did everything only as his worship to the Lord; his *bhāva* was *ofsamarpaṇam*.

I can tell countless incidents on his detachment (*anāsakti*). But what is most important is that we learn detachment from the body. Doctors knew him and about his heart condition; they said that in such a condition, a person cannot even go from A to B! Yet Gurudev was constantly traveling internationally, conducting programs and meetings; it was simply a miracle. He was a diabetic patient and losing all sensation in his feet. Some people would sometimes show pity out of their own *bhakti* and they would say, “Oh, Swamiji’s legs and feet have become . . .” In reply, he would say, “But my brain is working, no? What is working, why don’t you pay attention to that?”

Once, a girl who had a problem with her knees went with her mother to see him. She still comes sometimes and now has an artificial leg. Most people feel pity when they see people with such ailments, but Swamiji was not like that. He laughed and said, “Thank God, you have got good brains! There are so many people who have no brains.” The idea here is to turn the person’s energies to a positive direction. He was detached from all kinds of things.

Then, his patriotism! What to say about that *desh-bhakti*? It was really something. Compassion, modesty, and great regard for all great saints, like his respect for Swami Vivekanandaji. When that [Swami Vivekananda] Rock Memorial was inaugurated, his condition was very bad, but he said, “I have to go there,” and he did. His *desh-bhakti* and regard for all mahatmas was unparalleled.

His Work

What is his work? It is enough to write a book on. We have a book called *Call of the Conch* and it has everything in it. But what was his main work? Statistics you can give, but the work that he did was:

- Giving the rationale behind the scriptures. He called Vedanta the “Science of Life.” What people thought of as spirituality—some bundle of blind beliefs etc.—he taught as the *Logic of Spirituality*. He gave the rationale behind spirituality and emphasized that religion and culture are not bogus.
- Making the scriptures and their knowledge available to all—to the classes and the masses. He demystified everything. So many people were trying to make

everything mystical and secretive, but he made it available to everybody. At this time, we may not appreciate this much, but remember, when the British were ruling, they systematically destroyed our pride in our own religion, culture—everything. Soon after independence, when his work started, he created pride in India and her culture. People had started thinking that everything that comes from outside—the West—alone is the best, and everything from India is useless and a waste. But that was not true. He would say, “I don’t seek to convert people belonging to other religions to Hinduism. I want to convert Hindus to Hinduism. They themselves do not know.” Years later, our Mission youth, organized a national quiz called “Awakening Indians to India.” Sooner or later, we will organize a quiz for Mission members: “Do you know your Mission?” Only when we know ourselves and what truly we are can we do something. If we have such a low opinion of ourselves, what can we do? One should not look down on oneself or degrade oneself.

- Touching the hearts and lives of millions, and transforming them. This was his real work. No statistics can be given about that. It is not possible. When you travel to different places and meet people, you will be surprised to hear and see how Gurudev touched them. That is the real work of transformation.
- Consideration for all people, of all ages—from children to senior citizens—and their needs. This was a cultural revival and he knew that only one person cannot go on doing this work. There are limitations. If this work is to continue, there has to be a *paramparā*. To look beyond one’s own life is something very special. So many mahatmas were present at the time. We cannot and do not compare their greatness and say one is greater than the other. But Gurudev made a certain kind of difference; he beyond his own life. The two-year Vedanta Courses in *Sandeepanys*, in different languages, have been continuously going on, maintaining this *Guru-shishya sampradāya*. The work goes on spreading. I was supposed to teach a two-year course, but had to take many breaks because of health and travel. But was there any break in the course? No. Why? This is the strength of *Guru-shishya paramparā*. Some acharya or the other came to take over. The work has to go on—such is the power of the *paramparā*.

His Teachings

K.P. Daswani in Singapore wanted to take Gurudev to China. In those days, China lived behind an iron curtain. For any and all visiting speakers, the officials wanted to know everything the speaker would speak about. So Gurudev was not very interested, but KPji wanted him to go there. Gurudev said, “If you can get the visa, I will go.” Those authorities asked what will he would be speaking on. When KPji asked Swamiji to please give some points or a synopsis, Swamiji said, “I don’t prepare my talk. If they don’t give visa, I don’t care.” KPji was so eager to take him there and so he took *The Holy Gita* and sent it the officials, telling them Swami would speak from this only. To his surprise, they gave the visa, and Swamiji did go there, although there were so many restrictions.

If someone asks what was Gurudev’s teaching, can you give the whole *Gita* to everybody? Yes, that was his teaching. When I discussed this with others and we brainstormed, we found these to be his teachings:

1. “You change!” He told us many times, “You are not here to change others.” The most humorous thing I remember was when I conducted the first Vedanta Course in Sidhabari, and on its conclusion, I requested Swamiji to meet them and to please address them. The first thing he said was, “You have learnt this knowledge to go and teach, but don’t think you are going to change the world. You cannot change anyone.” Then he looked at them and asked, “Could I change you?” and laughed.

2. World perfection through individual perfection. You can only try to be perfect. After all, the individual is a unit. Don't go on complaining about the imperfections of this world; try to perfect and improve yourself.
3. "Keep smiling!" One of our *brahmachārīs* once asked, Swamiji what do you expect from us? He replied, "Nothing. Just smile when we meet."
4. Active resistance to evil.
5. And the most beautiful is, "We can! We must!"

REFLECTIONS

The Dance

by Chetana Neerchal

I dance to the beat of fears manifold	Lifeless garments, both fears and I	Eternally shaking off our tired dust, to engage forever in this thrilling dance
Fears manifold dance to my beat	Colorful breathless stimulating, yet draining,	Hearing not our own ceaseless cries that plead for Rest
Inseparable partners Who enlivens whom? I lift our veils to reveal our faceless faces	is this dance of lifeless garments	

Gurudev's Farewell to Mother Ganga in 1991

by Anjali Singh

Continued from CMW News, May 2013

Swamiji [Pujya Gurudev] and Krishna remained always inseparably together—Swamiji in the form of the gold heart locket around my Bāla Krishna idol, named “the Great Witness.” The two together were the most important symbols in my life, and over the years, my attachment to them grew.

Swamiji had giving the heart to Krishna in Zurich, Switzerland, saying, “I am giving my heart to Krishna. He wanted it!” Nine years later, Swamiji was holding a *Gita jñāna yajña* in Dehradun in March 1991, and was to drive to BHEL (Bharat Electricals) in Haridwar to address the Chinmaya Degree College students. The previous night, Swamiji had said, “I am going to drop them at Hari-ki-Pauri in Haridwar at 6 a.m. and proceed to BHEL.” I did not realize then that the word “drop” would have such a huge significance. I was thrilled at this unexpected trip to Gangaji along with Swamiji, and that, too, to the most sacred bathing *ghāṭ* down the

entire river.

Five of us, including Jyoti Barucha, who was a trained nurse and had come from USA to serve Swamiji, and Divyajyoti, the daughter of our host, Maharaja Divya Deb Singh, were in the car that followed Swamiji's. From Hari-ki-Pauri, Swamiji drove another half hour past Gangaji to the BHEL complex, while we stayed behind.

We had an exhilarating hour playing in Mother Ganga's holy waters while She affectionately washed off all our sins! Jyoti asked if she might also give Krishna His dip. I asked her to be careful about the heart around his neck. She took the heart off, wound it around a safety pin, pinned it to his clothes, and left them in my handbag. She bathed Krishna in the Gangaji while I took photographs of Him.



We then had a priest perform a puja, something I do not normally do, to Krishna. Half an hour later, while dressing up the Great Witness in the car, I realized with a shock, that the heart was missing! I even ripped open the lining of the handbag, but it was nowhere to be found. I requested the two gentlemen from Dehradun in the car if we could go back to search for it. Everyone said it would be impossible to find it in such an overcrowded place of pilgrimage. I, too, knew of the bare possibility, but I also knew that I would always live with the regret if I did not even try. When I told Jyoti Whom [Pujya Gurudev] the heart represented, she was as worried as me. She also realized the symbolic significance of losing the heart to Gangaji's waters.

We turned the car back and I prayed to Gangaji to please let me have Swamiji's heart back, and that I would not be asking if it was not a matter of life and death. I implored Her not to decline this special request under any circumstances.

At Hari-ki-Pauri I ran down the numerous steps and asked the first pilgrim who was bathing

there whether he had seen such a heart. And he replied, “The one that looks like a *pān* leaf?” I said in anxious excitement, “Yes!” He said that it had been lying on the wet steps, and he and his wife had thrown it higher toward the dry steps. Apparently, he was an honest pilgrim who did not want to take something that had been offered to Gangaji; last rites were usually offered there for the departed.

We all started searching and a bystander who had overheard us found it almost immediately! I was overjoyed and thanked him and Gangaji profusely. The vibrant heart who was Swamiji in that form, must have felt excluded from the holy dip. Somehow, he had managed to extricate himself from the safety pin and gone ahead to have a dip all by himself! It was my mistake to not have given Swamiji a dip, which was why he had dropped us off at Hari-ki-Pauri. Jyoti was quite baffled as she was sure that she had secured the heart properly.

We reached BHEL excited to relate the whole story to Swamiji. After hearing the first part of the story, up to my prayer to Gangaji, Swamiji was ushered into the BHEL dining hall for breakfast with a host of people. While walking away, he looked back and asked with great interest: “So, did you find it?”

“Yes!” I said happily. It was one of those moments in life when I was so excited to have had my prayers answered. It was a reassurance for me that Someone is really looking after you, and I have always looked upon Gangaji as Mother. And whenever I have visited Her, some change has taken place in my life.

Swamiji was seated at the head of the table. After most of the seats were occupied by the college and Delhi school trustees and principals, he called out to me, “Anjali! Come and sit here,” pointing to the seat on his right. I went to him and whispered that Jagdeesh Prasad’s daughter was yet to be seated. But he said in a commanding voice, “Sit down!” His face was grim.

Whenever he used that tone of voice, it was always prudent to do as told without argument. I took a photo of him with that grim expression, but dared not take another. I was scared—for once!



I wondered what I had done wrong between telling him the story and walking to the dining room. And I found out before I could even put the first spoonful of cornflakes in my mouth. “If

Gangaji asks you for something, don't you have the heart to give it?" he said.

I could not believe that Swamiji, who had shown such an interest in the story, was chiding me for recovering his heart! He knew what it meant to me. He also knew the whole significance of giving this living, pulsating vibrant heart of his to Gangaji. I felt tears welling up in my eyes. Pretending nonchalance, I put the cornflakes in my mouth, but had a hard time swallowing.

Swamiji continued, "Some detachment is necessary to gain something greater. If you don't give up something, a greater good can't come to you."

At this point, I could no longer hold back the emotional upsurge and it silently made its way out. Uma Shergil came around and asked me if I wanted to eat a *dosa*, but I asked her for a tissue instead. She brought a pile of paper napkins and gave me one.

Swamiji said, "Take a few more." I guess he knew what was coming. Uma left the whole lot on the table and a *dosa* on my plate. Swamiji passed me *sāmbār* from his plate, but I could not eat a thing. I smiled mistily and apologetically, and then tried to change the topic by cracking a joke.

I said to Swamiji, "Yesterday, you spoke in your talk about the eight arrow markers to Brahman. "Changeless" hit me the most." I asked Uma if any had hit home for her and she said, "Yes. All of them."

"Where? On the bottom?" I asked.

"All over!" she replied. At this, Swamiji laughed loudly and so did all of us. I thought with relief that the Gangaji topic was over.

And Swamiji said, "Ultimately, all things have their end in Gangaji. That is the final resting place.

This time, I replied defiantly, "I cannot give Her your heart."

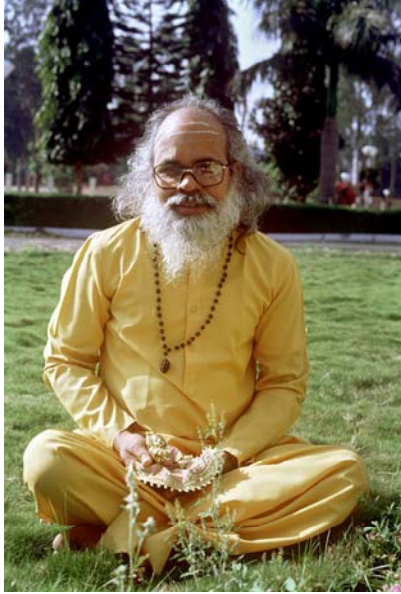
"Then don't grow up! Remain young!" he said.

At this point, I stopped trying to control my emotions and the silent tears flowed continuously—even after we had gotten up from the table, for several hours. I used up all the napkins, to say the least.

I now realize that Swamiji was trying to make me face my subconscious fears in his presence. Until that day, my mind had refused to ever entertain even the slightest thought of his leaving us. Whenever such a thought would come, I would just push it away.

Indira Bharadwaj, the principal of *Chinmaya Vidyalaya* in Delhi, pressed my hand in consolation as we walked out of the dining room. Nobody seemed to know what exactly was happening. She said, "Don't behave like a *paglī* (mad woman). So what if Swamiji got cross with you! He doesn't mean it!" To them I just seemed to be overreacting to something he had said. This was almost the first time in my 30 years with Swamiji that I was crying before him. And it would not have happened had his tone not bound me to that chair.

Later, I went out and sat alone with Krishna and the heart on the lawns of the guest house, and the tears just would not stop. Brahmachari Gopinath Chaitanya from Uttarkashi (the late Swami Dhyanananda) seemed very concerned and watched from a distance for about an hour. Perhaps he thought that the hysterical woman might commit suicide.



It was now becoming evident to me what I must do with the heart. I started by taking a lot of photos of Krishna and Swamiji's heart together.



I wondered if I would actually be able to bring myself to give his heart to Gangaji. It remains the most difficult thing I ever had to do in my life.

Even his address to the college students seemed to be directed to me, for it was all about detachment at the mind level. He must have realized what was going through my mind—that perhaps I intended to give the heart back to Gangaji since he had admonished me over it. He said, “The body is symbolic. We have to do things with the mind. It is the mind which is the doer, not the body!”



I felt that I needed to practice detachment at both levels, one leading to the other. I realized that I did not really have a choice. I rode with Indira Bharadwaj and Col. Bhargava in their car and requested them to go via Hari-ki-Pauri. I explained the entire context to Indira and she ended up in tears as well.

The mere thought of dispensing Swamiji's heart into Gangaji was nerve shattering. At Hari-ki-Pauri, I went to the place where Swamiji's heart had been spotted by the pilgrim. Here, Gangaji again received what was meant for Her in the first place, what Swamiji had wanted to give Her. This was a matter between them. I was only an outsider, an instrument, who had tried to interfere in a ritual he had planned.

I should not have asked Gangaji to return the heart; it would have saved me the trauma of having to give it back. Indira, who was safeguarding my camera, took a photo of me offering back the heart.



Swamiji had great love for Gangaji as Divine Mother, as the embodiment of Self-knowledge. At Her banks in Rishikesh, he had been drawn to religion and had been initiated into *sannyāsa* by Swami Sivananda-ji Maharaj. And at Her banks in Uttarkashi and Gangotri, he had learned *Brahma-vidyā* from his teacher, Swami Tapovanj-i Maharaj.

Ganga represents the flow of Knowledge. It was She, by example, who had inspired Swamiji to take the Knowledge down to the masses. Her presence in the form of *kalashas* was installed by Swamiji in the Jagadishvara Temple of the Powai ashram in Mumbai. *Ganga Stotam* is chanted in all the Chinmaya Missions centers around the world. It was an extraordinary close relationship that he had with Her—almost like that of Bhīshma Pitāmaha.

It is not possible that he would go by her for the last time, without a befittingly deep salute, consonant with the place she held in his life. And so it was, that in recognition of this unique relation, he gave his heart to her at their last meeting, knowing that the rest of his embodiment he would give to Mother Earth. Into water and earth are the two ways in which a mahatma's form is merged with the elements. And Swamiji gave his mortal forms to them both.

Later, when Swamiji was sitting in the garden, I touched my orange *dupatta* indicating my renunciation—because I had at least symbolically shown detachment by giving the heart to Gangaji. He said, “Available in the market!”

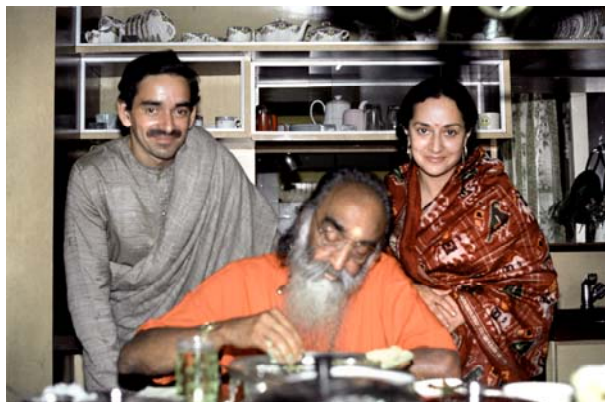
Though Krishna slept every night just above Swamiji's bed, I thought perhaps Swamiji might not have noticed that there was no more a heart locket included in Krishna's fancy pink outfit. I took Swamiji's orange handkerchief and used it to replace Krishna's clothes. When Swamiji was walking to the car for the evening discourse I said, “Krishna has thrown his heart into Gangaji, and in the shock of it, has renounced the world and taken *sannyāsa*! He borrowed your hanky for that purpose!”

He said, “What about the 16,000?”

I said, “16,000 what?”

“16,000 wives!” he replied. “The whole community is in trouble!” Then he hurriedly got into the car, as he was getting late.

When he got on the dais his very first sentence was, “Krishna had 16,008 wives. He could handle them all, whereas we can't even handle three!” Then he went on to explain that they represented the 16,008 thoughts or *vrttis* of the human mind. Like this, he explained *karma-phala tyāga* as renouncing worries and fear in life, making Krishna and His 16,008 wives the opening topic for 15 minutes!



-- Om --

167th GEETA GYAN YAGNA, AKOLA

(Geeta XIII & Bhaj Govindam)

5th January to 15th January 1967

Swami Chinmayanand

SHRINIWAS
Vanasda-Peth, AKOLA

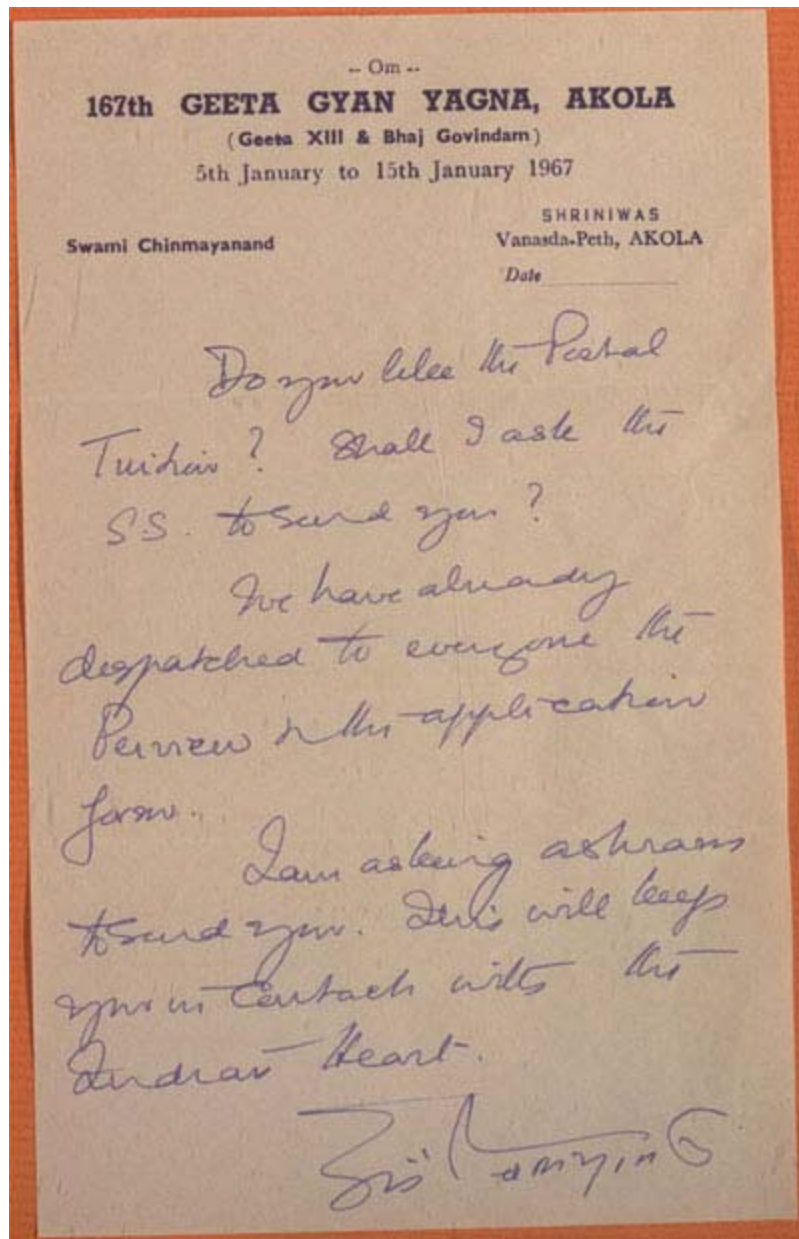
Date 7.1.67

Angali

Thank you very much for the
sweet remembrance of the Chief
Supervisor Divine who peeps at all
acts even when blanketed with
darkness. This Great Witness of
all is ever all-eyes, all-ears.

For He has also an
Infinite Heart of endless love.
He understands; helps the sincere;
provides for the devotees.

May He be ever with you
with all blessings during 1967 like
the Elephant-Team. Sri Chinmoy.



Keeper of My Peace
by Chetana Neerchal

From whence is this
fascination
for
dark silhouettes,
silver horizons,
the moon floating
in midnight's breath?

Ever-lasting
never dying,
I want you
with me always,
for
You are the
keeper of my peace

Through
Childhood's dreamy
smiles,
teen's wild
melancholy,
today's struggle
in accepting
Life

What is *Sādhana Chatushṭaya*? (Part 2)

by Swami Advayananda

Continued from March 2013; originally published as "Vedanta Unveiled" in Tapovan Prasad

Sādhana-chatushṭaya is the four-fold means that makes one an *adhikārī*, a qualified aspirant for the knowledge of *Brahman*.

1. *Viveka* (discrimination)
2. *Vairāgya* (dispassion)
3. *Shamādi-shaṭka-sampatti* (six disciplines or inner-wealths beginning with *shama*) and
4. *Mumukshutvam* (desire for liberation)

Of the four, we have seen in detail, the first—*viveka*. *Viveka*, which literally means discrimination, stands for the firm and decisive conviction (*nishchaya*) that *Brahman* alone is permanent and all else - the whole perceivable world (*dṛshya-prapañcha*) is impermanent. Such a *viveka*, an 'intellectual-heartfelt-sureness' is a great achievement in one's spiritual path. Decisiveness in this matter has far-reaching results. In fact *viveka* is the very foundation of *sādhana* (spiritual practice). It transforms the individual into a *sādhaka* (seeker of Truth) and also paves the way for the birth of the other three aspects of the *sādhana-chatushṭaya*.

In this part, we shall elaborate on *vairāgya*, the second aspect of *sādhana-chatushṭaya*. The word *vairāgya* literally means the "state of absence (*vigata*) of attachment (*rāga*).” It can be translated as detachment, desirelessness, or dispassion. *Vairāgya* is of three types: *manda* (dull), *madhyama* (mediocre), and *tīvra* (intense).

Manda vairāgya is only a temporary *vairāgya*. When near and dear ones die, or when all of one's hard-earned wealth is lost in some unexpected calamity, there arises an intense sorrow, and spontaneously one exclaims, "This worldly life is too painful to bear!" At that moment of heart-wrenching pain, one feels like giving up everything. But this feeling of renunciation is only momentary. After some time, when things cool down or become a little better, it is back to square one—whipped by desires, we are once again sweating and toiling for fleeting sense pleasures.

Madhyama vairāgya is such that though there is dispassion for things of this world, there still remains a strong desire for the pleasures of the other worlds. Due to some small collection of merits (*puṇya*), one understands the painful nature of sense enjoyments; the tensions to acquire and hoard; the fear of loss; and even after acquiring, the possibility of prolonged disease or sudden death ever hanging over one's head like the sword of Damocles. Yet, the individual has dreams of subtler and greater enjoyments in more permanent realms like *Svarga-loka*, *Brahma-loka*, and so on. And he plans to go there after death by living a life of virtue here, by meticulously performing various Vedic rituals that promise those realms. He believes that he can be truly happy with those heavenly pleasures. Thus, the individual has only substituted the desire for objects of this world with those another world, but the passion for sense enjoyments has not faded.

Tīvra vairāgya is true, intense, and complete *vairāgya*, wherein one is totally dispassionate to everything—objects of this world and other worlds. This arises out of tremendous merit (*puṇya*) and from a clear perception that all enjoyments whether of any world can never give permanent happiness—because they are all born of actions, and actions can only give reactions. If the actions are within the realm of time (finite), then so are the results. One sees the impermanence of such pleasures and knows that pleasure-seeking will only push one neck-deep into *samsara*. It is this kind of firm, absolute, and true *vairāgya* that is the means for Knowledge.

Bhagavadpāda Shankaracharya defines *tīvra vairāgya* in *Vivekachudamani* as:

*tad-vairāgyaḥ juḡupsā yā darshana-shravanādibhiḥ
dehādi-brahma-paryante hyanītye bhogavastuni*

“*Vairāgya* is revulsion from all things seen, heard etc.; from all transient objects of enjoyment beginning with the body up to *Brahma* (-*loka*).” Here, the word *Brahma* does not mean the supreme Brahman, but stands for the joys of *Brahma-loka*, the highest realm of worldly enjoyment.

The analysis of *vairāgya* according to the five-fold criteria (as done for *viveka*) is as follows:

Hetu (Cause): The cause for *vairāgya* is *viveka*. When one sees clearly that sense pleasures, here or hereafter, are no solution to the emptiness within, one understands that they are temporary and impure; that running after them means creating *rāga* (likes) and *dvesha* (dislikes), strengthening *vāsanās* (impressions), causing further births, and this bringing more trouble than joy. When the intellect is firmly convinced about the hollowness of sense pleasures, it will no more blindly rush toward them.

Svarūpa (Nature): Just as one feels a revulsion (*juḡupsā*) to one’s own vomit or the feces of a crow, so too, one has a strong dislike towards sense pleasures and even starts fearing their enjoyment. Thus there is an absolute cessation of desire and the consequent pursuit of worldly enjoyments.

Sant Jnaneshvar Maharaj, in his commentary on *Bhagavad Gita*, brings out the true nature of dispassion beautifully in a series of similes that jolt the mind. He says, “A man of true detachment will run toward sense objects with as much enthusiasm as rushing to embrace a dead queen’s rotting body, with as much satisfaction as quenching one’s thirst by drinking the pus flowing out of a leper’s wound, and with as much readiness as entering a boiling cauldron of molten iron to take a refreshing bath.”

Kārya (Effect): The effect of dispassion expresses as the absence of desire even for objects that can be easily enjoyed, e.g., daily food. Further, even while experiencing these objects, the *vairāgī* finds no sense of enjoyment as such.

Avatī (Perfection): This is the indifference (*upekshā*) towards the entire gamut of pleasures—from *kāminī* to *kañchana*, to *kīrti* (lust, wealth, fame), as Shri Ramakrishna puts it—of this world, up to the extremely subtle celestial pleasures of *Brahma-loka*. This indifference is like the sheer unconcern one has for, say, a torn cloth or piece of straw laying on the wayside.

Phala (Result): *Vairāgya* results in the rise of the next aspect of *sādhana-chatusṭaya*, namely, *śamādi-shaṭka-sampatti*. Certain texts also indicate *sāmīpya*, one of the four kinds of *mukti*, in case of a seeker’s death before attaining Self-realization.

Vairāgya is the practical application of *viveka*. If *viveka* is the knowledge that all sense pleasures are impermanent in nature, then *vairāgya* is not hankering after them. What is the purpose of knowledge if one cannot reap the benefit of it? *Viveka* without *vairāgya* is like having wealth that cannot be used in one’s need. *Viveka* reaches its fulfilment only in *vairāgya*, and without *vairāgya*, there is no spiritual progress at all. Spiritual progress is measured by the amount of true *vairāgya* one has. Hence, cultivating firm *vairāgya* is very, very important.

Three wrong estimations about the world stagnate us in a mire of sensory pleasures:

1. *Satyatvam*: The sense of reality given to the objects of the world
2. *Nityatvam*: The sense of their permanence

3. *Sukhitvam*: The false imagination that there is joy in them

As long as a seeker entertains these three notions about worldly objects, he cannot but seek them for his happiness. It is only in the removal of these three false notions that brings freedom from desire. *Satyatvam* should be removed by understanding *themithyatvam* (illusory nature) of objects; *nityatvam* by *anityatvam* (ephemeral nature); and *sukhitvam* by *duḥkhitvam* (pain-giving nature). Once one recognizes that the world of objects is illusory like mirage waters, impermanent like bubbles in water, and the cause of pain and sorrow, one will never run after the world. Nachiketa of *Kaṭhopanishad* fame reveals *viveka* beautifully when he says to Lord Yama:

*shvobhāvāmartyasya yad-antakaitat sarvendriyāṇām jarayanti tejaḥ
api sarvam jīvitam-alpam-eva tavaiva vāhas-tava nṛtyaḡīte*

“O Death! Ephemeral are these and they waste away the vigor of all the organs that a man has. All life, without exception, is fleeting indeed. Keep your chariots, dances, and songs!”

When one steadily applies such *viveka*, the mind weans away from its foolish, dangerous, and habitual pursuits of sense pleasures. The neverending hunt for joy and comfort from objects of the world makes us go in purposeless, painful circles. The frustration and gnawing emptiness within that one tries to escape by revelling in sense objects only becomes stronger; momentary thrills do not satisfy us. Real happiness is in realizing the Supreme, which alone is *satyam* (true), *shivam* (auspicious), and *sundaram* (beautiful). The *Mahabharata* declares the glory and greatness of that state of total *vairāgya*:

*na sukham deva-rājasya na sukham chakravartinaḥ
yādrsham vīta-rāgasya munerekānta-shīlinaḥ
yachcha kāma-sukham loke yachcha divyam mahat sukham
tṛṣṇākshaya-sukhasyaite nārhatam shodashī kalām*

“The happiness of Indra or an emperor is nothing compared to that of a saint who is devoid of all attachment and living alone. The joy of sense pleasures, or even the most marvellous celestial joys, cannot approach even a sixteenth of the joy of a man in whom all desires have disappeared.”

To be continued

Light in the Night
by Chetana Neerchal

And the night
has fallen,
my friend;
suddenly, quickly,
as only a winter evening
can end.

Our day is done,
its light is swept
into the corners
of the world.

It's time to
light up
our prayers
on this
cold January night.

Introduction to *Jñāna Sāra*

Talk by Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya; transcribed by Bela Pandya

All our human efforts in life can be grouped into two categories: One where some doing, some action is involved; the other where knowing is involved. If I want to go to the end of hall, first I need to know how to get there. So, knowing always comes first. But just knowing how to get there doesn't get me there; I need to act. I can walk straight, or zigzag, or in circles. Or, I can get tired, change my mind, and go later. After knowing how to get there, I many even decide not to go at all. So, there are many options on how to do, how much to do, how much not to do, or how not to do at all.

I have many options when it comes to doing, but with knowing, there is only one way. If I want to know this watch, how can I know it? Is it dependent on me or on how the watch reveals itself to be? If a belt is black, can I say it is white? If I say it is white, then this is incorrect knowledge. I have to know a thing as it is.

Doing or accomplishing a function depends on the individual doer, but knowing depends on the object that I want to know. For example, when cooking, first I need to know how to cook. And for every recipe, there is a specific method. If I don't follow this recipe, I will get something unexpected. I have often seen people from North India wanting to make *idli* and *dosa*, and South Indians wanting to make *phulkā* or *chhole*. But unless you follow the exact method, the result will not be what you may expect it to be. Just by knowing cooking, can I satiate my hunger?

In life, all our efforts are grouped into these two categories of knowing and doing. In doing, the option is up to us. In knowing, all rights are reserved by the object we want to know. In technical terms, doing is called *purusha tantra* and knowing is called *vastu tantra*.

Jñāna Sāra focuses on *jñānam*, or knowing the Self—not doing something to get or reach the Self, for I do not have to do anything to get something that I already have.

There four areas wherein action is required: *utpādyam*, *prāpyam*, *saṁskāryam*, and *vikāryam*.

Take the example of a table. It was first a log of wood. To create a table, I have to cut the wood and shape it. This is called *utpādyam*—that which was not there in the beginning has been created.

Prāpyam is where I do not put forth any effort to create the table. Instead, I just go to a shop and buy it. *Prāpyam* means “to obtain” and it also includes begging, borrowing, or stealing.

Let's say I have something in raw form or in an unfinished condition. It looks like a table, but I want to polish it, add a nice border. This is *saṁskāryam*, or purification. Purification is an act and it will not happen just by knowing, but doing.

Vikāryam is modifying or destroying an object. Suppose the table is too high and you want to cut its legs to make it shorter; this is modifying it. Or, you may decide to change the table into something else altogether; this is destroying the original object.

All these four fall under the purview of doing. Now, let us consider the Self. Do we have to go out and produce It from something? No, it is already there. Do we have to borrow it or buy it? No. Can we purify *Ātman*? No, *Ātman* cannot be purified; the mind can be purified. *Ātman* is *avikārī*, or without modifications. This means that none of the four types of doing can be used with relation to the Self.

This means the Self has to be known as it is. When it is said “as it is,” it means “not the way I want to know it.” I may have my own ideas that *Paramātmā* means someone with so many heads, a white beard, a crown, etc. But they are just my ideas. We have to know *Ātman* know as it is, not based on any idea.

And to know, I do not have to do anything. Yes, as part of my preparation to know I may need to do some things. Thus, all doing is part of the preparation process. But once we are ready, knowledge is immediate. This is called *yathārtha darshanam*. So when the rishis teach that *Sat* is *Sat* alone and *asat* is *asat* alone, it becomes *yathārtha darshanam* for the qualified and ready disciples.

Here is an apple. To know this apple, I have to know it only as apple. If I say it is a mango, or pineapple, or orange, this would be wrong knowledge. But how to eat this apple is up to me. I can bite it, peel off the skin, cut it into large pieces or small pieces, or whatever. I can also throw it out and keep walking. Therefore, in eating, where there is doing, I have all the options open to me; but in knowing, there is only one way: Know it as it is.

Jñāna Sāra is the “Essence of Knowledge.” Knowledge can be grouped into two types: Knowledge of everything of the world (e.g., math, science, dance, music, computers, finance, language, astrology, etc.) is called *aparā vidyā*, or lower knowledge, worldly knowledge. Knowledge of the Self is *parā vidyā*, or higher knowledge, knowledge of the Supreme.

Our reflection on the word *jñānam* can be like this: Knowing in the worldly sense takes place in two ways: One is indirect knowledge, or knowing through my instruments of body, mind, and intellect; and the other is direct knowledge, wherein no means are necessary. If I want to know this watch, how do I know it? Through my senses. My organs of perception help me know the things of the world. If I want to know my thoughts, whether I am happy or sorrowful, I have to know my mind. Through my mind and intellect, I know feelings, emotions, thoughts, etc. But when it comes to my own presence, do I need any other means of knowledge? Do I need any instruments to know that I exist? No. This is direct perception or direct knowledge. The first kind of knowledge described, which is obtained through various means and instruments, is called knowledge through perception: *Paroksha jñānam*. The second type is direct knowledge: *Aparoksha jñānam*.

We can reflect more, in a different way. Suppose I want to get another watch. Then I have to go out and look for it—whether I want to buy one or make one. But if I want to know or gain the watch that is in my pocket—only I forgot that it is there—what do I need to do? If I start looking for it everywhere other than my pocket, will I be able to get it? No. First, I need to know what I am looking for and then I need to know where it is. For a watch that is somewhere else, I can follow various paths. But for the watch in my pocket, all I need to do is know that it is already with me. So too, Self-knowledge is not the result of, or gain from, all our analyses and efforts. But these ‘doing’ processes are part of the preparation, and yes, this will require a lot of reflection.

That which I do not have and try to gain is called *aprāptasya prāpti*. To gain that which I already have is called *prāptasya prāpti*. I put my glasses on my head and then search for them everywhere. Someone comes and points out where they are. All my earlier efforts completely stop at that moment; I realize that what I was looking for was with me all along.

A wife had received a new gold and diamond necklace from her father as a gift. She was so fond of it that every night she would remove it and put it on again early morning. The family was invited for Thanksgiving dinner, and on that very day, she forgot to put on her necklace in the morning, thinking that she would do it later during the day. When she was getting ready for the dinner, she put on the necklace absentmindedly. She got busy with other things, but still kept thinking that she has to put her necklace on later. When it was time for them to leave,

she was frantically looking for the necklace; the entire house was like a circus. Her husband and all her children were looking for it. Her husband finally saw it around her neck and tried to tell her from across the room, in the midst of all the noise and commotion, “It’s there! It’s there!” But she couldn’t get into her head what he was saying. She still kept asking in utter confusion, “Where? I’m looking for it! Where?” Only when she touched her neck did she say, “Okay, I got it!”

In the same way, we keep looking for the Self, not knowing where it is, thinking it is “somewhere.” Just as we just have to know that the necklace is “right here,” so too, we do not have to do anything to attain the Self. Just know it: The Self is “here.” Thereafter, all our sorrows, work, and running around stop. Until then, they will continue. This is the knowledge that the teacher, Bhagavān Shri Ramaṇa Maharishi, wants to impart in this text. You will have to reflect on it, and yes, while this is still “doing,” it is all part of the necessary preparation.

Jñāna Sāra is based on the voluminous text, *Yoga Vāsishṭha*, wherein Rishi Vasishṭha imparts the essence of Self-knowledge to Lord Rama. *Jñāna Sāra* presents this knowledge in 18 verses. In all our scriptures, whether *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Shrīmad Bhāgavatam*, or the Upanishads, there is often a disciple who asks questions and a guru who gives the answers. In *Mahābhārata*, there is a dialogue between Janmejaya and Vaishampāyana; in *Gītā*, we have Arjuna and Lord Krishna; in *Tulasī Rāmāyaṇa*, there are parallel dialogues ongoing.

In *Jñāna Sāra* also, we see the journey of an individual who thinks he is bound and suffering, who is caught up in this world and has become a slave to it. This individual reflects on the purpose of life, and questions his identity, God, and the world. This marks the start of his, and every seeker’s, spiritual journey. After approaching a teacher, he finally gains Self-knowledge, which leads to Fulfillment.

Our foremost question often is, “Having gained this knowledge, what happens?” Truly speaking, we are not very interested in the knowledge; we are more interested in its results or aftereffects. But to directly know the effects, we have to get the knowledge first.

The first six verses of *Jñāna Sāra* address the journey of an individual—his present state in life, how he moves forward, and how he eventually reaches a teacher. If I want to learn how to dance, then I have to know which dance I want to learn, find out who the good teachers are, and prepare myself accordingly. If my body is overweight for most of the movements or my body parts are aching, I will not be a fit student. First, I have to become a qualified and prepared student. Then, when I am learning, I have to be an obedient student and surrender to the teacher’s disciplines. When the teaching is over, then there is an *ārāṅgetram*, where the student displays her learning. This represents the fulfillment of the knowledge she gained. Now, the disciple can continue learning her own; her teacher’s role is over, but her gratitude and reverence to him remains.

The first verse in most of our scriptures is an invocation seeking the Guru’s blessings and knowledge, and showing the disciple’s reverential surrender to the Guru’s will. In keeping with this tradition, the first verse of *Jñāna Sāra* is an invocation seeking Lord Rama’s blessings to study, imbibe, and directly experience of the teachings in the text that are as lofty as Upanishadic knowledge. The seeker prays for inspiration, strength, surrender of ego, humility, and transformation. Transformation here means that this knowledge should not remain as mere information, but lead to direct experience of the Self.

After the student has saluted Lord Rama and the *Sat-guru* with devotion and surrender, the Guru addresses the student and tells him that he has composed this text for “*svātmā-eka-nishṭhā-siddhi*,” or single-pointed abidance in the Self.

The reference to *rāmam* here is Lord Rāma, who is the author’s *ishṭa-deva*. The word *rāma* is

derived from *ramaṇāt ramaṇam*, or the one who delights all. That which delights all is the Self alone. When we have any kind of sorrow, we go to God. When every effort stops, He is our last resort. *Rāma* also means “the abode of all Bliss,” for, as Tulasidās-ji says, “*Jo ānanda sindhu sukha rāshi.*”

Sat-guru means “the teacher who is *Sat* (Existence; the Supreme);” it also means “the teacher who indicates *Sat*.” There are many teachers in this world, but that Guru who leads us to the higher Self is the *Sat-guru*, the embodiment of truth, nobility, and righteousness, with all compassion to digest each disciple’s foolishness.

And now we see the four factors that comprise the *anubandha-chatusṭayaḥ*. First and foremost is the question of who is the qualified student to receive these teachings. When we buy a book, we have to know if we are competent to read it; as in, if I want to study eighth grade geography, I have to know seventh grade geography already. Simple.

Here, the *adhikārī*, or qualified student, is the one who has devotion and can surrender to the Guru, the Lord, and none else. The subject matter here is the Essence of Knowledge, or *Jñāna Sāra*. The purpose of study, or *prayojanam*, is abidance in the Self. And the relationship (*sambandha*) among all these factors is that the one who studies this text will gain abidance in the Self; this is *bodha-bodhāyaka-sambandha*.

Now, how does the journey of the spiritual seeker start? Let us say you were all in the Bay area and wanted to come to Piercy for the first time. You go to Google maps and enter one address that is familiar territory to you and location that you do not know. So, your journey starts from where you are.

Our spiritual journey to self-unfoldment also starts from where we are; but first, we have to know where we are. In worldly life, we know where we are because most of it is perceivable and tangible. But in spiritual growth and progress, we are lost. The teacher explains that the seeker’s journey is from *baddhaḥ* (bound) to *buddhaḥ* (enlightened). When we think this body alone I am, when we have cravings for and attachments to the objects of the world, when we the sense of doership in all our actions, and when we are convinced that this world is real, we will not easily leave what we know and experience in present day. It may be the most intensely uphill climb we make in life, but it is the only one worth making.

A Reverie

by Chetana Neerchal

On my ride back home yesterday, I was watching the trees weaving their bare branches into a net, thick in places, thin in others, sharp needles of pines and firs, silhouetted against the silver evening sky. My occasional peeks at the moon, late into the night, when my teen thoughts needed peace, came back to me. I wondered at the objects of my fascination, and my fascination itself, which has not waned over the years, but only grown fuller. My fingers inevitably sketched my thoughts into a poem. I looked out the window again. It was dark already—how swiftly the night had fallen. My fingers continued to write.

I stepped out of my bus and the cold January night reminded me to be grateful for the light and warmth of my house. My thoughts were complete for the evening.

And How Shall I Seek Thee This Spring?

by Chetana Neerchal

A lamp stayed
burning beside You
while
the music
filled the room.

A heart stayed
sweetly with You
while
thoughts
roamed around.

A woman sat
seeking a
presence
to fill
an empty page.

A bee buzzed
heady with spring,
his hum a single
“Om.”

The light within
sketched
Your presence
on my page,
in shadows
spilling all around.

NEWS

New Global CHYK Website by Swami Swatmananda

Global CHYK is pleased to announce the launch of its new worldwide CHYK website, chinmayayuvakendra.org. The site, which went live on July 5, 2013, was over a two-year project worked on by over 50 CHYKs around the world. Sincere thanks are offered to each of them.

This site is meant to serve as a medium to unite CHYKs worldwide on one platform and allow them to interact online. The site will serve three main purposes:

1. **Inspiration:** To keep all CHYKs and Mission members inspired about Pujya Gurudev's life, work, and teachings. Also highlighted will be the newer ways in which Pujya Guruji and other CM acharyas carry forward Pujya Gurudev's vision. The site is not limited to young adults alone; there is something for everyone to take home.
2. **Information:** To have one platform where all information about CHYK is available. All CHYK groups are encouraged to register on this website, so that they can also avail the facility of having their own five pages that they can update regularly and easily. Email confirmations will be sent after review of each entry. Individual users can also register on the site and avail the many benefits, such as online camp registrations, online *Chinmaya Udghosh* subscriptions and reading, online donations, and downloads.
3. **Involvement:** The site provides various avenues to get involved and contribute to the CHYK Movement, and its various projects and events. One can also volunteer different services, such as becoming part of the website team. Helping write, edit,

design, animate the site will help keep it more interesting and interactive.

View the promotional video on this new global CHYK website and help promote the site in all possible ways. For feedback, questions, or more information, contact us. Visit:



Three Days, Infinite Blessings by Prachiti Dhamankar

The dates of July 13, 14, and 15, 2013 may not mean much to most people, but the Chinmaya Family of Beaumont, Texas will forever regard these three days as some of the most precious and memorable in their lives because of the blessed visit of His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda, the Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide.

In this small city of 115,000 people, the community members of Beaumont who were blessed to be in Pujya Guruji's presence bowed before him and welcomed him warmly after his four-year long hiatus. Guruji's first of three evening discourses on the Vedantic significance of a temple and temple deities concluded with a successful fundraising banquet that brought in over \$80,000 in pledges to support the new local ashram of "Chinmaya Shripati," which is already under construction. The ashram completion and inauguration are expected to be in October 2013. This project of joy and pride includes the very first Hindu temple in Beaumont within a 100-mile radius.

Guruji cheerfully accepted the many requests made of him and, in addition, treated us to his sweet and joyful humor. His jokes are no doubt entertaining, but when individually reflected upon, are lessons in themselves. This, of course, applied to every word he spoke during his discourses, *bhikshā* offerings, and informal *satsangs*. Everyone

was spellbound by his clarity, wit, and wonderful examples in his discourses.

Special mention must be made for the smiles he brought out at the beginning and end of his lectures when he opened the harmonium and sang so melodiously. His deep devotion for the Lord was instantly and tangibly felt by one and all, who could not help but hum, tap, clap, and sing along with him. The devout *bhajan* renderings offered at his feet during the *bhikshās* were indeed most memorable for everyone present.

CM Beaumont members were not the only ones savoring these jubilant moments. Four acharyas from across the US—Swami Paratmananda (CM Beaumont), Swamini Akhilananda (CM Miami), Brahmacharini Arpita (CM St. Augustine), and Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya (CM San Jose)—were also present during Guruji’s visit. Prabodhji’s million-dollar smile, Arpitaji’s heartfelt music, Akhilanandaji’s unparalleled discipline but contagious laugh, and Swami Paratmanandaji’s astounding leadership made the experience all the more delightful. The level of devotion and reverence that the four acharyas offered Guruji was an uplifting sight to see in itself, and inspiring to all.

The highlight of Pujya Guruji’s visit was his sojourn to the *Chinmaya Shripati* center. Throughout the tour, CM Beaumont Board members eagerly awaited Guruji’s responses and opinions on the construction in progress, down to the building colors. And his approval of the progress of the temple, classrooms, auditorium, bookstore, office, residential quarters, and storage space was a delightful moment for all. CM Beaumont is truly fortunate that Pujya Guruji blessed *Chinmaya Shripati* with his presence and visit there, making it all the more sacred for the local community. It is a given that when visiting the *Chinmaya Shripati* ashram, the CM Beaumont family will always fondly recall Guruji’s walk-through, and his teachings on how a temple and its deities enrich our life.

“20/20 Vision”: Shrī Chinmaya Mahāsamādhi Ārāadhanā Family Camp 2013

by Vidya Ramanathan and Sangita Shivakumar

Chinmaya Mission Ann Arbor was indeed blessed to be given the opportunity by Pujya Guruji to host the 20th Shrī Chinmaya *Mahāsamādhi* Camp this year. A full-house camp brought together 800 full-time campers, including 205 Bala Vihar children and 55 CHYKs, to bask in Pujya Guruji’s divine presence and offer homage to Pujya Gurudev at the Adoba Hotel in Dearborn, Michigan, July 29-August 3, 2013.

The theme of the camp was “20/20 Vision.” Adults received a depth of insight into the “Vision of Truth,” as Pujya Guruji revealed through his discourses on Bhagavān Shrī Ramaṇa Maharshi’s original Vedantic composition, *Sat-Darshanam*. Guruji’s discourses encased weighty Vedantic concepts with humorous one-liners and anecdotes, keeping a mesmerized audience rapt in still silence as well as unbounded laughter.

The delegates were also delighted to hear, and left yearning for more, Swami Ishwarananda’s (CM Los Angeles) talks on *Mukunda Mālā*. From sublime *jñāna* to sublime *bhakti*, the *Saddarshanam* and *Mukunda Mālā* talks perfectly complemented each other.

The mornings began with guided meditation classes by Swami Shantananda (CM Princeton) and yoga classes by Swami Sharanananda (CM Chicago). CHYKS learned about the Seer and the Seen through Acharya Vivek Gupta’s (CM Niagara) talks on *Dr̥g Dr̥shya Viveka*. Bala Vihar students learned 20 values from the various chapters of *Bhagavad Gītā* through their respective grade-level classes with Swami Sharanananda, Swamini Shivapriyananda (CM Toronto), Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya (CM Austin), Amrutha

Nagarajan (CM Boston), Sheela Gupta (CM Niagara), and John Wiersba (CM Ann Arbor). Various volunteers offered abundant assistance as well.

The afternoons brought a wealth of *satsangs* with various acharyas, including all of the aforementioned, as well as Brahmacharini Arpita (CM St. Augustine), Swami Siddhananda (CM Philadelphia), Acharya Shanker Pillai (CM Chicago), and Acharya Vilasini Balakrishnan (CM Washington DC). The congregation was divided into small groups that went to hear different topics by different acharyas every day. The topics included 1) Gurudev as I Know Him: Stories of My Time with Gurudev, 2) Advancing One's Career through Vedantic Principles, 3) Meditation and Devotion in Daily Life, and 4) Parenting: How to Raise Children Using Vedantic Values and Perspectives. These sessions were extremely popular, and many audience members left with happy tears in their eyes or pages of notes in their hands.

A highlight of the camp was the pictorial display on Pujya Gurudev and CM ashrams, featuring Gurudev's quotes and 108 names, on the revolving top (16th) floor of the hotel. The 108 names and photos presentation was based on a compilation by Swami Mitrananda (CM Chennai) that is also available in book form. Devotees were assigned numbers to visit the exhibit in small groups. Many were touched by the tribute and awed by the vista. While some became more contemplative during their visit, others shared joyous remembrances. Pujya Guruji also toured the hotel's Rotunda, fondly recalling several instances depicted in the photographs.

The delicious meals provided by Madras Masala of Ann Arbor were enjoyed by all. The owners had kept in mind throughout that they were cooking for God, for Guru, and thus, they made sure their entire team prepared food to properly nourish all the delegates.

The evenings brought culture to the forefront, starting with a fun-filled *garbā/rās*. The Bala Vihar cultural program centered on the camp theme and, recounting anecdotes that Pujya Gurudev used to tell, showed how living a life dedicated to the Guru and his teachings leads to the vision of God. The CHYKs used their talents and innovative styles to present "We Can; We Must; We Will" during the formal banquet on the night of August 2.

The final day of August 3 featured the main reason everyone had gathered in Dearborn, Michigan—to offer homage and tribute on the sacred *mahāsamādhi* day of one of the most illustrious spiritual masters of the 20th century. Pujya Gurudev's auspicious *Mahāsamādhi Pūjā* was the culmination of a transcendental week. On this special day, Pujya Guruji offered his melodious chanting of Pujya Gurudev's 108 names as all the campers offered flowers at the wooden *pādukās* gifted to them, complete with carvings of lotuses and Pujya Gurudev's signature *Om*. On this day, Guruji also offered to Pujya Gurudev his beautiful, original composition of *Chinmaya Mahimā*, a Sanskrit synopsis of Pujya Gurudev's glorious biography in rhyme and meter, sung in a tune similar to *Nāma Rāmāyaṇa*. The 2013 Mahasamadhi Family Camp thus concluded with spirits uplifted and inspired, ready to take on life's challenges, newly rejuvenated by a bounty of blessings.

This year's camp had been capped at 800 due to logistics, though many more devotees had wanted to attend full-time. Accordingly, this did not leave space for part-timers or day visitors either. Swami Prakashananda (CM Trinidad), during his two-day stop at the camp, personally invited everyone to next year's Mahasamadhi Camp in Trinidad with Pujya Guruji. It came as no surprise that before the day was done, 150 families had already signed their names with the CM Trinidad *sevak*s on hand to receive all the 2015 Camp information and forms. Indeed, all of Trinidad will soon be buzzing with a new catchphrase: "Hari Om!"

The following Mahasamadhi Camp poem by Shalini Sahni (CM Ottawa) was written on August 2 and recited on at the puja on August 3:

Eight hundred people came to learn,
To laugh and mingle, and have *vāsanās* burn

The day started with lots of bending
Followed by a quiet, spiritual ascending

Mukunda Mālā put us in the mood
Of pure devotion; how futile to brood

Saddarshanam was a little bit tough
We hoped we were students with the right stuff

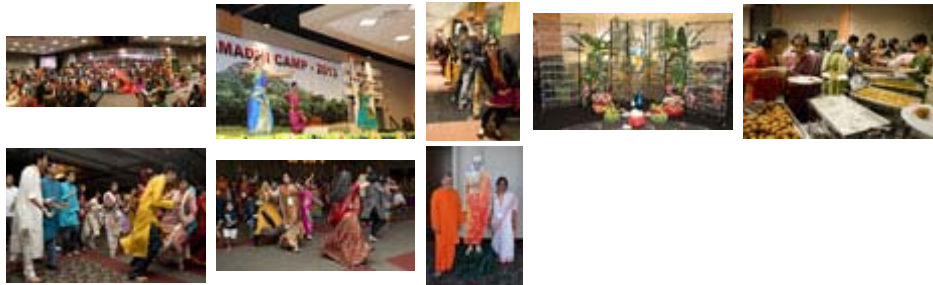
In every class, we laughed so much
Pujya Guruji has a magical touch

Afternoon *satsang* was truly divine
We heard about Him and ourselves began to shine

With dances and performances, and *ārṭi* in between
Mahāsamādhi camps are a sight to be seen<

I can't wait for what tomorrow will bring
Guru Pādukā Pūjā is a divine offering

The week has come and gone so fast
But the memories and learning surely will last



CM Ottawa's Two Days of Much Ado by Saakshi Sutarwala

Swamini Vimalananda came to Ottawa on a very short visit, yet was still able to leave an indelible impression on all CM Ottawa devotees. She gave two talks—one on “Sure Mantras for Success (SMS),” and one for women on “Managing Your Emotions.”

In her SMS talk, Swaminiji spoke on the three vehicles used to achieve success, namely, *yantra*, *tantra*, and *mantra*. She simplified it as *yantras* being the machines to conduct operations in the world, *tantras* being the rules and regulations for these machines, and *mantras* being the messages that give us a higher direction in our lives. She said our usage of *yantra* and *tantra* has been drilled into us since childhood, but

everyone seems to forget about what is most important—*mantra*. She pointed out that even large companies need to have a *mantra*, or motto, to guide and motivate their employees. In the same way, everyone must develop *mantras* that work for them and can be followed at all times.

One of her personal *mantras* that she shared was, “Don’t bang your head on closed walls; walk through open doors instead.” This simple statement can be used to refocus and channel one’s energy in the right direction. Where people or situations are not willing to open up for us, it is better to walk away than waste energy. This statement also implies that when circumstances in life seem difficult, there will always be a way, a door, to get out of it, for if there is a way you got yourself in, there must also be a way out.

In her talk on managing emotions, Swaminiji first spoke on the four levels of all human beings: Physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. She said each level has its own set of requirements. Just as the physical aspect requires food, shelter, clothing, and exercise, so, too, the emotional aspect level requires love to survive. One key point added was, “We should be givers of love, not beggars of love,” for the giver of love has the upper hand in life; to take, the hand must be below the giver’s.

Another major aspect of the talk was that we should not steer our life based solely on emotions. Emotions are powerful and they can be a strong support for our intellect, which steers us in any given direction. The steering wheel of a car determines our direction, but the steering wheel is powered by the engine. So, too, the intellect drives us, but our emotions provide power.

In coping with pain, she emphasized that we must give time for ourselves to heal. If we go through a bad incident in life, we can either brush it off or let it heal. If we brush it off, then when the wound opens up again, it will hurt ten times more. But if we give ourselves time to heal, we will be able to move on with our lives, and look back on that incident without getting emotional.

Some wise and helpful statements included:

- God has placed our head above our heart, so we must use it correctly.
- Just because there aren’t any good thoughts going through our intellect, doesn’t mean we should feed it garbage or negative thoughts; it is better in such cases of pain to not have any thoughts about a given person or incident.

At the spiritual level, she reminded one and all to strive for the higher Goal and to not brush away questions such as, “What is my purpose in life?” or “What have I achieved?” She reminded that even with all the other three levels under control, life without a greater goal is meaningless and the path to Enlightenment is supreme.

Charged to be more physically fit, emotionally balanced, intellectually stimulated, and spiritually enlightened, attendees at these talks still vividly remember Swaminiji’s powerful words and fearless attitude. Thanks to CM Calgary’s Sweta Aditia for arranging Swamini’s visit to Canada, allowing so many to gain so much from her discourses.

Home Run, T20 Style on *Shvetashvatara Upanishad*
by Padmashree Rao; photo by Jayesh Mistry

With pure grace and masterful delivery of knowledge, and an agile sense of humor that kept the audience alert and enchanted, Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda completed

his seven-day *jñāna yajna*, July 7-13, 2013, on *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* at the *Chinmaya Prabhāshram* in Houston, Texas.

Pujya Guruji introduced the rare Upanishad with a invocative game-plan of a T20 (20 overs) cricket match that instantly became a home run on the *Chinmaya Smṛti* pitch! Young and old listened spellbound as Guruji delivered exquisite strokes of explanations for the 112 verses of the Upanishad; his *yajña* had incomparable innings of three lectures every day for the entire week.

The subject matter of the *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* is no mere play, for its discussions take place among serious seekers of *Brahma-vidyā*. In line with the text, Guruji let questions such as, “What is the cause of Creation, its nature, its sustaining principle?” and “What is Liberation and the vision of Oneness?” sink into the audience gently and deeply. His simple, direct approach encouraged everyone to reflect on the potent existential questions with true enthusiasm.

After Guruji had laid the scenarios of the causation-hunting game, he called attention to how knowledge of the Truth was elusive, for it was a game where the seekers themselves need to disappear on the meditative pitch!

The *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* is a mesmerizing combination of supreme knowledge and pure devotion expressed in startlingly concrete imagery. When Existence is probed through intense meditation, seekers are presented symbolic answers about the fabric of Creation. Guruji, a teacher par excellence, drove home many an answer while explaining Creation as a fascinating wheel with many spokes and fasteners, all indicating cyclical aspects of life. At perfectly placed intervals, he made the audience roar with laughter with his collection of Indian truck slogans, and again masterfully made them plunge into the great river of introspection on the Truth.

In the later chapters of the Upanishad, Guruji unfolded the vision required to untangle oneself from the delusory web of attachments. He emphasized a wiser “outlook to look out [from],” an ability to see the Oneness that the Upanishad indicated. He described how the unique beauty of this Upanishad lay in the blending of one’s deep faith in God with the pure quest for Self-knoweldge.

This *jñāna yajña* was at once, thought-provoking and mind-stilling. Guruji’s *bhajans* touched the soul; his humorous anecdotes made learning delightful and happy; his deep insights stunned one and all. His quote from the Upanishad, “*Sā no budhyā shubhayā sahyunaktu*,” was a blessing to stay inspired: “May He (God) endow us with noble, auspicious thoughts.” Indeed, Guruji’s teachings on *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad* at *Chinmaya Prabhā* are a memory that will be ever treasured, revered, and reflected on.

In his address to CM Houston’s Bala Vihar children, Guruji spoke to eager listeners, who ranged from toddlers to teenagers to CHYKs in age, Guruji recounted a beautiful *Paurāṇik* story of a boy named Upamanyu, who prayed for the “real thing” in life and found it. Guruji urged every child and youth to never settle for the false and fleeting, for Reality is everyone’s birthright waiting to be claimed. Later that evening, Guruji also spoke to Bala Vihar teachers and conveyed the importance of teaching with deep purpose and love.

The entire week of the *jñāna yajña* was a devoted offering at the feet of Pujya Gurudev. CM Houston was blessed to have over 12 CMW acharyas attend. Acharyas Gaurang and Darshana Nanavaty energized many dedicated teams of volunteers who worked together tirelessly and joyfully for the success of the *yajña*.



Divya Shakti: First Devi Retreat at CM Washington DC

by Richa Agrawala

Divya Shakti (divine strength), a one-of-a-kind retreat for women over age 29, was held at CM Washington DC's *Kailas Nivas* ashram, June 14-16, 2013, over Father's Day weekend. Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara) and Acharya Vilasini Balakrishnan (CM Washington DC) conducted the retreat, which was also attended by Swami Dheerananda, resident acharya of CM Washington DC, during the opening and closing ceremonies.

Vivekji specified the goal as an opportunity to give women "a chance to leave everyday stresses, get in touch with their true Self, and address many of the challenges they face in balancing their many responsibilities." Indeed, Father's day weekend seemed most appropriate for such a gift and break.

The retreat united over 75 women from various states and even a few countries. The activities included spiritual discourses, and practices to relax and focus the mind. The main text was *Medha Sūktam*, the faithful and devoted daily recitation of which brings mental concentration, memory power, fame, courage, wisdom, and creativity. Vivekji taught the correct way of reciting "*Aum*," which none of the delegates was able to match in length or steadiness. But everyone is practicing and getting better!

The special activities included *yoga-nidrā* sessions for body and mind relaxation; group discussions on balanced living, spiritual parenting, awareness, and prioritization; art; games; cultural program; and the active practice of *maunam*. The early morning *yoga-nidrā* sessions flowed smoothly into an hour of *maunam* at breakfast. It was an unbelievable sight to see: A large room full of women not chit-chatting for over two hours on two days!

The congregation was randomly broken up into small groups of 5-6 ladies for the group discussion sessions. Each group chose its own topic for discussion or chose from a given list of topics. Each 15-minute discussion was followed by a sharing of thoughts and findings. Concepts introduced in the group discussions included: 1) "The Sacred Pause," a five-minute meditation technique to reset oneself; 2) self-awareness through the practice of "Introspect, Detect, Negate, and Substitute;" 3) letting go of limitations and inhibitions by recognizing the benefits and losses of weaknesses dropped and not dropped; 4) "PLEA(D)," to Pray, Lead, Engage, Accept, and Depart (if all sincere efforts fail); and 5) prioritization to label activities using the matrix of Urgent/Not Urgent and Important/Unimportant, thereby determining where one's time gets wasted.

The art session had ladies playing with clay of different colors that could be molded by hand and baked later. Most of the artwork featured deities, the *Om* symbol, flowers, and animals. There was even a turtle that one person admired as *Kurma Avatār* and later learned that it had been designed after the mascot of the University of Maryland.

The games session was interesting in that all ladies, young and old, whether young at heart and old in body, or young in body and old at heart, or any combination thereof,

played together. Two games that were played were the human knot puzzle and *kho*. To untangle the human knot created by holding hands in a special pattern, the group needed to communicate and coordinate physical movements between each other. *Kho* saw all the *devis* unable to follow directions that most young kids could follow immediately, which resulted in some initial chaos. Yet in the end, they all ran, laughed, and played—just like children. A brief nature walk after the games got the ladies ready for other sessions.

The cultural program was an Open Mic session, open to anyone willing to showcase their talent. There were skits, jokes, singing etc., followed by a *garbā*. The day that started with meditation and *maunam* ended with music and dance.

Even the lunch sessions were interesting, for where there was no talking at breakfast, there was no seeing at lunch! The campers learned to use their other senses to taste and identify what they were eating.

The lodging and boarding logistics of the retreat had been made relatively easy with the availability of nearby hotels, catered food, and a slew of CHYK volunteers who served behind the scenes for setup, cleanup, and admin tasks under the guidance of Meera Ravichandran and her team. The team provided a question and comment box, and time to discuss some of the points submitted.

What changes they want to make in their lives are the points that the women took home in the form of neatly written *sankalpas*, which had prepared toward the end of the retreat. At the next retreat, it will be interesting to see how far everyone progressed in implementing their *sankalpas*!



"Alphabet Connection": A Bala Vihar Vedantic Spell

by Padmashree Rao; photos by Jayesh Mistry

A greater vision was the thematic hallmark of “Alphabet Connection,” a Chinmaya Bala Vihar music/dance/drama extravaganza that unfolded center stage in Houston’s Stafford Center on July 6, 2013. Performed in the august presence of Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda and visiting acharyas from various CM centers, the show was a fundraiser benefiting CM Houston’s upcoming project of *Chinmaya Jeevan Darshan*, a multimedia exhibit on the life and work of Pujya Gurudev, on the campus of its *Chinmaya Prabhāshram*.

Over 60 local Chinmaya Bala Vihar artists cast a delightful spell on a rapt audience to bring home the ultimate Vedantic message in a language as elementary as the alphabet. The 90-minute musical was scripted by Acharya Darshana Nanavaty (CM Houston), directed by Jennifer Minor, Theater Director of Austin High School, and orchestrated by Jamuna Murali, Choir Director of CM Houston’s Bala Vihar. The children’s flawless and spirited performances brought to life the thought-provoking dialogue. The unique and creative presentation featured fusion music of Sanskrit chants, Western classical and

contemporary, and even Bollywood.

The search for complete happiness is the innate journey of every human being, and this is what made “Alphabet Connection” appealing to the young and old, the carefree and the serious, among the 1,200-strong audience. Happy-go-lucky, carefree Mr. It, a piece of a pie, is enjoying life with the motto, “Just chill.” His conscience becomes his companion and a guide, and while he often ignores or tries to sidestep her in the rush of “having it all,” persistent Ms. Conscience goes through its treasure chest and invites the letters of the alphabet to help him unearth his complete and true identity.

The letter A infuses the Ambition to “Be Somebody” without arrogance, and the letter G guides Mr. It to a rich and worthy Goal requiring hard work, God’s grace, and a happy smile. Every other alphabet befriends the protagonist with a special value—from Brotherhood to Courage, from Truthfulness to Dedication, from Patience to Unconditional love.

Sidetracked by the false glitter of fame and the restless expectations of relationships, Mr. It is keen to find his missing piece that will make him complete. His attempts to meet and mingle with shapes of all kinds only leave him lonely and mismatched. Sharp negative emotions poke and prod the little piece of far-from-humble pie.

Guided by the God’s Grace, he comes to see a wholesome round pie strolling by happily and alone. He runs to this Teacher, who teaches him, “These sharp corners are your strong likes and dislikes. Learn to remove them and be complete. Remember: Corners wear off and shapes change.” Thus, Mr. It finds his answers through the wisdom of connecting with the Highest in order to realize his completeness.

Walking us on a path of teachings to reshape ourselves and achieve true happiness, “Alphabet Connection” was at once, entertaining and enlightening. All the actors, whether in big or small roles, spent months practicing with such enthusiasm that this Vedantic musical truly became their homage to *Chinmaya Jeevan Darshan*. While Acharya Darshana, Ms. Minor, and a team of dedicated Chinmaya Bala Vihar teachers tirelessly planned and guided the rehearsals, many other teams of CM Houston helped set the stage for this massive production. The vibrant costumes and enchanting stage props were created by a skillful art team. The musical scores were played and sung by a live Chinmaya Bala Vihar orchestra and choir.

Pujya Guruji appreciated the show and the children’s performances as being “spectacular.” He added that our most important connection is the one with God and the happiness of a lifetime is in making others unconditionally happy.

By the Lord’s grace and Pujya Gurudev’s blessings, “Alphabet Connection” kicked off the CM Houston family’s *janma-shatābdi* (centennial) celebrations in a big way. *Chinmaya Jeevan Darshan* is expected to be inaugurated at *Chinmaya Prabhā* in 2016. This new meditation center and multimedia exhibit will keep future generations ever connected to Pujya Gurudev’s far-reaching vision.



CM Atlanta's Memorial Day Camp

by Acharya Raghu Grandige

CM Atlanta organized a family camp over Memorial Day weekend, May 24-27, conducted by Swami Prakashananda (CM Trinidad). Over 100 members (ages 5-80 years) attended the camp, which was held at the serene, wooded Calvin Center in southwest Atlanta. Swami Prakashananda, in his inimitable style of music and oration, left the audience spellbound as he spoke on the texts, *Sat-Darshanam* of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, and *Purajana Gita* from *Tulasi Ramayana*.

Brahmacharini Arpita (CM St. Augustine) and Acharya Geetha Raghu (CM Atlanta) conducted the children's Bala Vihar classes, which focused on the theme of "Lord Rama, the Ideal." The theme for the youth classes conducted by Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara) was "The 16 Qualities of Lord Rama."

The camp was a great success. It featured *jñāna* and was packed with many outdoor activities as well, including canoeing, walk trails, cricket, team building, and *Upanishad* Ganga viewings. Satya Jella, a BV student, wrote:

I just came back from the Memorial Day camp and it was amazing, beyond all expectations! Our classes with Brahmacharini Arpitaji were great. We learned about the vision of God, the vision of ourselves, and how to apply right vision in everyday life. Through the movie, *Gifted Hands*, Arpitaji taught us that the vision we have of ourselves changes who we are. When Ben Carson, the main character, thought he was dumb, he got bad grades. But when he thought he was smart, he began to get all As. Arpitaji explained Brahman to us, telling us that we were God, because God is Brahman and Brahman is everything.

She impressed on us the importance of having a vision in life and helped us realize that life is like a camera. We should have one object to focus on, one main goal in our life. We have to always be aimed towards the object, our goal, in order for the picture, the result of our life, to be clear.

We also learned the values exhibited by Lord Rama, and that He is our supreme Self. Arpitaji taught us several wonderful songs and helped us put together our repertoire for the end-of-camp program.

Vivekji played with us during sports time, and I had lots of fun playing soccer and watching cricket.

Swamiji's jokes were the highlight of the camp for everyone. We all enjoyed singing *bhajans* with him; he is an amazing singer and harmonium player. Everyone in our class became close friends even though we had never met before. I loved when they showed their friendship to me by refusing to go canoeing when I was hurt.

Next year, I would like to hear one of Swamiji's lectures. I had a brief encounter with him, and he told me that in order to pass on the culture that we are exposed to in Bala Vihar and in our family, we must deeply understand and learn Hinduism. When that happens, Hinduism will flow out of us like an overflowing bucket with the tap still on. These words of wisdom really impressed me, and I want to hear him speak again.

Thank you to all the organizers for giving me this wonderful opportunity to learn about our amazing culture. I really enjoyed the camp and I hope to come back next year.



Lord Rama Meets His Devotees at CM Boston

by Venkat Pula

The CM Boston Family was deeply honored and overjoyed to welcome Pujya Guruji to the *Chinmaya Māruti* ashram in Andover, MA for a series of first-ever, unforgettable talks that fully soaked devotees in love for Lord Shri Rama, His devotees, and the multifarious lessons to be learned from their lives. For this special and rare blessing of hearing “Lord Rama’s Meetings with His Devotees,” over 300 CM family members from the New England area, Florida, Virginia, Georgia, and California came to revel in the week-long *yajña*, July 19-25, 2013.

Pujya Guruji delighted the hearts of all through his daily discourses on *Tulasi Rāmāyaṇa*, each day unraveling new surprises and glorious stories of Lord Rama and His devotees. Steeped in bliss, Guruji’s discourses evoked a gamut of emotions—from laughter to tears, from ethos to pathos—bringing to life for the audience a powerfully vivid world of days when the Lord walked the earth in full glory.

Guruji began with an introduction to the meaning of *soundarya*, or “beauty.” He said everyone in the world likes beautiful things and people, but real beauty is that which is permeated by *satyam*, or “truth,” and *shivam*, or “auspiciousness.” True beauty thus refers to absolute Truth and Auspiciousness. Thus, he said, there are only two truly beautiful people in this world: *Bhagavān* and His *bhaktas*. And therefore, when we immerse ourselves in their *kathās*, or stories, then we, too, shine in their light and, by the Lord’s grace and Guru’s blessings, become absorbed in Truth alone.

Guruji said that the Lord does not differentiate between his devotees based on any characteristics, external or internal. He has one vision, one eye, and He loves and showers His grace all His children equally. Guruji said, the common denominator for all devotees is love—love for the Lord and love for serving Him in all ways and forms. Guruji enraptured the audience with brilliant and poignant descriptions of Lord Rama’s meetings with Raja Dasharatha, the blessed devotee who left his body soon after being separated from the Lord; Ahalyā, the pure-hearted wife of Rishi Gautama; King Janaka, the *raja-rishi* who was a *Brahma-jñānī*, ever reveling in *nirguna*, *nirākāra* Brahman; Kevat, the boatman who cheekily got the most sought blessing of washing the Lord’s holy feet; Mother Shabari, whose simplicity and purity proved far greater than any degree of literacy; *Dāsa* Hanumān, the Lord’s ever faithful and perfect servant who had no other identity of his own; Sugrīva, the monkey-king blessed to be befriended by the Lord; Vibhīshana, the demon-king whose surrender won him the kingdom of God even before the kingdom of Lanka. And love for Mother Sītā and Lord Rama’s brothers—Bharata, Lakshmaṇa, and Shatrughna—is the most sublime and treasured gift that Pujya Guruji imprinted in every listener’s heart as he extolled their divinity, depth, and oneness with the Lord. CM Boston will soon make available on its website the audio and

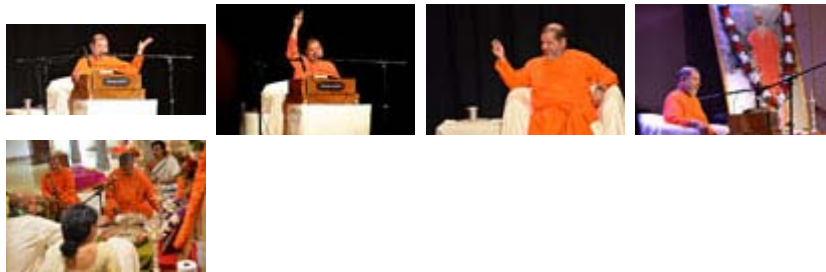
video files of these discourses.

In a special one-day visit to CM Boston's satellite in Westborough, Pujya Guruji spoke on "Perform to Potential." The *sevaks* of Metrowest lovingly and warmly welcomed Guruji to address an audience of over 200 adults. Guruji spoke on every person's innate potential to succeed. His masterful tips on identifying one's hidden talents and abilities, and performing to full potential made for a powerful formula to grow spiritually and succeed in daily life.

While everyday was a highlight and every moment a blessing, it was a truly cherished gift to be with Pujya Guruji on the most holy day of *Guru Pūrṇimā*. Swami Shantananda (CM Princeton) came for the occasion and conducted *Guru Pādukā Pūjā* with two *yajamān* families. Pujya Guruji melodiously chanted the 108-name *archanā* of Pujya Gurudev, and spoke on the far-reaching glory of Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa and our sacred *Guru Paramparā*.

Guruji's informal and interactive *satsangs* at the ashram every morning were eagerly looked forward to by all the attendees. His concise and pragmatic replies to the many written questions submitted by the devotees on spiritual and worldly matters had powerful depth and meaning, always lifting and guiding the mind back to the absolute Truth.

And though his days were already filled with two talks, official meetings with various CM centers' and officers and *sevaks*, daily *bhikshas* for all three meals, and appointments with out-of-town devotees, Guruji was ever relaxed, jovial, and accessible to one and all who came to sit before him in the Dwarakanaths' residence. Every devotee experienced the entire week as an *utsava*, from start to finish, asking only when Guruji would be returning. Like the entire global Chinmaya Family, the CM Boston Family, too, seeks to be blessed continuously with the vision and teachings of beloved Pujya Guruji.



***Jñāna Yajña* by Swamini Gangananda at CM Orlando** Sree Nambiar

CM Orlando welcomed Swamini Gangananda (CM Mumbai) to its *Kaivalya* ashram for a week-long *jñāna yajna*, July 15-22, 2013, with morning talks on *Kaivalyopanishad* and evening talks on *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 9.

Each morning, devotees had the unique opportunity to hear the meaning and significance of this profound Upanishad found in *Atharva Veda*. This amazing experience continued in the evenings with Swaminiji guiding devotees to try and understand the Royal Secret, as revealed by Lord Krishna in Chapter 9 of *Gita*. Swaminiji punctuated the teachings with some delightful and beautiful stories of Pujya Gurudev.

Swaminiji's wonderful exposition of these sacred texts was a truly wonderful learning experience for all the attendees.



Pujya Guruji's Discourses on *Guru Mahima* and *Gurudev Mahima* at CM Dallas by Latha Maram

CM Dallas-Fort Worth was blessed with Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda's visit for two days, June 16-17, 2013. This was the third consecutive year that Pujya Guruji was able to accommodate a visit to CM Dallas in his ever busy schedule.

Unusually cool July weather and rain showers welcomed Pujya Guruji to the *Chinmaya Saaketashram* on the eve of June 16 for *satsang* on *Guru Mahimā*. The CM Dallas Family, including along with Acharyas PB and Asha Ghate (CM Dallas), had been waiting in eager anticipation with *purṇa-kumbha* and *ārti thāli* for his arrival. After his visit to the meditation shrine, Pujya Guruji was introduced and requested to address all the members gathered in assembly hall, which was filled to capacity.

Pujya Guruji's divine presence and warmth filled the hearts of all devotees as he commenced his *satsang*. He recounted the glories and greatness of the Sat-guru, a spiritual teacher who points the student to the supreme path of God-realization and teaches him to discover his own true Self. Guruji reminded that Self-knowledge alone removes all sorrows and miseries, and establishes the seeker on the firm foundation of true and complete fearlessness. One can never overstate the substance and significance of Self-knowledge. How much more, therefore, is the weight and worth of the Guru who imparts It, and leads one to abide in It?

In conclusion, Pujya Guruji sang his beautiful new and original composition of the *Guru Stotram* in Hindi. His mellifluous voice touched everyone's hearts as he explained the meaning of every verse. To be in the presence of such a spiritual master was nothing short of pure bliss.

After the *satsang*, Pujya Guruji introduced the new release of the *Mananam* Chinmaya Birth Centenary Series: *Our Children, Our Future*. This fifth book in a series of twelve focuses on Chinmaya Bala Vihar. This entire collection is indeed a must-have in every Chinmaya Family home. Attendees were blessed to receive from Pujya Guruji's own hands copies of the book that had been personally autographed by him. Basking in his love and kindness, devotees greatly appreciated this opportunity to meet and offer their *pranaams* to him as he entertained them with his sharp wit and sweet humor.

CM Dallas President, Ashok Dandekar, introduced Pujya Guruji to an assembly of Bala Vihar students on the morning of June 17 with a peculiar title that Pujya Guruji deftly used as a prompt and base to expound his entire entertaining and profound talk: "the Boss." After being introduced as "the boss" of resident acharya, Swami Sarveshananda,

and all CM acharyas worldwide, Guruji, in his typical yet unique style, span the term and its meaning toward the Lord, calling Him “the supreme Boss” of one and all.

In the exclusive treat for children that followed, Guruji instantly captivated their young hearts and minds with his engaging and charming stories. As if mesmerizing them like a piper, Guruji bestowed on them values and wisdom that the truly blessed are privy to comprehend, digest, and imbibe. He concluded by leading them to sing *Prarthana Gītā*, an original composition by him on one’s daily prayer to the Lord who is our Leader and Guide throughout life.

The evening program on June 17 was held at CM Dallas’s *Chinmaya Chitrakoot* ashram in Irving. The *satsang* hall was filled to capacity in eager anticipation and the pathway to the dais was strewn with rose petals. Melodious *bhajans* resounded as Guruji entered the *satsang* hall to first meet the local CM *sevaks*. Recalling that he had spoken on the topic, “Why Serve,” when he had visited last year, this time, he welcomed the *sevaks* to ask any questions they may have. One question pertaining to Pujya Gurudev’s centennial celebrations led to Pujya Guruji’s explanation of the theme of the 2015-16 celebrations: “Unto Him, Our Best.” All that Pujya Gurudev has given to his disciples, devotees, followers, and all of humanity can never be measured, much less repaid. Yet, in sincere and humble ways, the global Chinmaya Family can make his 100th year focused only on giving back to Him what He treasured most, as best as possible, in as many ways as possible. Guruji reminded that the only motivating factor behind Pujya Gurudev’s every action and work of the Mission was the inner transformation of the individual. This transformation, he said, is brought about in three ways: *Pūjā* or prayer to the Lord, *japa* of the Lord’s holy name, and *chintanam* on the scriptures through study, reflection, and application.

He added, “Love thy Self (local CM center). Love thy neighbor (the Chinmaya Family worldwide). Love thy mother (Mother India).” To love one’s center means to continuously support it and improve its programs. To love the global Chinmaya Family means to support all Mission centers in their time of need. To love mother means to support the myriad CM projects in India. At this juncture, Guruji said he was especially pleased to know that CM Dallas had so wonderfully and wholeheartedly helped fundraise for the current Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) for CHYKs by producing and staging “*Susamskrta*,” a music and dance. Numerous CHYKs and volunteer cooks are presently at YEP in the *Krishṇālaya* ashram, which is the retreat center and site of CMW’s headquarters.

Pujya Guruji highlighted various other programs being planned for the centennial celebrations, including “Om in Every Home” (keeping lit the brass Chinmaya Om lamp in every home), the *Mananam* centenary series and other new book releases, “Chant *Gītā*, Enchant Krishna” (national and international *Bhagavad Gītā* chanting competitions, creative multimedia projects, and cultural programs. Guruji encouraged all CM Dallas members to come up with their own unique ways to celebrate Pujya Gurudev’s birth centenary. He expressed sincere thanks to all the Mission volunteers for their dedication and commitment in all activities of CM Dallas, and invoked Pujya Gurudev’s grace and blessings on everyone.

After conferring two massive *Shlokathon* trophies to two Bala Vihar students, Pujya Guruji commenced his evening *satsang* on Gurudev’s *Mahimā* in light of the upcoming sacred day of *Guru Pūrṇimā*. He sang the ode to Pujya Gurudev (“*Shri Gurudev ko kareṇ naman ham*”) that he had specially composed for the occasion Chinmaya World Workers’ Conference held in December 2012 at *Chinmaya Vibhooti*. Recounting the rare blessing of having seen, heard, learned from, and traveled and lived with such a divine spiritual master, Guruji shared his personal testimony on how life transforms as a result of such

contact. Such saints lend validity to the authenticity of the scriptures, he said. He described Pujya Gurudev as being true to his name of *chinmaya* and *ānanda*—ever established in and as pure Consciousness and ever reveling in and as supreme Bliss. It was extremely touching to hear Pujya Guruji narrate the glories of Pujya Gurudev, his vision for the Mission, and how he had touched and transformed millions of lives, and still continued to do so.

Pujya Guruji introduced his new and original composition of *Shrī Chinmaya Nāmārta Stotram*, which had been offered on the joyous occasion of the 50th anniversary of *Sandeepany Sāadhanālaya* in Mumbai, India. This Sanskrit *stotram* is comprised of the 108 names of Pujya Gurudev and is similar to the meter of *Shrī Vishṇu Sahasranāma Stotram*. Guruji explained how the 108 names indicate Pujya Gurudev’s absolute nature, or his qualities, or his actions, or his relationships. The Chinmaya Family now has another gem that can be offered during a *Guru pūjā* or sung in contemplation and remembrance of how Pujya Gurudev inspired and transformed people into volunteers, devotees, and disciples. Guruji encouraged everyone to chant this *stotram* to grow in devotion to Pujya Gurudev, and to recognize Pujya Gurudev’s ever-present grace and blessings.

The *satsang* ended with *Chinmaya Mahimā*, another beautiful, simple, and poetic Sanskrit composition by Pujya Guruji that is dedicated to Pujya Gurudev. Similar to *Nama Ramayana*, which captures the entire life story of Lord Rama and allows one to meditate His sterling aspects, *Chinmaya Mahimā* summarizes the life story of Pujya Gurudev. Pujya Guruji’s overflowing *Guru-bhakti* was more than evident as he recited and explained every verse. It is this *Guru-bhakti* that Pujya Guruji made reverberate in the hearts of everyone present. The *satsang* concluded with *Chinmaya Ārti* and an appreciation dinner for volunteers.



Swamini Vimalananda in Vancouver by Vishnugupt Dixit (age 7)

Swamini Vimalanandaji (CM Coimbatore) visited Vancouver in June 2013 and conducted *asatsang* for four days on “How to Remain Happy.”

The first two days, I sat with my mom and grandparents. On the third day, I sat in the front row with my friends. Swamini Vimalanandaji speaks Marathi like my family does and she has also met my other grandfather.

Swaminiji told us two stories: One of a man named Amthabhai, and one of a great scholar whom the villagers called a mad man.

The story of Amthabhai goes like this: One day, Amthabhai woke up and asked his wife for cheese. His wife said he never liked cheese before. Amthabhai said, “Who told you I don’t like cheese? I love cheese because I am a rat!”

His wife said, “You need to go to the doctor.”

So, off they went to the doctor. The doctor said, “Amthabhai, you are a human, not a rat.”

Amthabhai insisted, “No, I’m a rat!”

“You are human!” roared the doctor. “Look at yourself in this mirror!”

“You are right. I am a human. I am not a rat.”

“Aah,” sighed the doctor.

Amthabhai went out of the office. But a few minutes later, he came running back, sweating and panting. He said he seen a cat!

The story of the mad man goes like this: One morning, a man pushed a boulder up a hill. It took him six hours to take it up and a few minutes to roll it down. He laughed and laughed as the boulder came down.

From then on, he did this regularly. The villagers thought he was a mad man. One day, great scholars came searching for this man. They asked the villagers about him. The villagers said, “Oh, that mad man . . .” and showed the scholars the way.

The villagers stayed in and around the man’s house to watch. They couldn’t believe their eyes! Scholars learning from a mad man!? When the scholars left, the villagers asked the man for forgiveness. They also asked him why he pushed the boulder up and why he let it go.

He said, “It is a reminder of an important lesson. It takes us a long time to be born as humans. Here, it only takes me six hours to push uphill.

“And after we get human life, we waste our lifetime chasing pleasures instead of finding out who we really are. Our life becomes such a laughable condition, and that is why I laugh when the boulder come down.”



Ramayana for You and Me at CM San Jose

Submitted by CM San Jose

Chinmaya Mission San Jose (CMSJ) was blessed by the august presence of Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, under whose divine grace San Francisco Bay Area devotees basked for five days, June 30-July 4, 2013.

Many CMSJ devotees and *sevaks* eagerly and joyously received Pujya Guruji on his arrival at the Park Avenue *Sandeepany* ashram on June 30, which marked his 63rd birthday. A

pictorial storyboard of several episodes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* adorned the walls of the ashram's ground-level hall, where Guruji partook his daily meals. Balloons, intricate flower arrangements, and lit lamps added color and festivity to the happy atmosphere where everyone had gathered to rejoice in Pujya Guruji's presence.

Every morning, CMSJ's Bala Vihar teachers, volunteers, and CHYKs came in groups to have the unique opportunity to interact with Pujya Guruji in *satsang*. Each *satsang* was unique and was meant for a particular group. In his inimitable style, Guruji spoke on the need of knowledge, the study of scriptures, the value of devotion, and the attitude of *sevā*.

Guruji graced the construction site of CMSJ's new ashram on Clayton Road. Having surveyed the construction, Guruji was pleased to see the progress made to date. By the Lord's grace and Pujya Gurudev's blessing, the CMSJ Family is dedicatedly supporting this project and work is continuing smoothly. The new ashram will feature 22,500 sq. ft. of indoor area—with auditoriums, classrooms, acharya quarters, and kitchen and dining—and an open-air courtyard.

In his four-day lecture series on “Ramayana for You and Me” at the Spangenberg Theater of Gunn High School, Pujya Guruji captivated devotees' minds and deepened their devotion to the Lord. Goswami Tulasidāsji's reverential love for Lord Rama resonated throughout Guruji's narration on the essence of *Rāmāyaṇa*. The principles of *dharma*, *shraddhā*, *bhakti*, *jñāna*, and *vairagya* were elaborated with precision and sprinkled with humor and music, leaving the audience enthralled.

Everyone at CMSJ is deeply grateful and extremely blessed to have Pujya Guruji's everlasting love and grace in their lives.



In Memoriam



Dr. Rajendra Prasad (CM San Jose), 84, passed away peacefully at home in Atherton, CA, surrounded by family and loved ones on July 14, 2013. Decades before it was fashionable to do so, Dr. Prasad followed the principles and practices of “loving kindness meditation,” forgiveness, and “living in the present moment” while “living life to the fullest.” He exemplified the classic American Dream while following a deeply spiritual path.

He was born in Dehradun, India, received his Ph.D. in Education from Stanford University in 1968, and worked for the Foster City/San Mateo City School District until the mid-90s, when he retired as Deputy Superintendent. He spearheaded community efforts in the fields of education, civic service, culture, grassroots politics, and many other areas. He also served on the Gubernatorial and Presidential Commissions. He was the first President of Chinmaya Mission West, the Founding Chairman of First Indo-American Bank, a Democratic Party activist, and a founder of the Livermore Hindu Community and Cultural Center.

His wife, Malti Prasad, passed away in July 2002. He is survived by his son, Praveen Prasad, and his daughter, Renu Prasad Relan, and five grandchildren. His funeral was held at the Skylawn Memorial Park in San Mateo on Sunday, July 21. A memorial website, www.rajendraprasad.org, is available for more details.

CMW Treasurer, Pranji Lodhia, wrote: "We are saddened by the loss of Dr. Raj Prasad. He was very instrumental in the formative days of CMW and served as its first President. Some of the current CMW Board members have had the opportunity of working with him over many years. He will be missed by the CMW Family and the entire Indian community in the Bay Area. Our prayers are with the Prasad family."

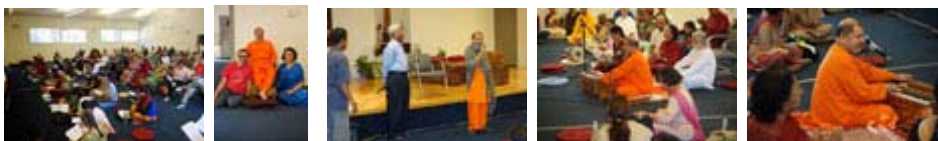
Vedanta Camp 2013 by David Brown

In the lovely and tranquil setting of *Krishnalaya*, nestled in the hills and redwoods of Northern California, beside the murmuring stream of the Eel Ganga, our much loved teacher, Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, taught the profound text of Advaita Makaranda during the 2013 Vedanta camp, held June 17-23.

The teachings of *Advaita Makaranda* are aimed at removing the final obstacle facing sincere students on the path of Vedanta—the difficulty of accepting oneself as the supreme Self. Guruji made the teachings all so clear and plain with gentle words, sublime illustrations, music, and humor that the week flew by as though on the wings of the birds flying high above the ashram.

The morning classes by Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya (CM San Jose) were on *Mukunda Mala*, the beautiful, devotional garland presented to Lord Krishna, the Bestower of Liberation.

In the evening *satsangs*, Swamini Akhilananda (CM Miami), Brahmacharini Arpita (CM St. Augustine), Brahmacharini Robyn Thompson (CM Vancouver), and Prabodhji all contributed wisdom and devotion to the beauty of the camp experience. The camp also included a cultural program that was a preamble celebration of Pujya Guruji's 63rd birthday. Guruji blessed us with his presence and offered his newly minted summary of Pujya Gurudev's life in Sanskrit at the evening *bhajan* and *aarti* sessions. The camp concluded with a heartwarming, devotional evening with Guruji beside the Krishna *murti* in the garden.





Features

Karma Yoga of the Three-in-One:

Pujya Swami Tapovanam, Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Tejomayananda
by Anjali Singh

Param Pujya Swami Tapovanji Maharaj, the Guru of our Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda, lived his entire life as an unrelenting ascetic, simple to the core, graceful in bearing, and ever established in the citadel of the Self. Unmoved by the world's changing phenomena, aware of its tumultuous nature, he was the walking embodiment of utter detachment. He roamed the Himalayas, not to find peace, but to exaltedly revel in Nature's beauty. And in his so doing, his holy feet blessed every particle of earth on which he stepped. His communion with the lofty Himalaya mountains was itself a sublime example of the art of contemplation and his love of the sacred river Ganga was an outpouring of bhakti. His settlement in Uttarkashi brought to life the final culmination--his divine role as a Guru.

Whatever karma flows from a man of Realization comes bearing the approval stamp of the Almighty. Devoid of any trace of egocentricity, Tapovanji Maharaj was a teacher to all who came to him seeking solace. But he was Guru only to the rarest of seekers who sought only the ultimate goal of life, Self-realization. One such seeker was named Swami Chinmayananda. One of the greatest and renowned of Tapovanji Maharaj's selfless services to the world was accepting and teaching this unique disciple who, in turn, shared the most precious and treasured gift of his Guru with millions around the world.

Pujya Swami Tapovanji Maharaj was the Source and Grace from which our Pujya Gurudev emerged. This Source, beginningless and endless, infinite and true, lies just beyond the misty clouds of temporal matter. Swami Tapovanji Maharaj is the divine Source of the Chinmaya Mission, the grandsire of the Chinmaya Family, the mighty Sustainer and nourisher of our roots. The strength of the Chinmaya Mission lies deep in Him. We pray to him, seeking his blessings to keep us on the road of rishis, to lead us to reverie in the Self, as the Self.

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Pujya Gurudev was a daring and dynamic visionary who, having gained

Knowledge of the Self from his Guru, took inspiration from the roaring Mother Ganga and came down to the plains to share the Truth with the masses. This was his Karma Yoga. He said: "To a man of Realization, there is nothing to gain or to lose--either by the practice of meditation or by working in the world in a spirit of selfless dedication and divine love. Certain periods of history reflect the general tempo of man and his interest in the social environment and activities, while other periods are characterized by man's aspirations for a quick and studious life of contemplation and meditation. A man of Realization acts in the world of his historical period, not prompted by personal vasanas, but as service to mankind due to the pressure of the total vasanas of the community, the total destiny of the world (samashti prarabdha). The total vasanas form the equipment through which the Spirit functions. Thus comes about the expression of the God Principle. God works through the God-man."

Can a frog in the well ever conceive the vastness of the ocean? Gurudev said, "Unless you have a comprehensive view of the universe, how can you know the cause of it? If the teacher waits until your mind is big enough, 20 generations of teachers must die and still there will be no hope of you giving up your little ego. You are still in the well. So, the only way of doing it is to bring the whole universe to you. . . ." To do just this, Pujya Gurudev established Chinmaya Mission. And in this revival and revitalization of Hinduism, especially Vedanta, humanity was reintroduced to the strength and glory of Self-realization.

The most difficult task is to be an innovator, to start something that goes against the current flow. The force of the opposing current drowns most innovators. Only a hero, a man of grit and determination, can work against all odds and come out a winner. The world began to honour the man who, at first, had been vehemently criticized by the orthodoxy of his time. Gurudev's contribution to the world was to bring awareness to the people at large of the liberating knowledge of Vedanta that is the birthright of every individual. Millions of people in the world continue to be benefited directly and indirectly by Pujya Gurudev's unending service and teachings through Mission centres, acharyas, publications, classes, yajnas, institutions, and projects.

The effectiveness of this spread of knowledge definitely tied in to the fact that Gurudev taught in English. His literary paintings and inimitable wit that peppered his talks and written commentaries became renowned as a unique, memorable, and welcome approach to spirituality. Pujya Gurudev belongs to the rank of pioneers, whose genius changed the world forever.

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And in the footsteps that followed came Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, a modern traditionalist whose quiet manner and simple devotion has manifested wonders. Keeping the eternal values intact, his greatest Karma Yoga has been taking forward and expanding the vision of his Guru. Rare are such perfect disciples who come to reveal themselves as perfect masters. Under his tutelage, guidance, and administration, Chinmaya Mission has blossomed as a haven for the sadhana and perfection of karma, bhakti, and jnana.

His innovative and creative projects of Chinmaya Vibhooti, Upanishad Ganga, Chinmaya Naada Bindu, and original musical compositions have impressed and blessed devotees worldwide. Under his supervision came the establishment of the Chinmaya International Residential School, the expansion of the Chinmaya International Foundation, and the renovation of Tapovan Kuti have been

marvelous accomplishments in themselves.

Gurudev always said that if religion is not presented in the language of the day, or if it is too rigid in its application, that religion or culture will soon die. Many civilizations that refused to change with the times found their place among the dead fossils of history. Understanding this clearly, Guruji has taken Chinmaya Mission into the technological age with a dignified balance and right purpose that never swerves from Truth.

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In God-realized masters, the Lord alone functions, for in them there is no ego or doership. The blessed grace, teachings, and refuge of such a rare combination of three God-realized masters, who are One, is like the flow of one Mother Ganga who flows under many names. The sacred flow of these masters that is known as Chinmaya Mission is a mighty movement that brooks no delay in serving all and helping spiritual seekers reach the ultimate Goal.

We are, one and all, eternally grateful, indebted, humbled, purified. May we be blessed to live in constant remembrance of this undeserved grace of our Guru Parampara.

Traveling with Pujya Gurudev to Uttarkashi by Anjali Singh

It was the beginning of February 1981 and the weather was cold. Pujya Gurudev was going on a retreat to Uttarkashi for three days, and I was to travel with him. This was a long cherished dream about to come true for me. Until then, the only other time that I had traveled with him was in 1966—to Ahmedabad, Jabalpur, and Surat.

It rained all the way from Delhi to Haridwar, and on the way to the Meerut cantonment, our car (which was behind Swamiji's) lost its way. A bit later, the car battery stopped working. Instead of sleeping huddled around a fire in a deserted jaggery factory, we decided to somehow make it to Haridwar using whatever was left of the battery. In my car were S. Kohli (CM Kuwait president), Pushpa Jaisinghani, and Brahmachari Radhakrishnan (later Swami Jyotirmayananda). They took charge of rationing the use of the headlights. After a few more small-scale mishaps, we finally reached Haridwar late at night.

The next morning, in the pitch dark that was enhanced by a drizzle and electricity failure, we began the exciting journey to Uttarkashi via Rishikesh. This time we stayed close behind Swamiji's car. We wound our way up through a beautiful wooded road that raised us high above Rishikesh, allowing us to view the sacred site in pre-dawn light, hugging and nestling the majestic Ganga.

This beginning of the hilly journey was momentous for me. Twenty years earlier (in 1961), I had gone this way right up to Gangotri, and Swamiji had come into my life three months later—a gift of Mother Ganga, I believe—a result of my first pilgrimage to Her.

As we neared Chamba at 7,000 ft., we were met with billows of mist and the cars halted for a short while. All of us joined Swamiji as he shared his *channas* with us. He told us that ever since his days to Uttarkashi on foot, he had always

eaten hotchannas and *halvā* in Chamba. We made a few such short stops on the way and got to talk to Swamiji during each stop.

As we neared Uttarkashi, the scenery changed dramatically. At times we could see the ravines far below; only Mr. Kohli kept his eyes tightly shut during those sights. At other times, picturesque, green stretches of wheat fields terraced the hillsides towards the Ganga. And here and there, we met herds of shaggy mountain goats. In Swamiji's car, he pointed out to the accompanying devotees (Leela Nambiar, Kamal Bhavnani, and Raju Rohira) the spots where he had halted during his two journeys on foot.



Mountain goats en route



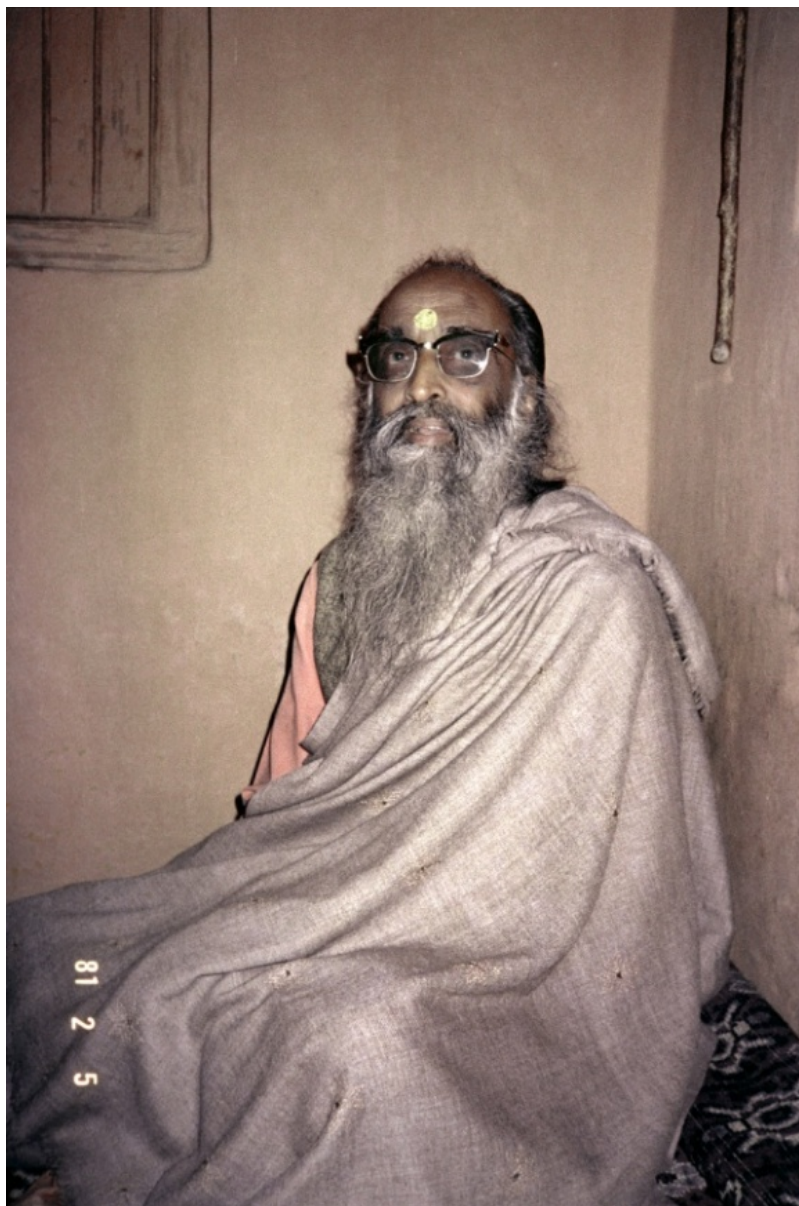
Swamiji in the first car



Swamiji talking to Kamal Bhavnani in the car

The road to Uttarkashi was bad, especially the last few kilometers, which were untarred, slushy, and rocky. It was drizzling when we reached. Swamiji sprang out and started climbing to *Tapovan Kuti*; everyone else got busy collecting their hand luggage. I left my luggage (and the camera) in a hurry in the car, so that I could catch up with Swamiji and take his briefcase from him. In doing so, I unwittingly entered Swamiji's temporal home by his side on my very first visit to *Tapovan Kuti*. I was ecstatic, too overjoyed for words.

The rainwater collected at the steps washed Swamiji's feet in greeting. As I opened the latch, the door creaked and a bell tinkled to mark our entrance. Swamiji prostrated at the shrine in *Tapovan Kuti* and sat down in the place where we see him seated in the famous photograph of him with his Guru. He looked out toward the Ganga reflectively. Gradually, the others joined us and we all sat around him.



Swamiji sitting in Tapovan Kuti



Swamiji with Mr. Kohli in Tapovan Kuti

Tapovan Kuti had been kept just as it used to be, now a sacred shrine with an ashram built around it. The small veranda outside the mud-plastered room is where Swami Tapovanam spent the major part of his life. It was a moment of deep devotion, gratitude, and significance for all of us to be sitting beside our beloved Guru in the very sacred place where he had sat with his. Perhaps subconsciously we were pledging ourselves to him and seeking blessings; perhaps this was the purpose of our visit.

Tapovan Kuti represents years of *tapas* (austerity) of an enlightened master. This is not the *tapas* of sadhana by which a spiritual seeker evolves, but the *tapas* of Self-realization, by which a master blesses all of creation. The profundity of a master's *tapas* charges the atmosphere. And a sincere seeker's mind, filled with faith and surrender, can bask in, and draw from, its spiritual content.

Tapovan Kuti also represents the *Guru-shishya paramparā*. In handing down the knowledge of the Self to Pujya Gurudev, Param Pujya Swami Tapovanji made our Gurudev his ultimate *Tapovan Prasad*, his holy gift to humanity. Today, we are blessed to be benefiting from the *tapo-bala* (strength of austerity) of our *Guru-paramparā*.

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda describes the *Guru-shishya-paramparā* as a specialty of Indian culture. He has said, "Where there is a tradition of *Guru-shishya-paramparā*, there is growth and unfoldment. If every individual feels that only he or she is special, then knowledge will remain only with him or her; there will be no flow. A flow is necessary, like the flow of Gangaji. There are certain rivers that exist only in the rainy season, and when the rainy season is over, the river is also over; it is not a perennial flow. Moreover, the Self cannot be known by sense perception, inference, or mere reasoning. For Self-knowledge, the teacher must be enlightened himself and capable of enlightening others. Even if all who come in contact with the teacher are not enlightened immediately, they are inspired, and this inspiration is what is required in life. Once a person is inspired, he or she will be a different person."

Swamiji, too, never took any credit. Sitting there in *Tapovan Kuti*, Swamiji told us that although Swami Tapovanam himself never left the *kuti* to go out and

work in the world; his greatness was that he molded Chinmaya and did his work through him. “They were good, great, grand days,” said Swamiji.

During the first eight of ten years that Swamiji was in association with Swami Tapovanam (the first few continuous years of study in Uttarkashi and Gangotri, and his later intermittent visits between jnana yajnas), when in Uttarkashi, Swamiji ate only the *bhikshā* (usually watery *dāl* and *roṭi*) served at the Kali Kambliwallah Annakshetra. “Never, not once, did I even get a headache!” Swamiji told us. “It was only when I went down and started taking ‘better’ food and a more ‘balanced’ diet that little, little troubles started!”

Swami Tapovanam had eaten only *bhikshā* food over his last 50 years. And if any sweets came from devotees, he would neither eat them himself nor give them to his disciples. “The box would lie there till it rotted!” said Swamiji. “Tapovanji Maharaj was very strict. Most students wanted to run away.”

Swamiji recalled that Swami Tapovanam would predict that a new student might perhaps stay for a maximum of ten days. “I thought of running away many times!” he said with laughter. “But it is the mind that keeps the body healthy,” he said. “If the mind is tuned only toward That, and thinking only of That, and if the mind is cheerful, the skin starts a photosynthesis by itself. It is only for volume that one eats! After all, the plants and vegetables get all the energy directly from the sun, so why not us? If we swamis in Uttarkashi are suffering, then it is because we are not doing sadhana.”

After lunch, Swamiji went into his study and did not come out until bhajans began before dinner. While he was working, a few of us silently ventured into his study. I daringly decided to take some pictures, and did a *parikrama* (circumambulation) around his desk, clicking from every angle.



Swamiji at his writing desk in Tapovan Kuti



The Allah Baksh Krishna, Lord Shiva, and Ivory Krishna

Doing this, I saw pictures of my two Krishnas on a shelf on the wall above his desk. Many years earlier, I had given these two Krishnas to Swamiji with a love that was genuine, though perhaps not completely unselfish, and I was touched to see Swamiji's compassionate acceptance of the same.

Swamiji let me take one round of pictures, but when I got greedy and started taking a second round, the expected happened—he threw us all out, except for Asha Lohra, who was helping him with his mail. Kamal was upset that I got everyone thrown out of the room, but at least we have some photos.

In the evening, two *brahmachārīs* sang beautiful bhajans in the satsang hall before Tapovan-Krishna, who is at His most charming here, poised on a wooden altar. After bhajans, Swamiji spoke about his plans for the Sidhbari ashram to Swami Akhandanandaji (president of Sadhu Samaj in Uttarkashi). Swamiji spoke about his idea to bring out a batch of *pahāḍī* (hill-folk) *brahmachārīs* who would be taught the *Ramayana* in Hindi and given some knowledge of cooperative farming and medicine. When their course ended, the *brahmachārīs* would go into the interiors of Himachal Pradesh and teach the *Ramayana* in the local dialect to the hill-folk. They would also treat common diseases and show the people how to develop their own cooperative farming and cottage industry. In this way, Swamiji said, he hoped that *pahāḍī* children would grow up in a healthy atmosphere of social values, preserving their spiritual heritage. Swamiji added that the completion of this plan would discharge his debt to the Himalayas, in whose shelter he had received spiritual knowledge, and to whose folk he would be giving it back.

We had our dinner with Swamiji in the kitchen, where it was warmer. Swamiji then retired to his room. I was told he was up at his desk at 2:30 a.m. and he worked the next ten hours, not even coming out for breakfast. We saw him only at noon after our return from the famous Vishvanath Mandir, where 20-25 sadhus (one from each ashram in Uttarkashi) were expected for *bhikshā*. After lunch, Swamiji again went back to his desk to work, granting us permission to go visit some mahatmas.

We first went to see Swami Govindagiriji who lived in the *kutiā* right next to Swami Tapovanji's. He was Swamiji's contemporary and recalled some

interesting stories. He told us that when Swamiji's first commentary on *Māndūkya Kārikā* was printed, he had dedicated it to his Guru. And when Swami Tapovanam had received it, he had been very pleased, saying, "*Chinmaya bahut buddhimān hai*" (Chinmaya is very intelligent).



Swamiji with Swami Govindagiriji in Tapovan Kuti

We also visited Dharmavati Mata, whom Swamiji revered greatly. By the time we got back to *Tapovan Kuti* it was raining, and Mrs. Nambiar, who had a knack of getting her socks wet, managed to dip them into a puddle for a second time.

Swamiji came out a little before dinner and we sat around him in the verandah. This was our last opportunity with him in Uttarkashi. Gracefully swinging his body to and fro, from front to back, to the accompanying rhythmic sounds of the Ganga, he said, "When you move your body so, you hear Om, Om, Om."

The sun began to set. The lighting in Tapovan Kuti was very dim. Brahmachari Ramesh sang bhajans and Raju shifted further into her silent self. It was very cold; Pushpa added yet another shawl over her already two sweaters, overcoat, and shawl. Mrs. Nambiar, who was accustomed to Chennai weather, was feeling uncomfortable. But Brahmacharis Radhakrishnan and Prabhakaran seemed quite immune; other than a vest, never did we see an extra piece of clothing on them. Mr. Kohli also wanted to claim the distinction of not being heavily clad, but Pushpa always reminded him of the tie over his shirt!

Swamiji insisted that we leave at 5 a.m. the next morning, despite Mr. Kohli, who, "speaking on behalf of the drivers," said it was risky to try the first five kilometers of bad road in the dark. He was horrified that we would be driving through the ravine area in that sort of visibility. At 5 a.m., Mother Nature sent hail to bid Swamiji goodbye. For forty-five minutes it continued, and when the offerings were spent, we used a torch light to make our way down the steep and uneven path to the main road.

This time, Swamiji changed places with Brahmachari Radhakrishnan and sat in our car. We ploughed and bumped along the slushy road in silence. The visibility was poor because of the mist, and when we met a stream crossing the road, Mr. Kohli insisted on getting out of the car so he could see the road for himself. Was it left, right, or straight? He wasn't sure! On one side was definitely the river,

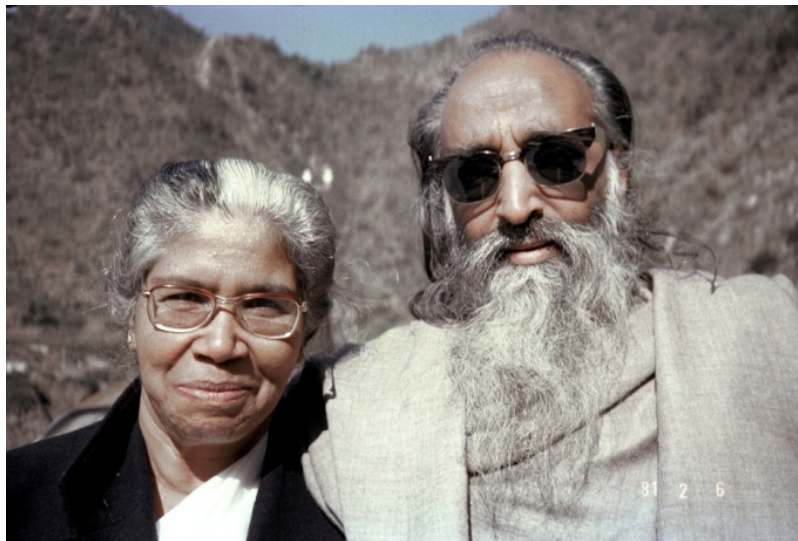
but everything else looked ambiguous. His shoes got wet and I had to check myself from laughing. Mrs. Bindra (a long-time devotee of Swamiji's from Delhi; she knew Swamiji's habits well) had warned me that if, by chance, I happened to find myself in Swamiji's car in the early hours of the morning, I was not to chatter away or laugh, as he would be doing *japa*. Luckily, the road got better and we gained speed; the rain finally stopped as well. It was the most wonderful experience to drive in the pre-dawn hours in silence with Swamiji.

If astronomical configurations have any say in the scheme of things, they were definitely benign for me at that moment. I looked up at the few stars twinkling in the dark early morning sky and said silently to them, "Swamiji will be back soon, along with me, I hope."

Within the next one hour, the indigo sky was indigone, steadily transforming into lighter hues, outlining the dark mountains in sharp contrast. It was a beautiful painting of five mountain ranges, one behind the other, in layers of shades, from gray to blue to purple, the sun about to rise in the next two minutes. Despite my most persuasive "pleeease" to stop for a photograph of such a fantastic and perfect setting, Swamiji just would not relent. So I kept the sole copy with me, in my memory slab.

We soon climbed higher to reach an aerial view of the Ganga forking into and around the mountains, embracing their every curve. Swamiji remarked then, "When the Ganga takes a turn toward the north, that place is considered very holy. Temples are generally built in that area. It is rare that man turns his attention from the world of objects, emotions, and thoughts [north] toward his Source, towards the Self. This effort to turn against the downward flow, back toward the spring of Consciousness, is symbolically marked by such places as Benares and Uttarkashi, where the Ganga turns northward."

Further along (and quite fortunately, I might add), the other car ran out of petrol! This meant we had to stop to give them some from our car and I could take individual photographs of Swamiji with everybody, although the scenery was not as beautiful here.



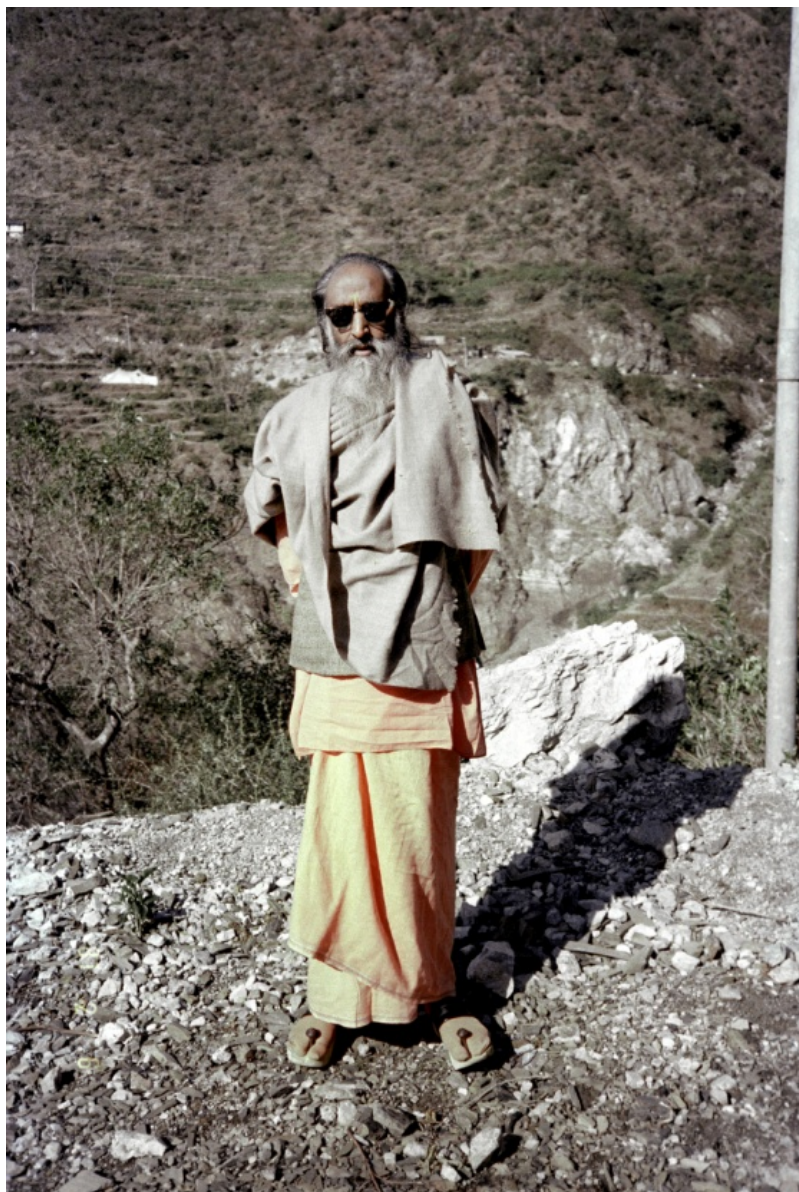
Swamiji with Leela Nambiar



Swamiji with Brahmachari Radhakrishnan



Swamiji with Pushpa Jaisinghani during the petrol stop



Swamiji en route to Rishikesh



Swamiji with Raju Rohira

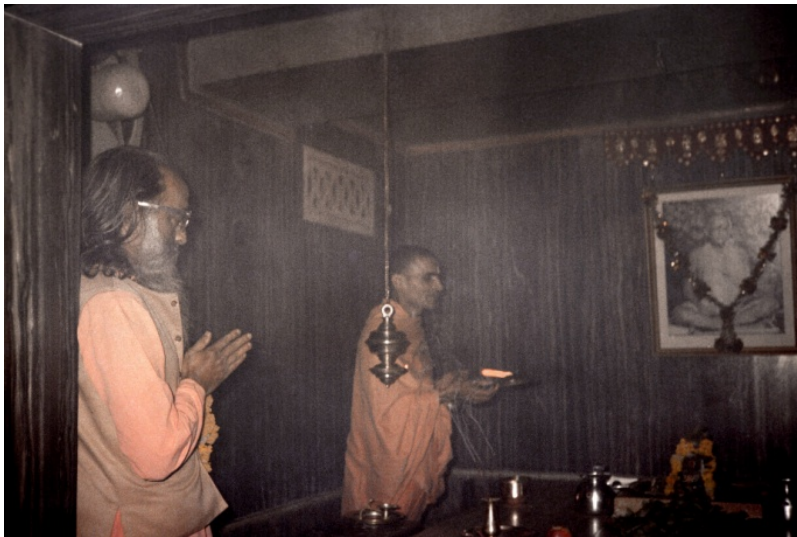


Swamiji drinking Ganga jal

When we reached the foothills of Rishikesh, Swamiji wanted to stop at Sivananda Ashram to pray at the samadhi of his *sannyasi diksha* Guru, Pujya Swami Sivananda Maharaj. I was very curious to see what happens when two mahatmas meet. How do they greet each other? What memorable words are spoken? I had thought that maybe Swami Krishnanandaji would be there. So when Swamiji got out of the car at the ashram, I rushed out of the car as well to hear his first words. Alas, it was not Swami Krishnanandaji who met him, but some other swamis. The first words that Swamiji said to them were, "Where can I find a clean bathroom here?"



Swamiji being escorted in the ashram



Swamiji at Swami Sivananda Maharaj's samadhi-sthala

Swami Krishnanandaji was conducting a satsang with 15-20 people, most of them foreigners, when we went with Swamiji to see him. Swami Krishnanandaji asked Swamiji to answer a question put by an American, “Why did God create this universe and land us all into trouble?”

Swamiji answered, “Motive hunting is a logical absurdity! It is possible to answer questions like ‘how,’ ‘when,’ and ‘where’ of a thing through a scientific approach You can say ‘how creation came into being’ by postulating theories of creation. You can even question ‘when’ and be given a rational answer—before time came into existence. But as to the ‘why’ of actions, no one can give an answer except the person who perpetrated the action. The actor alone knows his motive. Even in the ordinary actions of human beings, only that person and God know why he acts in a particular way, although others may try to impute and refer certain motives from those actions. And in the case of the creation of the world—God alone being the Actor—God alone can answer the question. So, my advice to you is: Go and meet God, and personally ask him this question. That is the only way of finding out what was his motive in creating this

universe. And when you meet Him, you will realize that you yourself are that God, and there never was any creation. Actually, by then, there will be no question left to ask!”



Satsang with Swami Krishnanandaji and other swamis and devotees



Swamiji with Swami Krishnanandaji

From Rishikesh, we went straight to the BHEL guest house in Haridwar. In the afternoon, some of us went for a dip in Gangaji, which had not been possible with the rain in Uttarkashi. That evening, Swamiji's host had arranged a talk for BHEL managers and their spouses, entitled, "Smile and Work." The wives were appreciative of Swamiji's elaboration on their routine—the monotonous housework they do day after day, year after year, without bearing any grudge or feeling bored. "In fact," said Swamiji, "ladies work much harder than men—getting up before them and going to bed only after the entire household is asleep."

And what inspiration geared them forward so cheerfully through their work? Swamiji answered, "Because they harbor a vision that one day their child will grow up, and all the sacrifices made on the child's behalf will find fulfillment."

Men have no such vision in their work. They labor on without a sense of achievement, not knowing toward what end they are working, apart from their little microscopic selves.”

Swamiji also said that in India people did not take national pride in their work, and it is a sorry fact that an imperfect thing or quality of work is accepted and passed. He gave the example of a Japanese man he had met in Tokyo who made hundreds of bicycle bell springs every day. “Every day he would test them out, rejecting the ones he considered unfit, even though all the rejected ones were at a personal loss to him. When I questioned him about it, he explained that when the cycle bells went into the export market on the other side of the world, if someone were to find the spring defective, Japan would get a bad name. It is well known that the entire world shudders before Japan in the international market. This kind of macrocosmic vision is lacking in India.”

Swamiji put forward an idea for them to consider: “If management were to project a vision to the workers and involve the workers . . . not only would the quality of work improve tremendously, but great possibilities that were earlier tied down by a microcosmic sense of achievement would now flow out in dynamic expression . . . drawn by a macrocosmic vision.”

We were coming to the end of our short trip to Uttarkashi—the beautiful pilgrim center of the *tapas* of countless sages over centuries, the region of a myriad hued mountain ranges and twinkling stars that talk to you, the land of the holy Ganga that offers perennial solace to mankind. That night, when we went to sleep, the weather was normal again, but at 5 a.m., a heavy fog enclosed us until Meerut. We started with rain from Delhi, and were accompanied by drizzle in Haridwar and escorted by mist through the hills. The continuous clouds and drizzle in Uttarkashi ended in hail bidding us goodbye. At the close of the journey, fog embraced us and led the way safely back to Delhi.

It is said that Lord Indra honors all auspicious happenings. His messengers had stood in salute of Swamiji all the way up and down on this most hallowed trip, for a Great Disciple had gone back to the sacred abode of learning of his Great Teacher, where the Greatest Secret had once been revealed and passed to him in sacred tradition.

[TOP](#) |

Announcements

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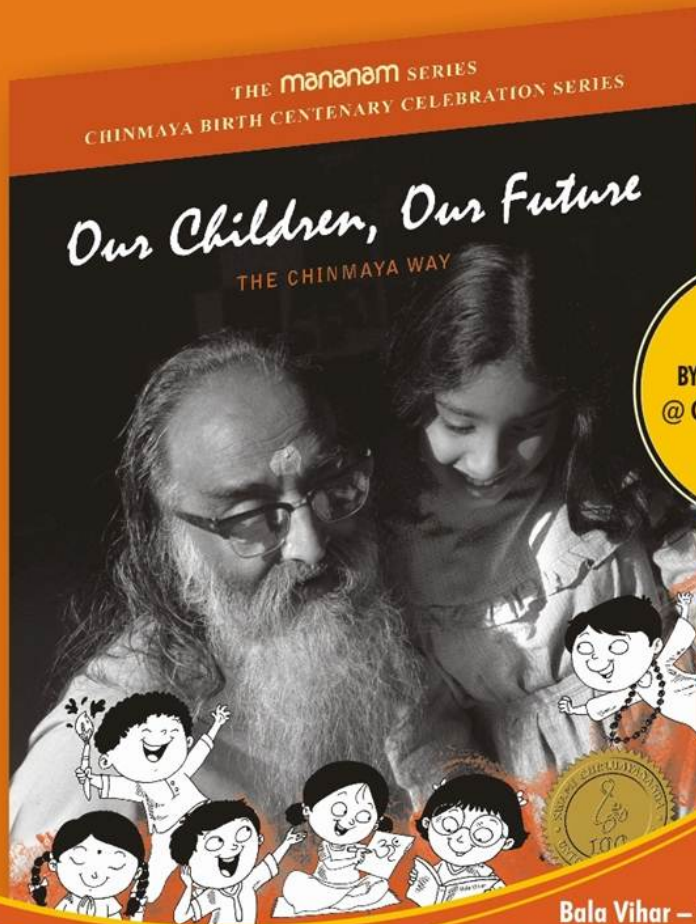
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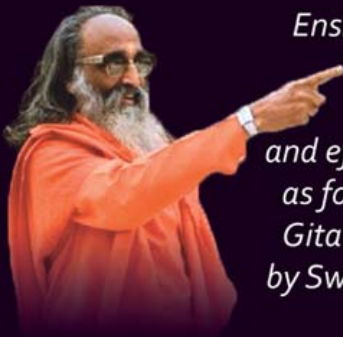


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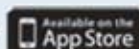


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