



Hari OM
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One should consider it a rare piece of luck to have the mind absolutely quiet without any agitation or drowsiness for even a short while. That is the gateway to the experience of the Self. Agitations and drowsiness are the usual impediments to samadhi. . . . The mental states known as *bhramaṇa*(roaming), *viparyāya* (misapprehension), *vikalpa* (imagination, doubt, uncertainty), and *smṛti*(memory) are together described as *vikshepa*, or agitation.
Swami Tapovanam Maharaj

Each day when you come to the seat of contemplation, a lot of unnecessary mental agitations can come afloat. They can all be neutralized if you, on the seat of meditation, with large-hearted, Godly compassion, forgive everyone. Forgive everyone who, knowingly and unknowingly, has wounded you, just as the Lord has forgiven you for all your trespasses. Forgiveness is a mental balm to heal all mental ulcers and, in the long run, stomach ulcers also! . . . You can never forgive unless your mind can stretch and spread out to contain everything and embrace everyone in love.
Swami Chinmayananda

The truth is that most people do not know what love is. Any form of liking, fascination, infatuation, or attraction is conveniently termed “love.” This word “love” has been grossly misunderstood and misused. In love, there is total purity, where one asks for nothing and only gives and gives! This is the beauty of love. The nature of love is described in *Nārada-Bhakti-Sūtra* (5.1). Firstly, it is devoid of any desires and expectations; there can be no demands in love. Secondly, it keeps growing All other kinds of so-called love become stale and putrefy with the passage of time. Real love is ever fresh, ever new.
Swami Tejomayananda

SPIRITUAL TRAILS

Vedanta Unveils the Mystery of Creation
by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda
Reprinted from Mananam: Mystery of Creation

Nothing new is ever created by anyone. The change of form, name, nature, and condition is all that is creation. Reconversion alone is creation. For creation, three essential factors are necessary, and they, in their aggregate, are called the “cause.”

In any creation, these three fundamental and separate causes are: (a) the material cause or the raw material, (b) the instrumental cause, the equipment with which the object is created and (c) the efficient cause, the intelligence that creates or works at the material with the instrument.

Generally, the three causes exist separately, but in the case of the creation of the world, the objects created are not different from the Creator. The material cause, the one supreme *Paramātman*, manifests as different objects, for, in the infinitude of Its existence, there cannot be a second Infinite.

The waves in the ocean cannot claim an existence apart from the waters of the ocean. Likewise, this outer world, and our own world of experiences in the physical, mental, and intellectual spheres rise from, exist in, and merge back into that one supreme Awareness that glows in everyone. And like the bubbles that form and burst upon the surface of water, different experiences in different bosoms rise and fall on that one Consciousness.

Similarly, behind this seeming multiplicity of existence and the manifold nature of our experiences, the one unchanging Substratum persists in all its splendor. This we variously call as Brahman, *Paramātman*, *Sat-Cit-Ānanda*. This supreme Being alone is the dynamic Truth, and no differentiation is possible in this state of absolute Reality.

How, then, do we come to feel the plurality in the outer world of innumerable objects, which we experience now as so very real? If the Spirit that pulsates through all objects in and around us is that One without a second, why is there a conflict in the perception of plurality by us?

Theories of Creation

The *Nyāya-vaisheshika* school of philosophy propounded the theory that *paramāṇus* (the smallest possible particle) are the cause from which the created world has come. They accept these particles to be inert. However, from an inert cause, sentient effects cannot be expected to arise. And they observed that in the universe of happenings, qualities not found in the cause are also not found in the effects. Therefore, this theory is to be rejected by all sincere students of philosophy.

Another theory is that the world has arisen from the *pradhāna*, the Unmanifest, which is termed in Vedanta as *mūla-prakṛti*. No doubt, all that is manifest is a projection of the unmanifest, but to declare that the unmanifest is the very cause of the dynamic manifest

world of expressions is an obvious fallacy. There must be some vital positive Substratum even for the Unmanifest to exist and function. Therefore, this theory is not satisfactory to a diligent student.

The Nihilists (*asat-vādins*), a major school of Buddhism, declare that this existing world has arisen from nonexistence. This also is to be rejected. If I am invited to the marriage of the eldest brother of a barren woman's son, obviously I cannot attend the function! No student of philosophy can accept that an existent world has emerged from a nonexistent cause.

Thus, by rejecting the different theories propounded by various schools of thought, Vedantic teachers directly indicate the nature of the positive, divine Substratum over which this delusory world of phenomena can be superimposed. This is the world of things and beings going around in a game of perpetual change. According to the Advaita philosophy, this substratum is Existent (*sat*), Unconditioned (*akhaṇḍa*), Consciousness absolute (*bodha*). It is subtler than the subtlest, the highest (*parātpara*).

How has the world come about? What exactly is this process? Many thinkers have concluded that it must have happened in a process of modification (*pariṇāma-vāda*) of the infinite Truth. If the world is created by God, wherein He becomes the world, just as milk modifies to become curd, it will suggest a great tragedy. In becoming the curd, the milk has irretrievably lost its properties. So too, if God has modified Himself to become the world, the very God-principle would have ended.

Thus, we have reached an unenviable dilemma. The world has for its cause infinite Consciousness. Yet the Infinite itself has not become the world. At the same time, the world of plurality is readily available for our experience. What exactly then is the relationship between the Infinite and the finite? According to Acharya Shankara and others of the Advaita school of thought, it is only a delusory misapprehension (*ābhāsa-vāda*) caused by *avidyā*, or the nonapprehension of the Reality. Shri Swami Tapovan, in his *Hymn to Badrinath*, says:

“If this world is the modification of *Sat-Cit-Ānanda*, of Consciousness, as in curdled milk, the very nature of the Supreme would end to become something else. Therefore, That which in delusion is misapprehended as the world, like mirage waters, to that Lord of Badri, my salutations” (1.25).

This delusory projection is compared in the ancient Vedanta *śāstra* to the mirage waters, which cannot satisfy anybody's thirst. The desert alone is the reality, but because of thirst, the wayfarer projects his own desire for water and sees an apparent lake of shimmering waters at a distance. Once the mind has projected to conceive that there is water, it is the experience of many a desert traveler that he sees ripples and waves, even ships moving on it, and the sun reflecting upon its disturbed surface. Similarly, when pure Consciousness is not apprehended, the mind projects in its place a world of change; and identifying with it, the ego comes to live a life of pain and sorrow.

Vedanta considers the world unreal because it is in a state of constant flux. That which exists in all periods of time—past, present, and future—without any change, is called the

Real (*Sat*). And that which was not and will not remain the same, but is seemingly available for our present experience, is called the unreal.

That which is changeless alone can be eternal, Real. Vedanta explains that the world of plurality, which in fact is not real in itself, is superimposed upon that which is Real. Such delusory superimposition takes place only when the real Substratum is not comprehended. For example, due to the ignorance of the garland, we misunderstand it to be a serpent. Nonapprehension of Reality gives rise to many misapprehensions. On apprehending Reality, all misapprehensions disappear.

It is an experienced fact that unconditioned by any of these primary scientific factors as time, space, and objects, we create for ourselves a world of experiences in our dreams. It is evidently clear that we can, in our imagination, project forth a world of plurality and thus create situations, identifying with which we live a life of joy and sorrow.

Time is a relative, subjective experience. The dreamer in the dream world might live through ten years of life very vividly, yet when he wakes, he realizes that according to the world's chronometers, only a few insignificant minutes have passed. The dream was projected in the mind—where certainly there is not enough space for towns and fields, for houses and mountains, for the sun, the moon, and the stars—and yet, the dreamer dreamed all of them. No doubt, these were all real to the dreamer. Within the dream-space and dream-time, dream-objects are created. However, to the waker, all of these are empty delusions.

The waking world, held within the web of our present concepts of time, space, and objects, is, and can be realized as, an equally imaginary projection from the standpoint of a higher plane of Consciousness. This can be realized only if we awaken ourselves into that state of experience, which is the experience of Truth, the Self.

After projecting the dream world, completely forgetting his waking identity, the waker himself becomes the dreamer, the dreamed, and the dreaming, and thereafter continues to experience the joys and sorrows of that realm. On waking, he understands that this triad of dreamer, dreamed, and dreaming is but one homogeneous whole—the waking mind. The waker's mind itself becomes the objects of the dream world; the waker's mind in another aspect becomes the dreamer; and the dreamer, drawing vitality and dynamism from the waker's mind, establishes his own relationship with the endless objects and their arrangements and acts in the dream. This process is called dreaming.

By a similar process of forgetting our own eternal, divine nature as nondual Consciousness, we project the misconceptions of a pluralistic world of objects and play the game of experiences through the triad (*tripuṭi*) of knower, known, and knowing.

From what we have discussed so far, can we say that the world of plurality has emerged out of Truth—the world being unreal? But though unreal, it has such a similitude of reality that it can choke us with its bondages and can give us semblances of sorrow and joy! How is it? Every philosopher finds it difficult to explain how the unreal has seemingly come from the Real. Therefore, the great Acharya Gauḍapāda states in his *Māṇḍūkya Kārika* that:

“When Consciousness is associated with the idea of activity, the appearances that are seen in It do not come from elsewhere. When Consciousness is inactive, appearances do not go elsewhere from passive Consciousness. The appearances never go into Consciousness, nor do the appearances emerge from Consciousness, since they are not real entities. These are always beyond our comprehension, because they are not subject to the cause and effect relationship” (*Alāta-shānti* 51-52).

These verses plainly declare that it is inexplicable how finitude has come out of the Infinite. The great thinker Gauḍapāda himself admits, “It is not because of any intellectual idleness on the part of the philosophers, but it is because of the very inability of the science of logic.” He says that since causation is but a myth, the law of causation does not function in this particular instance. And evidently, no scientific explanation can be given without seeking and discovering the Reality behind the seeming finitude of the eternal Infinite.

Science can function only in a field of cause and effect. But when the intellect and the mind transcend the lower realms of causality and are away from the jurisdiction of delusion, they rise into the world of Truth where causation is not observed, as nothing is ever caused in pure Consciousness. Nothing can be produced there wherein the Truth is, One without a second.

We must carefully note that in these two verses Gauḍapāda hints that Consciousness associated with activity is the consciousness available for us in both, the waking and dream states. When he says that Consciousness is inactive, it is meant to indicate the deep sleep state, wherein the whole world of plurality that was available for us in the dream and waking states, is no longer with us. It does not mean that the worlds of the dream and waking states have gone elsewhere; nor can we say that they have entered into the deep sleeper. The real difficulty is our inability to give complete intellectual explanations for the how and why of these false appearances.

Why have they emerged from Consciousness and how? This has produced in our philosophical literature various theories about creation. For example:

“Some creationists believe it to be the projection of the glory of God’s own superhuman power, while others consider the world to be of the same nature as a dream or illusion. The creationists consider this manifestation as having been caused by the mere will of God, while there are others who, looking upon time as real, declare that time is the cause for the manifestation of all things. Others think that the world is created for the purpose of God’s enjoyments, while still others attribute it to a mere play of the Lord. But it is the very nature of the effulgent Being, the Atman, for what desire is possible for Him, whose desires are always in a state of perfect fulfillment” (*Māṇḍūkya Upanishad, Āgama Prakaraṇa* 7-9).

Enumerating the theories that existed then regarding the creation of the world, the teacher says that some of them believe that the creation of the world is caused by the determined will of the Lord, while others believe that the world was created with a set purpose behind it—the purpose being either the enjoyment of the Lord or an afternoon

diversion for the Lord. Some believe the factor of time is a real entity, and that the creation of the various names and forms depends entirely upon time.

The non-creationists explain the world as a long dream. According to this school of thinkers, a dream is literally real while the dreamer dreams it; just as magician's illusions, or the illusions of a serpent superimposed on a rope, are all real only as long as the illusions last. These non-creationists argue that if a thing is unreal, it cannot impinge upon our cognition and make us perceive it. According to them, wherever an object is cognized and some feelings generated thereby, such objects have a reality, however short-lived they may be.

Theory of Non-creation

After enumerating six theories in all, Gauḍapāda gives his own reasons as to why Vedānta does not believe in a created world. According to him, the supreme Reality is not created and there is never a world created by a Lord. He says the world of objects recognized by us is nothing but a mental projection made by ourselves. This is called the theory of non-creation (*ajāta-vāda*). Early Vedānta, mainly represented by *Māṇḍūkya Kārika* and *Yoga Vāsishṭha*, believes in this theory of non-creation, while modern Vedānta, represented mainly by Shri Shankaracharya, allows a relative reality to the world of objects seen in our everyday life. In fact, there is no fundamental difference between these two theories if we correctly understand them.

Thus, according to Vedānta, the only logical explanation that can be given for creation is that it is the very nature of the supreme Reality. Nothing can ever remain apart from its own real nature; it is the nature of Infinity to play the finitude.

The supreme, all-perfect Reality cannot be attributed to entertain any desire. Desire for a thing is experienced only when the absence of it is felt by the entity. If I finish full lunch and someone invites me for a second lunch immediately after, however tasty it may be, I would cry, "No, no! Not for me!" At such a time, the desire for food is impossible, for one does not feel the absence of food. Similarly, the supreme Reality, in its fullness (*paripūrṇatā*), cannot feel any desire to create the world.

The emergence of the finite world out of the Infinite is a phenomenon that is perceived and felt by us in our present condition of misapprehension. But when our intellect, with its sharpened discrimination, comes to inquire logically, the object of our inquiry somehow escapes even our most diligent pursuit. From the Infinite the world could not have emerged; yet at the same time, here is a world of finite things and beings starting at us so vividly—who can deny it?

"This field of action and result created by none and yet ever experienced by us, is indeed a great magic play. Therefore, o Badrinath, this can be only a great play of magic of Thy own maya—so say the great men of wisdom" (*Hymn to Badrinath* 2.5).

In Vedānta, this power in an individual to delude himself and perceive a world of plurality is called maya. This term, maya, is one over which a lot of unnecessary discussions have taken place. Also, other schools of philosophy have cast aspersions on Vedānta saying that they cannot subscribe to what maya is. This line of argument is pursued by them because of the misunderstanding in them that maya is a positive cause and not a hypothetical

negative supposition.

In all delusory superimpositions, there is ignorance or nonapprehension of the real substratum (a post, a rope, or a garland of flowers), and out of this ignorance rise the endless misapprehensions of unreal experiences (a ghost or a serpent). This ignorance or nonapprehension of the Real is the power of maya.

Apprehensions and nonapprehensions, and the quality of the misapprehensions, depend upon the nature and quality of the thoughts. Logically, therefore, maya is nothing but ignorance, or *avidyā*, which is nothing other than the mind itself. Where the mind is transcended, the imperfect world of sorrows and forms, lived and experienced by the individual through such maya-based experiences as a ghost on a post or a serpent on a garland, also disappears.

“Therefore,” Shri Gauḍapāda concludes, “Men of inner experience declare that this universe experienced by us is nothing but an expression of maya.” Maya expressed in an individual is called *avidyā*, or the individual mind. The total mind is called maya, and the Infinite functioning through the total mind, or maya, is called the Creator, or *Ishvara*.

The Truth about Maya

The objects of the world exist and play about only in the observer’s mind. And yet, due to maya, they are seen as though they are outside, as the reflection of oneself in a mirror.

“The divine Teacher makes an individual, at the time of realization, experience his own immutable Self, in which the Self alone plays as the universe of names and forms, like a city seen in a mirror, due to the power of maya, as though produced outside, as in a dream. To that divine Teacher, Shri Dakshinamūrti, is this prostration”
(*Dakshinamūrti Stotram* 1).

Here, it is pointed out that the reflected image has no reality apart from the object reflected. Though the reflected image is of the same form as the object reflected, it is laterally inverted. This lateral inversion in our personality causes confusions and sorrows in life, building our samsara. The supreme Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, when reflected in the mind, is expressed as the nonexistent, inert, and sorrowful world.

If the world has an existence only as a reflection in the mind, then it should be experienced only as an inner emotion. How is it, then, that we constantly experience the world of objects as outside ourselves? Acharya Shankara answers, “It is because of maya,” the nonapprehension of Truth. In order to elucidate this assertion, he gives the analogy of the dream. Even though we all know that the happenings in the dream world, peopled by the dream-crowd, are all experienced within the mind, while the dream lasts, the dream-world is definitely outside the dreamer himself. It is only on waking that he realizes the entire dream and its happenings were but figments of his own imagination, having an existence only within himself, and that his mind was the very substratum upon which the dream was being experienced. In the same way, though the world of plurality exists only in one’s mind, it is experienced as real and substantial, independent of the experiencer.

There is another school of thinkers that considers maya as an incomprehensible concept of

Truth or God. They argue that since they perceive the world, the world must be real. However, this cannot be arrived at logically. Human perceptions are often false. We see the sun moving, yet we know that the sun is not moving; we perceive the earth as steady and motionless, though the earth revolves on its own axis. The mere movement of air warmed by the midday sun is perceived as patches of water with waves and ripples in it, though it is only a mirage. An ordinary post is often misunderstood as a ghost; a rope as a snake; a bit of seashell as a piece of silver.

In all these examples, the nonapprehension of reality is cause for the misapprehensions. When we realize that it was only the rope, the snake disappears; when we realize the post, the ghost vanishes. The nonapprehension of Truth causes the misapprehensions of a pluralistic world. The intelligent student may then find a doubt arising in his mind: The nonapprehension of Truth may be due to the play of maya, but what power creates the world of perceptions? This possible doubt is answered, “By maya.”

The power of maya inherent in the Reality has two definite expressions—knowledge (*vidyā*) and ignorance (*avidyā*). Of these, ignorance manifests as two subjective mischiefs, the veiling of the Real (*āvaraṇa*) and the projection of the apparent (*vikshepa*). When the veiling power clouds our intellect, the mind starts projecting its imaginations in place of the real object. When the intellect cannot detect the post, the mind projects the ghost. Where *āvaraṇa* plays, *vikshepa* also asserts itself. To control *vikshepa* is to remove the veiling power, and to the extent the veiling is removed, to that extent Reality is unfolded.

In the Upanishads we find positive evidence in the declarations of the rishis that the world has risen from the Supreme. The Upanishads stress that “before creation there was only pure Existence.” They also assert that “verily from This alone all creatures were born.” Further, from this omniscient (*sarvajña*), all-knowing (*sarvavit*) One, whose intelligence itself is thought, and through thought, all these names and forms of the world of matter were born.

According to Vedanta, creation could not have taken place from the Infinite, nor could it have happened from anything other than Brahman. It cannot be that the changeless Infinite has itself become the created world. And yet, there stands in front of us this world of objects and beings. The Vedantic philosophers were never blind to these facts, nor did they close their eyes to the brilliant expositions of Truth by the ancient rishis.

Shri Shankara’s Explanation

Shri Shankara’s theory of superimposition (*vivarta-vāda*) alone satisfies all the statements of the Upanishads. In the absence of the true knowledge of the nature of an object, the object’s true nature is misunderstood. When the real nature of the object is discovered, when ignorance is ended by the right knowledge, all the misinterpretations end. This is the theory of superimposition. As long as the post is covered by our ignorance, the ghost vision seems real. Under a beam of light, when the ignorance of the post ends, in the newly dawned knowledge of the post, the false superimposition of the ghost-form also ends.

The nature of the Reality is not experienced by us, and therefore, in its place we recognize the world of names and forms, of cross purposes, of negative tendencies, of sorrows and mortality. When Truth is known, the perceived world of plurality itself is

reassessed and experienced as nothing but the infinite Consciousness. However, it is true that Vedantic theory accepts a relative reality of the world of forms inasmuch as it has a temporary reality so long as the limited ego recognizes it, even though it is unreal from the standpoint of the Supreme.

In fact, there should be a Reality that exists behind the world of objects, or else, instead of our present experiences as “the pot is,” “the chair is,” “the table is,” we would have had an experience of “the pot exists not,” “the chair exists not,” “the the table exists not.” The existence of things is experienced by all, since the cause from which every object has emerged is an existent Being. Vedantic philosophers thus directly bring home to students that all things in the world have risen from Reality, which is the nature of pure Existence.

Continuing this logical enquiry, they arrived at some very important conclusions. When the common experience of “the table is,” or “the chair is” is analyzed, we find that the experience of “the pot is” comes to us when we are conscious of the existence of the pot. Similarly, the experience of “the table is” becomes ours only when we are conscious of the existence of the table. In other words, the existence of an object is recognized only when Consciousness illumines it.

In light of the above, if the common experience of all that “the world exists” is analyzed, we shall find that it is because we are conscious of the existence of the world. Just as a pot has no existence apart from the mud, its material cause, so too, the world has no existence apart from the supreme Existence (*sat*) and the supreme Consciousness (*sphuraṇa*). Hence, Vedanta *śāstra* declares that the world is the effect of Existence and Consciousness (*sat-sphuraṇa-kāra*).

If we accept that the world of objects has an existence of its own, and that existence and awareness are both the very inherent nature of matter, it will contradict our experiences in life. According to the objective scientists of modern time, the world is existence. To the subjective scientists, the philosophers of India, the world has existence. There is a vast difference between the assertion that the ever-perishing world of matter is existence and that the changing phenomena have existence. The phenomenal world is a play of matter upon Existence and that eternal principle of Existence expresses itself in and through all changes.

This world of plurality with different names and forms that seem to rise and fall like waves on the ocean is an illusion painted by the confused ego, experienced on the Substratum (*adhishṭhānam*). Just as the waves are on and of the ocean, not standing even for a moment apart, so, too, the waves of creation are in and of that absolute Supreme and have no separate existence in themselves. This supreme Being is the Atman that stands unaffected in the least by the changes caused in the arenas of time, space, and causality.

A Vedantic student may ask, “If, as you say, O Vedantin, both the objective and the subjective worlds in us be mere imaginations of the mind, what is the source of these imaginations? It cannot be merely the mind because the mind is nothing but matter, inert, insentient, and lifeless. Nor can this be the Atman, since the Atman is knowledge and in knowledge there cannot be any delusion.”

Answering this question, Adi Shankara gives a beautiful example to show how this delusion is maintained. The answer is, “Like an iron piece appearing to be fire when in contact with fire.” Inquiring into this phenomenon, Shri Shankara says, “It is mutual superimposition (*ananyonyādhya*sa).” Any superimposition is always mutual; it cannot be one way only. On a rope we cannot have the delusory misconception of a cow. The superimposition reflects some or all the qualities of its substratum. Therefore, not only does the rope borrow the properties of a snake, but the snake also borrows some properties from the rope. The snake is spotted, slimy, long, and has a hood; these snake-properties are not in the rope, but they cover the rope. And the rope lends its existence to the fancied snake. The rope exists; the snake exists not. The nonexistent snake exists for the deluded man. The imaginary snake borrows its existence from the rope. To the rope the snake lends its spotted slimy appearance. Together, one sees the rope as nonexistent and the snake as existent. The snake properties one sees and the rope properties one does not see. So one’s conclusion in delusion is, “The snake is; the rope is not.”

Today, we see the body, the mind, the intellect, the ego, and their sorrows, and say that these exist. The reality of God, Consciousness, exists not for us. When I apprehend pure Consciousness in myself, all the qualities of body, mind, and intellect, and the world of objects, emotions, and thoughts, disappear. Alone the Reality exists.

When the body, mind, and intellect are transcended, the individual apprehends the pure infinite nature of Reality, wherein, in its nondual Existence, no such distinctions as world, individual, or God can ever arise. Having seen and experienced the post, there cannot remain the ghost-vision to give us a share of the old dread or sorrow. This is the result of realizing the infinite Self. And to reach this desirable Godhood, we take shelter at the feet of the Lord of Badri, who is none other than this Atman divine.

How Time Disappears

by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

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In his text, *Saddarshanam*, Bhagavān Ramana Maharshi says, “The past and the future are, in their own time, the present. Giving up the truth of that present, will not discussion on the past and the future be laughable, like counting without the number one in the world?” Time is known to us as the past, the present, and the future. The past is the past and the future is the future only with reference to the present. The past, when it happened, was the present. And the future, when it happens, will also be the present. The future takes its own time to come and the past is already gone. The present alone is in our hands. All actions are possible only in the present, even if planned in the past, even if to give results in the future. So, the essence of time is the present, without which there is no past or future. Just as, for example, without the number zero, there would be no concept of -1 or +1.

The future comes towards the present to pass away as the past. The future never comes as the future, which is why it is said, “Tomorrow never comes.” The past, too, never returns. It may be relived through memory or repetition of actions but the past is never new. Only the present is ever fresh and new. Therefore, all beauty is only in the present. Hindu scriptures state, “Beauty is that which is ever new.” Unfortunately, most of us live most of the time with memories in the past or with hopes for the future, thereby, missing out on the essence of time and life. Time is spent in discussions about the influence of the past on the present and about future trends. Money is spent in the search for predictions about the unknown future and the means to improve future chances. An unsteady mind slips into the past or trips into the future. Swami Rama Tirtha says, “All time is now; all space here. Problems solved; solutions clear!”

What, then, is the present? We talk of the present century, decade, year, month, week, day, hour, minute, and second. We find that each can be further divided into smaller units of time. Even the second can be subdivided into microseconds and so on, until we experience the present actually disappearing into a mere presence or existence, which is the truth of time. The concepts of the past, present, and future are known to be superimpositions on the timeless Truth. The Lord is thus called by the names *Kālātmā* (the essence of time), *Kālātīta* (beyond time), and *Trikālaज्ञा* (the knower of the three periods of time).

The present is defined as a dot in the line of time. The past stretches toward infinity away from this dot, and the future speeds from infinity toward this dot. A dot is dimensionless. The present therefore is immeasurable; its truth is infinite.

There is no experience of time without events. Therefore, time is defined as the interval between any two events. The interval being event-less, it is also timeless. The essence of time is thus timeless. Time is a subjective concept. When we are happy, time flies; and when we are unhappy, every second seems like a lifetime. When we are young, we live in the future that lies ahead. When we retire, we live in the past that is already gone. This so-called ‘objective’ time, which is based on the movement of the sun etc., is only valid for a particular system. It is also not absolute in our system—after every few hundred years, international watches have to be set right. To give absolute reality to this relative concept of time, is not to know the truth of time. Counting begins with the number one. Therefore, the number one is present in all numbers. So, too, the truth of time, which is itself timeless and external, underlies the past, present, and future.

Bhagavān Ramana Maharshi says, “Without us, where does the talk of space and time appear? If we are the body, then there will be the play of space and time. Nowhere do we shine. At no time do we appear. But everywhere, and at all times, do we shine.” Space is that which accommodates. Directions are superimposed in space as north, south, right, left, front, back, etc. with reference to this body. Directions are not absolute. To someone in Japan, India is west and to someone in the US, India is east. All objects are in space. Space is measured with reference to objects as distance, e.g., the space between two marked spots is a mile. Long distances are measured in terms of time, as light years. Space, too, is thus a subjective concept. To someone living in a palace, an urban flat seems small. To someone from the slums, the flat is spacious. Space is a thought in the mind, because we live in a space-less world in deep sleep. Thus, where there is no

identification with this body, there is no existence of space.

Like space, time, too, is a subjective or relative concept that exists as a thought in the mind. It has existence only when we identify with the body. When I come to know that I am not the body, where is the concept of time and space? I am then devoid of time and space. And thus, I do not exist in time and space, but these concepts exist in me as superimpositions.

When the first thought was not, I was there to illuminate its absence. When the first thought appeared, I witnessed its appearance and disappearance. I also witnessed the appearance of the second thought, and thus became aware of the interval between the two thoughts. Hence, the concept of time as the interval between two thoughts exists in me. Interestingly, the unit of time is second, as its concept arises only with the second thought.

Here, there, nowhere, and everywhere are all concepts of space. Being beyond space, I am here, there, nowhere, yet everywhere. Now, then, never, always are concepts of time. Being beyond time, I am now, was then, never was, yet ever am!

The enlightened sage seems no different from an ignorant man in his day-to-day activities. Then where lies the difference?

Bhagavān Shri Ramana, says, “In the state of oneself being the body, the wise man and the ignorant man are the same. For one, in the heart, in the body, the Self is lit fully, encompassing the body and the world. For the other, the Self is measurable only as the body.” Is the enlightened sage distinguishable by a halo around his head? Would he eat, sleep, watch TV, or would he be ever immersed in contemplation? Would he recognize if we address him by a name or would he know himself only as the pure Self? Such questions do arise in the mind of a new initiate.

Here, an ignorant man does not mean an illiterate person. One who does not know his true nature is called ignorant. For the majority of us, the notion of oneself rests firmly in the body alone, e.g., I am fat, a brahmin, unemployed, etc. If the body is unhealthy, I am unhealthy. Any honor or dishonor to the body is my honor or dishonor. Living as the body, I feel helpless, hopeless, sleepless, etc.

The enlightened man knows himself to be the pure Self shining within the heart in the body. In the *Gītā* it is said, “I live in this city of nine gates, neither acting nor making others act” (5.13); “the qualities of *prakṛti* do all the actions” (3.27). How can I, the Witness, be bound by such actions? I don’t just live in the body, but pervade the body and the entire world. I am the Self of all, immeasurable, and infinite. I am not in the body; the body is in me. Actually, there is no duality of the body and me. I alone appear as the body. Such is the experience of the wise man.

Whereas the ignorant man says he is the body alone, the seeker says he is not the body, but the Self that is illumining the inert body. And the wise man says he is the body and everything within and without. The scriptures say, “Just as a clay pot is pervaded by clay, the body, too, is pervaded by Consciousness.” Knowing this, the enlightened one lives in

this world as the body. Hence, he, too, is seen to feel hunger, sleep, pain, disease, etc. that any normal body undergoes. From his daily activities he does not seem different from anyone else, but his vision is totally different. He has no attachment to the body and cravings for things related to the body. What is the attitude of the wise man toward this world of objects and beings that for us is solidly real?

It is said in *Saddarshanam*, “The world exists for the ignorant and the wise man. To the former, the seen world alone is real. To the latter, who has become the Substratum of the seen, the full, formless Truth shines.” The ignorant man takes the world at face value and gives absolute reality to all his experiences. For him, thinking about the truth of the world and life means worrying about how to earn a living, mourning his fate, and bemoaning prevalent corruption. He is so immersed in his thoughts that the vision of the wise seems otherwise and impractical to him. He wants to get rid of sorrow by increasing his bank balance, changing his job, etc., but he does not have time to get to the root of the problem.

For the wise, the world as the world is unreal, ever changing. The Substratum upon which this world appears is the real, eternal Truth. Reality has no names or forms, and is full and infinite. For example, a child gets so involved in a movie that he cries and laughs as the scenes change. The mature man may laugh, but he knows that the names and forms are unreal. The screen alone was, is, and will remain when the movie is over. The lights and sound are all projections. The actor never forgets that he is acting the tragic role of the widower, and is not actually one. He enjoys a masterly acted cry and the applause that follows. Similarly, for the wise man, the world is a stage where the drama of life goes on. He also assumes a role and enjoys the act, and wonders why others are not enjoying. In fact, it is he alone who enjoys; others are only trying to appear to enjoy.

REFLECTIONS

In Search of a Fire by Chetana Neerchal

We need
a fire,
my friend,
to keep
us warm
in the cold
of absent ideas.

We need
a passion
to set alight
our lives
absent
of action.

Let us
stir
the spark
within ourselves,
my friend,
to fire
our minds
absent of spirit.

Infinite Happiness

Talks on *Chandogya Upanishad*, Chapter 7, by Swami Bodhatmananda; transcribed
by David Brown and Lynne Matous

All of our actions are based on happiness. Whether of the mind or the senses, we will do nothing unless we believe it will give us happiness. We will do all spiritual activities—go to an ashram, study scriptures, do *seva*—when we know they will lead to happiness and joy. Therefore, we should desire to know about this happiness and joy that we are always seeking.

The scriptures explain that there is true and lasting happiness only in knowing the absolute Truth (*bhūma*). There is no joy in finitude or limitations (name and form), which are illusory. So what can and should we do? We should desire to know that Infinite, to attain *Bhūma-vidyā*. Consequently, as students of *Brahma-vidyā*, or knowledge of the Absolute, we should become aware of whether or not our sorrows have disappeared. If our sorrows have not disappeared and we are not happy, it is not from any problem in the teachings of the scriptures. Also, most likely, it is not from a problem originating with the teacher. The problem must be that somewhere we have not properly understood the teaching.

So, if scriptural knowledge of Vedanta is not working for the student, what is it that he (or she) needs to do? The teacher of Vedanta tells the student that the knower of the Self transcends all sorrow. The teacher has previously pointed out that a semblance of joy can be found in the finite sense object, but that these experiences cannot be the source of happiness, which can only lie in one's Self.

All sense experiences, as in *upāsana*s (worshipping, adoring, meditating), are a potential source of joy, a pathway toward the realization of Truth. On obtaining such knowledge, one becomes an *ativādī*, or one who has realized Truth. The student then wants to know how this Truth can be talked about, or communicated, so that he can become an *ativādī*. The answer is, to speak of Truth, it is necessary to know Truth. Realizing or knowing Truth requires listening, reflecting, and meditating upon the meaning of the teachings of Truth with faith, steadfastness, and self-restraint.

Now the question becomes, what is this happiness found only in the realization of Truth? Absolute Bliss, unconditioned by time, space, object, and causation is true, ever-lasting happiness. Happiness lies only in the Infinite, never in the finite. In our desire for happiness, however, our usual pattern of behavior is to move, for example, from a desire to be a college graduate to a desire to be married. Dissatisfied with every present condition, we always seek for something else, including spirituality.

We must learn that even as we look for peace, we are already Peace itself. But only when the “looking for peace” is dropped does Peace reveal. This Peace is indicated by the term *bhūma*, or the state of Awareness and our true nature of Completeness. Infinitude (*anantam*) is bliss. Joy is awareness of the Infinite. Joy and infinite, unconditioned Awareness are inseparable.

Why is there so much misery in the world? Joy is superimposed on the objects of the world, and therefore we seek them. But if these objects actually contained joy, the objects themselves would be jumping and dancing! We may think we love money, but what do we do with it? We exchange it for something else that we think is more valuable or useful. We want the objects money can buy more than the money itself! And once we get these objects, is the quest now over? Not at all. The cycle continues repeatedly. All that we acquire eventually loses its novelty, charm, significance, value, potency, or utility over time. This is our direct experience throughout life.

Within our five sheaths, the manifestation of joy is sought as an experience in our mind and intellect. We seek to experience joy through our bodily senses because we are not aware of our true nature. The question we should be asking ourselves is whether we are merely experiencing reflected Bliss or if we know Joy to be our own Self. So long as we continue to seek finite experiences, we will enjoy only reflected, finite happiness. Just as eyes can never see themselves, but only their reflection in a mirror, we never will be able to objectify the joy of knowing the Self.

Reflected bliss can be broadly classified into two categories. One is bliss reflected in the mind through objects, where the objects are not experienced directly, but only as an appearance in the mind. The other is bliss reflected in the mind through detachment, which is learned through discrimination and dispassion. Vedantic teachings are to help us experience the joy that stems from eliminating attachments from our life. While both categories are reflected bliss alone, the latter is not misleading or confusing as the former, which knows only the joy of mindless attachments to objects.

The simplest way to eliminate attachments to objects is not to go after reflected bliss at all. How do we do this? We own up to, and accept, that our true nature is happiness and it does not need to be found elsewhere. Once we are no longer dependent on objects or experiences superimposed by the mind, our true Self reveals.

Once we are established in this Self-awareness, we never can be deluded by experiences of joy or sorrow that we previously attributed to sense objects. Established in Self-awareness, all attributes of self-restraint, control of mind, dispassion, and discrimination become natural and effortless. This is how one who is Self-realized lives in the world, unaffected to the core. This state of Awareness is known as *Bhūma*, full and complete, infinite Awareness.

Such Self-awareness is the true meaning of happiness, unending and independent. The difference between finite awareness and infinite Self-awareness is understood as the difference between the conditioned separateness of subject-object and the nonduality of *nirvikalpa samādhi*, which is also undifferentiated Joy (*ananda*).

All the Upanishads state the Self is nondual Brahman, devoid of any otherness. For any knowledge to take place, an instrument or means of knowledge is needed. But in relying on any instrument, there remains a possibility of error. All relative knowledge, or objectified awareness, is illusory and cannot result in knowledge of the Self, for the Self is Brahman and has no cause, beginning, conditions, or attributes.

Just as the dreamer and dream world completely disappear on waking, so, too, all means of knowledge and objectified awareness disappear in the presence of Truth, or knowledge of Brahman. Joy is the presence of Truth, and the presence of Truth is Joy—the true happiness everyone is always seeking. *Chāndogya Upanishad* states, “*Bhūmaiva sukham*: That which is infinite alone is happiness.”

The Unborn Mind

by Anjali Singh

Continued from *CMW News*, November 2013

It was in Orlando, Florida in August 1991 that Swamiji replaced the vacuum that had been created by the absence of Krishna. He gave me another *sadhana* to follow. He told me about the “Unborn Mind.” While He appeared to be addressing his host, Dr. Shyam Nadkarni, I felt it was a message directly for me. He said, “Seek and search for the Unborn Mind. Leave everything else, all other forms of contemplation. Don’t ask ‘who am I,’ or claim ‘the mind was never born,’ or say ‘Consciousness is unborn.’ Seek the Unborn Mind. If you can keep yourself in that for six months you will enter samadhi.”

This much he said in Orlando and continued elaborating on the same theme eight more times through the trip, including in St. Gallen, London, Vizag, and even Sidhbari during his last camp in May. Some of those words were even recorded.

In early 1993, I learned from Brahmacharini Robyn Thompson that the Great Witness [Shri Krishna idol] had been given to Uma Jeyarasasingham for the Chinmaya Mission San Jose ashram. On a train from Hyderabad to Vizag at the end of February 1993, Swamiji made this one and only mention of Krishna to me: “You

threw Krishna away and dumped Him on me. I threw Him to the children of California, and they will also throw Him away one day when they grow up. That is called idol worship.” The reference of children here was to his spiritually young children.

With these words, like a surgeon he cut the last strings of emotional attachment to that particular form of the Lord that I had been worshipping for years. One should not give up devotion to the form until the Guru instructs. A Guru alone understands the psychological intricacies, weaknesses, and strength, of each student’s mind and inner makeup.

Thus is the story of Krishna, the Great Witness, who came out of Vrindavan to witness and participate in 32 years of our great Swamiji’s life. All that one sees spread throughout Chinmaya Mission worldwide is a joint venture of God/Guru, of Krishna/Swamiji, who are always One. I have told His story only from my little balcony, but infinite is His play, which goes on eternally in the realms of time and space at every level of the human personality—physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual. Galaxies shine with Him as the pivotal Center; infinite expressions weave around this one Heart, thoughts dance in Consciousness; and when the infinite array of creation stops revolving, one is in samadhi.

Swamiji said, “Critics dared not go to this wondrous place of this psychic dance, so they looked from afar at the legs of the mini sari-d girls and presumed Krishna was dancing. Krishna never danced. He was standing, playing the flute, and it was they who danced. The movements were only in the circumference and not in the center. Krishna is the motionless Centre in the midst of all movement, the Changeless in the midst of all change, the Immutable in the midst of all mutation. And this is called samadhi, where the intellect is not moving. What philosophy talks about has been picturized [in *rāsa-līlā*] for the average man to understand. He, by whose mere Presence all activities can take place, is Shri Krishna. This relation-less relationship beautifully expresses itself in drab, dreary, naked words of philosophy, poetizing philosophy into unforgettable art.

“So, when you sit down in your seat of meditation, don’t complain about the body and its activities. Don’t curb anything. Understand that all these activities are taking place only because of Myself. . . . I am this Presence; I am not the activities. Thus, when you withdraw your attention from the BMI (body, mind, and intellect) and be your Self, this attempt to rise into that level of Consciousness is called contemplation. . . . Assert and learn to awaken to that State.” (CM San Jose, 1987)

These were the statements of a Teacher who once threatened in a car, “I will unhang you from all your hang-ups and hang you on the Self,” when he found me hanging onto a friend for emotional support.

The Great Witness is at that ashram now, an extremely powerful Krishna, helping all who go to Him sincerely. He sits near Lord Shiva, the main deity of the ashram, and plays with the butter there. Perhaps He gets a joint *abhishekam* with Lord

Shiva every now and then.

This Krishna, who carries the powers of all the saints who blessed Him over the years, has been sent to San Jose by Swamiji to witness and bless all generations to come, to nurture the spiritual growth of the Chinmaya children of California, and to bless those who visit Him from other places. An idol in any temple empowered by holy persons and chants in a *prāṇa pratishṭhā*. Later the idol's shine and might are enhanced by the devotion of people. Be careful, for He will steal your butter (*vāsanas*) from you!

Chinmaya Bala Vihar Essays

The following edited excerpts are from the First, Second, and Third Place winning essays of Chinmaya Bala Vihar students who participated in CM Princeton's Essay Competition 2013.

by Akshay Janakiraman (First Place, Grade 9, CM Princeton)

Hindu Scriptures list *shat* (six) *ripus* (enemies) that constantly plagues man's life and lead to his downfall. These enemies, are *kāma* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *mada* (pride), and *matsarya* (jealousy). All these enemies are intertwined in some manner. To grow spiritually, we must try to overcome these six enemies. The two enemies that are particularly related to my life are *kāma* and *krodha*.

Desire is a longing or a craving for something that will bring a sense of satisfaction and enjoyment to a person. Many people believe that once they attain a desire, they will be happy. Unfortunately for all of us, this particular type of happiness is only temporary. Humans desire places, people, things, ideas, and so on. A desire by itself is natural for any being. But there is a difference between a need or desire for sustenance and a want or desire for nonessential materialistic gains. Desires that give rise to agitations in us until we fulfill them are wants, and they are most often for nonessential material objects. Once a desire is fulfilled, another rises, making us greedier in turn. A hungry man needs food, but when he craves for a particular type food, such as pizza, it turns into a want.

There are many examples of characters in the epic *Mahābhārata* who had strong desires that led to their downfall. There is no greater example than Duryodhana's craving to rule the kingdom of Hastināpura instead of the Pāṇḍavas. His wants got so out of control that he would do anything to defeat and ruin the Pandavas. His desire-prompted actions led to the great *dharma-yuddha*, or the war of righteousness. This war led to the destruction of the entire Kuru Dynasty.

Another example of desire-prompted ruin is evident in Adolf Hitler, an oppressive and racist German leader who conquered much of Europe for a short time. Wanting to rule and "cleanse" the entire world, he went to any extent and was responsible for the persecution of over six million Jews. His actions sparked World War II, in which world powers such as the United States, Britain, and France fought

against Nazi Germany. When the allied forces closed in on capturing Hitler, he committed suicide.

There are many methods to overcome desire. The best substitute for desire is contentment. By remaining content, our minds steer clear of every type of desire. Swami Shantananda-ji said in one satsang that “desire management” is the need of the hour. If an individual continually assesses his needs versus wants, then chances are he will not fall into the trap of desires. This is vital in helping us become the best human beings possible.

Anger burns us, and one and all around us. A usually soft-spoken person, when consumed with anger, shouts to be heard. *Kāma* and *krodha* are closely related. Desire not achieved leads to frustration, and frustration turns into anger. Mental agitations are directly proportional to the number of desires we entertain. The more desires you have, the more agitated you will become. When agitation increases due to the amount of desires, the already distraught mind becomes frustrated and in turn becomes angry. When anger sets in, it is very difficult to make discriminatory decisions. Without the discriminatory power, the individual’s progress or growth is inhibited.

Shakuni, also known as Saubala, was the prince of Gandhāra and one of the main villains in the *Mahābhārata*. He was the brother of Gāndharī and Duryodhana’s maternal uncle. Angered by the marriage of his sister to the blind king of Hastināpura, Shakuni vowed vengeance and destroyed the family by poisoning his nephew’s mind.

To overcome *krodha*, one must be able to focus on the positive aspects of life. Acceptance is a good substitute for *krodha*. Chanting the name of God when we see ourselves getting angry is a useful tool to control our emotions. Not making decisions, acting, nor speaking when angry will help one grow and be effective with better perspectives and a calmer mind.

The six enemies, especially *kāma* and *krodha*, inhibit an individual’s spiritual growth. In one camp, Acharya Vivek Gupta eloquently stated a five-point program to facilitate inner growth: introspection, detection, negation, substitution, and emancipation. With introspection, one is able to detect one’s flaws, which can then be negated by substitution. The substitution of the six *ripus* leads to emancipation from worldly thoughts and ideas, and further spiritual growth.

by Anubhav Dhar (Second Place, Grade 8, CM Fairfield)

. . . Of the six, two most powerful vices are pride and greed. Pride and greed come into play in our daily lives. Being selfish is arguably human nature, but once one is in no position to reverse, it is a downhill story from there. Greed can lead the way to other sins because greed is total selfishness . . . [and it] originates from the heart of evil. Committing more and more sins ultimately leads to one’s downfall. . . .

Pride is the overestimated opinion of one’s abilities and power. Pride is an

emotion that can blind one's vision of reality. It can create a layer of artificiality that is dangerous. Pride topples senses and soon morphs into arrogance. Greed is its foundation because of the mesmerizing benefits one can reap in unjust ways, marking one's ruin.

Although greed is a dreadful trait to preserve, let alone cherish, many people, in various aspects of life, still embrace greed. . . . Greed is one of the main reasons for crime, from corporate corruption to local robberies. For example, in the 1990s, the company Enron was the treasure of the energy sector. From a small business to the seventh largest company in the United States, it grew at an astounding pace. Many executives earned millions of dollars through its success, but became so greedy . . . [that it] collapsed in no time . . . [and epitomized to what] extent people will sacrifice morals to achieve material success.

In the *Mahābhārata*, when Yudhishthira asked his grandsire about the source from which sin proceeds and the foundation on which it rests, Bhishma replied, "Hear, o king, what the foundation is of sin. Covetousness alone is a great destroyer of merit and goodness. From covetousness proceeds sin. It is from this source that sin and irreligiousness flow, together with great misery. This covetousness is also the spring of all the cunning and hypocrisy in the world. It is covetousness that makes men sin." Thus, there is clearly no greater disaster than pampering greed. . . .

[Healthy] pride is an expression of one's achievements, but sometimes people do not know when and where to draw the line between [healthy] pride and arrogance. Arrogance is a disastrous method of expressing one's success and joy. When pride gets the better of people, their downfall is in the near future. Pride and egoism both originate in times of success. Repeated success makes one proud of one's accomplishments and [possibly] complacent because one feels that nothing can ever go wrong. But just as many things operate in a cycle so do success and failure. Failure can arrive during the finest of times [and a complacent] attitude can blind people from realizing the dangers ahead. . . .

Excessive pride can also cause one to commit careless errors, as when Duryodhana and Arjuna went to Shri Krishna to ask for His aid in the war, and Duryodhana was happy to get Shri Krishna's army instead of Shri Krishna. This careless mistake on Duryodhana's part ended in their loss at Kurukshetra. The needless mistake began with Duryodhana's disrespectfully sitting at Shri Krishna's side. He was so egoistical that he had zero appreciation and respect for Lord Krishna; rather, the only reason he even went to Krishna for help was because his uncle Shakuni ordered him to do so. Because of his behavior and lack of respect of the Supreme, the Kaurava clan suffered greatly.

Finally, those who possess an excessive and unhealthy amount of pride suffer from a great loss of awareness. Pride can block one from receiving beneficial advice. The last thing a proud person wants to hear is his criticism, whether it is constructive or not. . . . Proud people dismiss unpleasant realities, and if not, they selectively hear to their desire.

In conclusion, immersing in the sins of greed and pride leads to one's downfall. Instead of immersing oneself in the *shad-ripus*, we should develop noble virtues, such as selflessness, patience, charity, dispassion, humility, and contentment, striving to become better citizens, and contributing to uplifting ourselves and society.

by Ashwin Suseendran (Grade 8, CM Philadelphia)

Jealousy . . . Duryodhana was angry all the time was because he hated the Pāṇḍavas and all their success. If he had been content with his accomplishments and not worried about other people's, he would have lived a more successful life. Instead, he was constantly planning and scheming to demean the Pāṇḍavas. [The entire war] happened because of Duryodhana's hatred and jealousy toward his cousins.

Unless someone is content, they will continue to be greedy, which will lead to their downfall. For example, if I have already asked my parents for an Xbox 360 for Christmas, it would be greedy to ask for more presents. If I also ask for a new laptop, my parents will think, "Wow, he is pushing us too far. Maybe we shouldn't buy him anything." If you have a greedy attitude toward things, people would be inclined to give you gifts begrudgingly. Even worse, they may not give you anything at all. . . . Greed for power makes leaders dangerous and detrimental to peace in the world. . . . When people are already famous, rich, or powerful, yet hungry for more, their greed only makes them less successful.

. . . If we are trying to bring someone down rather than bringing ourselves up, it will only work toward our disadvantage. If we work hard to become better than another person, it can be healthy, but when we go out of our way to degrade someone else, we are not making ourselves any better. . . . [If we could] avoid these negative tendencies and change [our] ways, the world would be a better place.

Catch Me

by Chetana Neerchal

I am
slipping by
midnight's guard.

Thoughts
swirl around
wishing to
entwine me
in time;

I slip
into
their dreams.

NEWS

A Hearty Welcome to New CMW Acharyas

The year 2013 saw a big, happy influx of new CM acharyas posted to various Mission centers in North America. On behalf of the entire CMW Family, which looks forward to meeting them all, a warm and loving welcome is offered to:

Swami Chaitanyānanda, CM Boston

Swami Parātmānanda, CM Beaumont

Acharya Arun Gosai, CM New York

Acharya Dhiren Khatri, CM Chicago (*Badri ashram*)

Acharyas JK and Swapna Nayyar, CM Chicago (*Yamunotri ashram*)

Acharyas Rammohan Subramanian and Santhi Rammohan, CM Alpharetta

Visit the CMW website acharyas' page or the respective centers' websites to view acharyas' bios and photos.

Sannyāsa Dīkshā for CM San Jose Acharya

Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya (CM San Jose) received *sannyāsa dīkshā* from Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda on *Dīpāvali* Day at *Adi Shankara Nilayam* in Kerala, India in November 2013, and received the new name of Swami Bodhātmānanda.

While he remains the Acharya of CM San Jose, Swamiji will be in India 2014-2016 as the Resident Acharya conducting the next two-year, residential Vedanta Course to be offered by Tara Cultural Trust at the *Sandeepany Sāadhanālaya* ashram in Mumbai. Applications for the course are now being accepted. See the Announcements section.

The CMW Family offers best wishes to Swamiji for the upcoming course, and love and gratitude for his continuing, dedicated *sevā* offered at the lotus feet of our *Guru Paramparā*.

Shri Chinmaya ***Mahāsamādhi Ārādhanā*** Camp 2014

CM Trinidad is honored to welcome the CMW Family to the 21st Shri Chinmaya *Mahāsamādhi Ārādhanā* Camp, to be conducted by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda-ji on *Bhagavad Gītā* Chapter 18, July 29-August 3, 2014.

Relax, Reflect, Re-energize! CM Trinidad invites one and all to come to the first *mahāsamādhi ārādhanā* camp in the Caribbean for an enlightening camp for the entire family. Structured programs will be offered for adults, children, and CHYKs. Seize the opportunity. Make it a summer to remember. July 29-August 3: Reserve the dates.

CHYK West Second Cam-Tra-Con
by Pratheepa Ravikumar

CHYK West's three-day "Cam-Tra-Con," or camp-training-conference, was a leadership weekend retreat that "made an impact so deep that it will be nearly impossible to forget the invaluable moments spent with fellow CHYKs and CM acharyas." This second CHYK West Cam-Tra-Con was open to all CHYKs and Junior CHYKs (JCHYKs) of North America and held November 29-December 1, 2013 at Camp Buckner in Austin, Texas. Prefaced by the annual CHYKsgiving Dinner on Thanksgiving Day, November 28, the retreat was conducted by CHYK West Director Swami Sarveshananda (CM Dallas), Deputy Director Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara), and Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya (CM Austin), and attended by 58 CHYKs and JCHYKs.

Though some CHYKs came for the first time with trepidation, these few days were enough to create an eye-opening and powerful influence on their lives in many ways, opening the gates for their journey as CHYK. From icebreakers and team building activities, to outdoor games and open mic night, time was efficiently spent forming healthy bonds of love and respect with CHYKs from all across the US. Seeing the strong friendships previous CHYKs had made inspired the new and eager attendees to make their own. Under the umbrella of Pujya Gurudev's grace, the energy in the air was palpable and almost overwhelming. It was therefore no surprise to see the entire camp encompassed in joy and positivity.

Hosted by the CHYKs and members of CM Austin, the Cam-Tra-Con was smooth, neat, and organized in all aspects. The CHYK West directors conducted all the sessions and taught volumes throughout the camp, making attendees realize how blessed they were to gain such an enriching experience.

It was wholly inspiring to see and hear all the ideas that CHYKs across the country have been implementing in their local towns to promote CHYK participation and spread the vision of Pujya Gurudev. Discussions included analyzing the strengths and areas of improvement for CHYK study groups, reflecting on personal roles and goals with respect to CHYK, and enhancing efficiency in work. The attendees quickly began to fully see, understand, and appreciate all the opportunities and responsibilities awaiting every CHYK.

For many, a highlight of the retreat were the *bhajan* and satsang sessions. Aside from the amazing musical talents, it was most moving, and even overpowering, to see the love for God that unfolded in these sessions. After the *bhajans* came satsangs that provided much needed and valued practical guidance, which taught how to be aware, as well as how to mold and channel thoughts, speech, and actions at every step.

The insights on clear communication and detailed administration brought home the art of keeping the machine of CHYK West well-oiled and revved up for any task. The topics of CHYK involvement at centers; inspiring and mentoring Chinmaya Bala Vihar siblings as

responsible role models; and understanding “how to find, mind, bind, and kind the mind” were rousing and riveting.

New attendees said they were leaving CHYK West’s second Cam-Tra-Con seeing CHYK no longer as just a weekly study group, but as a practicable and joyful way of life. Many expressed how blessed they felt to have been given the opportunity to gain such a life-transforming experience in as short a span as three days, and how happy and grateful they were for this intimate time with the acharyas and their CHYK family.



Dīpāval* Illumines *Chinmaya Shivālaya

by Ranu Ramraj and Sejal Muni

Dīpāvali, the celebration of light, is the triumph of light over darkness, of good over evil, of knowledge over ignorance. It is a joyous festival that puts smiles on faces and joy in hearts. This bliss pervaded CM Toronto’s *Chinmaya Shivālaya* ashram on Sunday, October 27, 2013.

Walking through the ashram doors, everyone was greeted with rows of color and light. The walls were decorated in fabrics of blues, golds, and reds, arranged in designs that created movement, as though waves of color dancing in air. Rows of Chinmaya Bala Vihar students glowing in their Sunday best greeted all the devotees with *chandan* paste and sweets. So, too, there were rows of mothers, shining in their vibrant colored saris, and fathers beaming with excitement. Light was flooding in everywhere, in the ashram and in all hearts.

The evening began with a program designed to take us closer to the Lord and to remember the true meaning of Diwali. The program began with an invocation Bharatanatyam dance performed by Chinmaya Bala Vihar students. Everyone then chanted select verses from *Tulasī Rāmāyaṇa* and *Madhurāshṭakam*. Swamini Shivapriyananda (resident *āchārya*) then offered an inspiring message that painted a picture of Pujya Gurudev’s vision of Oneness and how the rows of lamps of Diwali all have the same one Light as their source. The pre-dinner program concluded with a beautiful *ārṭi*, which was even more special this year as long-time devotees were asked

to offer it in recognition and appreciation of their contributions and many years of dedicated service in establishing and developing the Chinmaya Family in Toronto.

After dinner, the celebrations continued with grand outdoor fireworks sky and a folk dance performed by some Bala Vihar children around the forms of Mother Lakshmi. The song depicted the significance of Diwali and concluded with dancers inviting Swaminiji to commence the *rās-garbā* dance for everyone.

The memorable event, filled with joy and laughter, will be savored for a long time to come with rows of soft light and gentle smiles in the heart. Everyone was grateful to all the organizers, who put much dedication, love, and inspiration into the planning of the festivities.

CMLA Holds Annual Fundraiser Focuses on Divine Mother by Sonu Kaushik

The 2013 annual *sevānjali* fundraiser of Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles (CMLA) celebrated Divine Mother and was held on November 9 at the Valley High School auditorium. “*Devi Bhakti, Desha Bhakti*” was a program to reverently salute the power and beauty of mother through dance performances that depicted the stories and glories of the Hindu forms of Divine Mother.

Swami Ishwarananda (CM Los Angeles) offered his introductory tribute by saying that each of us are who we are because of the love, nurturing, and sacrifice of our mothers. Quoting from the Upanishads, hymns on Divine Mother, and other texts, he pointed out that mothers everywhere strive to give knowledge and teach as Mother Sarasvati does, to inspire and sustain as Mother Lakshmi does, and to protect from negative forces as Mother Durga does. Transitioning from mother to motherland, Swamiji said about *desha bhakti* that Bhārata Mātā and the Statue of Liberty are the respective nurturing, motherly icons of India and the U.S.

Swamiji’s sentiments were brought to life on stage by three well-known Indian classical dance schools of Southern California. The recital began with Nandita Behera’s Odissi Dance Circle, where the dancers beautifully depicted the slaying of Mahishāsura by Mother Durga. Viji Prakash’s Shakti School of Dance offered a Bharatanatyam performance on a hymn to Mother Sarasvati, as well as a rhythmic and fast-paced medley of dances on the various manifestations of Divine Mother. Ramya Harishankar’s Arpana Dance Company troupe gave an engaging performance on ‘*Nityakalyāṇi*,’ with engaging coordination and attention to detail. Showcasing India’s lively folk rhythms, UCLA’s *raas-garba* team of *Bataaka Nu Shaakreeled* in everyone’s claps of hand and taps of feet. The grand finale was a featured all the dancers uniting to salute and offer homage to the patriotic Indian anthem, *Vande Mātaram*. CMLA’s Lalita Bala thanked the performers as Swamiji handed them tokens of appreciation.

Before the program concluded, the chair of CMLA’s Foundation Committee, Dr. Shashi Acharya, announced that the program had raised over \$200,000, which would help support of CMLA’s myriad spiritual classes and events for the community. Navitha and Krishna Rao, active senior members of CMLA spoke of their continuing ties with the

institution and the benefits they had accrued over the years as a family. Acharya Mahadevan (CM Los Angeles) thanked the volunteers for their time and the donors for their ongoing support.



Lakshmi Puja and Diwali at CM Orlando by Sree Nambiar

To commemorate the festive occasion of Diwali, CM Orlando performed the *Mahālakshmi Puja* at its *Kaivalya* ashram on November 3, 2013. The day began with the puja, which was led by Acharya Shailaja Nadkarni and performed by over 200 Chinmaya Bala Vihar students and 150 parents.

After the puja, all the Bala Vihar students and teachers each carried a *diya* (lamp) to the altar and participated in a lighting ceremony. As the lamps were being lit, children from the bhajan class were led by Rupam Sharma in singing beautiful bhajans. The hundreds of lit lamps placed together were a beautiful sight to see. After this ceremony, special *prasādam* with many mouth-watering delicacies was prepared in and served to all from the ashram's *Sita Rasoi* kitchen. The celebrations concluded with the fun-filled lighting of firecrackers.



Success for Students of ***Chinmaya Vidyālaya*** Trinidad by Nadia Beharry and Nandini Ramsawak

CM Trinidad opened the first *Chinmaya Vidyālaya* school in Trinidad in 2003 under the guidance of Swami Prakashanada (resident acharya, CM Trinidad and school Principal), making the school motto, “Education with a Difference.” With their academics, under the value-based curriculum of the Chinmaya Vision Program (CVP), students also learn Vedanta, Sanskrit, Vedic Chanting, and scriptural teachings that emphasize spiritual living. Be it in the field of academics, sports, culture, or information technology, every student of the school has achieved excellence in them, with an impressive 100% in the 2013 CXC examinations in eight subjects, including English, Math, Chemistry, and Physics. In addition to local students, students from the US, Guyana, and India have also enrolled.

Chinmaya Vidyālaya in Trinidad has grown from one campus to six campuses, including six pre-schools, three primary schools and one high school. The primary goal of the institutions is to bring about the harmonious blending between the traditional and progressive methods of education, to create positive contributors to society.

Additionally, Chinmaya Bala Vihar classes in Trinidad are filled with creative storytelling, jokes, puzzles, coloring, and meaningful questions. Special events include festivals, *Gītā*chanting, fancy dress competitions, field trips, summer camps, debates, picnics, sports day, and cultural performances. Classes are conducted in McBean, Gasparillo, Barrackpore, and Cunupia.



Every Brick Makes the Home by Bina Sutarwala

CM Ottawa was blessed to take possession of a 6,453 sq. ft. structure built in 1994 on October 31, 2013. The renovations began immediately to transform the commercial building into an ashram for the entire community. The sign was changed, partitions removed. The first lamp was lit and *homas* performed to transform the site into CM Ottawa’s new home of *Chinmaya Bhārati*, a dream that has taken 25 years to come true. But as Swami Shantananda lovingly said at the inauguration, “It was worth the wait.”

After the Shri Ganesha *homa* in the morning came the *vāstu pūjā* at 4 p.m. The events were attended by Swami Shantananda, over 200 members of the community, and CM Halton’s president, Joti Chakraborty, one of the pioneers of the Canadian CM movement more than 35 years ago. The ashram was filled with love and joy. Swamini Shivapriyananda (CM Toronto) said perhaps a center of learning in Canada’s capital will bring good tidings for the entire country.

Swami Shantananda said *Chinmaya Bhārati* should become a center to prepare the coming generations, a place for worship, service, and learning for the community. He

added that every person was like a brick in this creation and when one brick starts to disintegrate, it puts the entire structure at risk. He reminded the CM Ottawa family that every single brick is necessary, therefore everyone must remain vigilant and always humble in the community.

CM Ottawa president, Anil Parekh, said without determination and complete dedication, such a mammoth task would not have been possible. He thanked all who came for their good wishes and blessings.

Pujya Guruji wrote, "Mission accomplished and you all did it! I am so very proud of you all. Your devotion and dedication have been blessed by the Lord and Pujya Gurudev. Heartiest Congratulations! I wish you greater and greater success."



Doctors Get Musical and Other CNB News *Report submitted by CNB*

Chinmaya Naada Bindu (CNB) Music Director Pramodini Rao conducted a session on music appreciation for public health officers from Pune on September 29, 2013. It was a different experience for the doctors, who are trained to exercise their intellect, to sway to simple music that appealed to their emotions. That music reaches out to every living being was demonstrated through this session.



Ramaa Bharadvaj, CNB Dance Director, conducted a 4-hour experiential workshop to theatrically engage 60 MBA students of the Chinmaya Institute of Technology on October 24, 2013. Prior to the workshop, she presented three original Bharatanatyam

dances: *Mitrānjali*, *Nandan's Dream*, and *Sītā Haraṇam*.



CNB Music Director Himanshu Nanda toured the US, November 3-17, 2013, entralling audiences at Chinmaya Mission centers in Dallas, TX and Princeton, NJ, as well as in Irving, TX and at the University of Texas, Dallas. The tour included seven solo classical flute concerts and two lecture demonstrations on Indian music. He was accompanied by Pt. Kalinath Mishra on the tabla. This tour was organized by Indian Cultural Heritage Foundation (ICHF).



Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda conducted a *bhakti-sangīt-sandhyā* on November 24, 2013 at Siri Fort Auditorium, New Delhi, accompanied by CNB Music Directors Pramodini Rao and Himanshu Nanda. The program was a melodious and divine finale to Guruji's discourses on *karma yoga* earlier that week. Featured in the program was a beautiful, original Hindi composition by Guruji based on *Gītā* Chapter 3; the composition compared every aspect of music to life.



In an endeavour to take music closer to the homes of interested students, the activities of CNB have expanded to Pirangut near Pune. Following a puja *Dassehra*, formal biweekly classes in Hindustani vocal, flute, and tabla commenced.

CM Pittsburgh First Family Retreat by Sravani Hotha

Amid the brilliant autumn colors and forestry of the Antiochian Village in western Pennsylvania, Chinmaya Mission Pittsburgh held its first family retreat, “Unplugged,” October 25-27, 2013, conducted by Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara).

The retreat kicked off with a practical and intense introduction to Raja Bhartrhari’s *Vairāgya Shaṭakam* and a “Fear Walk” through the winding trails on-site. The challenge was to participate in a solo *yātrā* through the brooding dark, facing the fear of loneliness and the unknown. For many it was an exhilarating experience that allowed them to focus on the true nature of their anxieties.

After a good night’s rest in assigned cabins, and a refreshing morning hike and yoga session, Vivekji began with a discourse. Everyone came ready with pen, paper, and text to take notes, but was surprised to find an attendant at the door who poured a few drops of honey onto each entrant’s palm and instructed it be spread all over their hands. The next hour was spent listening to the discourse, learning to deal with the minor discomfort of honeyed hands.

Following this was a task to contemplate on the shackles that keeps one from accomplishing life goals. These were recorded onto a paper plate representing one of Ravana’s heads. There were discussions on some universally common shackles and how to let go of them. That evening featured a bonfire of a Ravana figure with children, CHYKs, and adults singing *Hanuman Chālīsā* as the “shackles” turned to weightless ash.

One of the highlights of the retreat was a trust fall exercise in which the CHYKs and JCHYKs learned to detach from their fear and place their trust in their friends.

In parallel to the CHYK and adult activities, the children had their own set of fun activities. Vivekji taught them about the five senses and how to practice self-control. In their free time, they played board games, Frisbee, and soccer with Vivekji. On Saturday night, they had great fun dressing up in Halloween costumes and trick-or-treating. At the end of the retreat, they wrote a special note to Vivekji thanking him for making the camp so fun.

Several CHYKs were instrumental in making the camp a success with their tireless service and leadership. By Pujya Gurudev's grace, "Unplugged" was a truly inspirational weekend for the CM Pittsburgh family.



***Chinmaya Prabhā* Shines with *Dīpāvali* Prayers** by Padmashree Rao

Lamps, prayers, *Dīpāvali* wishes. The *Chinmaya Prabhā* ashram in Houston shone brightly on November 3, 2013, when over 800 families gathered to celebrate the ever eagerly awaited, grand Hindu festival of lights.

Every year, as the expanding Chinmaya Family of Houston convenes in the celebratory atmosphere of *Dīpāvali*, the excited smiles, wishes, vibrant colors, and beautifully decorated lamps take on a pious hue. The social and cultural charm of the popular Diwali festival gets enhanced by the Chinmaya way of celebration—with the reflective and grateful spirit of puja.

The tradition of the *Dīpāvali* puja at *Chinmaya Prabhā* signifies the protective grace of Lord Vishnu and the showering blessings of Mother Lakshmi invoked in an ardent puja through the revered grace and blessings of the *Guru-paramparā*.

So, that bright morning, when young and old dressed in sparkling smiles and cheerful

Indian clothes walked into the ashram carrying flowers, lamps and their own carefully decorated puja plates, the real essence of *Dīpāvali* readily filled the air. Rows of devotees sat eagerly in the *Smriti* Hall, and the families overflowed into the adjacent *Sarasvati Nilayam* to participate in the puja. On an elegantly set stage, the idols of the presiding deities, Lord Vishnu and Mother Lakshmi were powerfully alive and beautifully adorned. Majestic and vibrant also was the life-size idol of Pujya Gurudev in the ashram foyer, resplendent with numerous lit lamps that signaled the start of the event. Across the courtyard, the divine idols in the *Saumyakāshi Shivālaya* radiated the enlightening glory of *Dīpāvali*.

In his Diwali message to the CM Houston family, Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty described the festival as a time for internal evaluation. Just as material profits accrue when assets are increased and liabilities are dropped, so, too, one's spiritual life has greater gains when it is filled with love, forgiveness, and other positive, enriching qualities. These values are the true wealth that Goddess Lakshmi bestows to sincere aspirants.

Since Mother Lakshmi comes where Lord Vishnu is invoked, the chanting of *Vishnusahasranāma* (1000 names of Lord Vishnu) was offered. When all the families rose after the puja to raise their *ārṭi* plates in worship, the rows of waving lights ushered the blessings of Diwali at *Chinmaya Prabhā*.

In conclusion, the families offered their salutations to Acharyas Gaurang and Darshana Nanavaty who have been guiding CM Houston since 1987. To keep the spiritual flame burning bright at *Chinmaya Prabhā*, the families offered their *Guru-dakshina* to the *Guru-paramparā*. The spiritual sparkle of Diwali thus marked the way for a bright and prosperous new year ahead.



CM Flint Bala Vihar Camp
by Arthi Chandrasekaran

CM Flint hosted a weekend youth camp October 12-13, 2013, conducted by Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara). Its befitting conclusion came on Saturday evening with *daṇḍiyā-rāsa* to symbolize the cycle of life. Unlike previous camps, this time, older brothers and sisters helped impart spiritual knowledge and explain the legacies of Swami Chinmayananda and Swami Vivekananda in this camp theme, “A Tale of Two Giants” to campers in grades 1-12. The campers came to see the two giants as the virtuous and noble spiritual masters and luminaries whom the world will continue to remember for all time.

The campers learned in many different ways, including: lectures, instructional dance, and physical recreation. Students were also able to play games with their CHYK brothers and sisters within the program, who took this wonderful opportunity to give back to the

community and help mentor their siblings.

The camp was a wonderful testament to the idea that graduating from the Bala Vihar program is not an ending but a new beginning into CHYK, where they can continue to learn the virtues and teachings of realized masters.



Dīpāvali* 2013 Celebrations at *Chinmayam

by Usha Konduri

Everyone looks forward to *Dīpāvali*, whether children awaiting presents and firecrackers, or adults eager to light up their homes with *dīyas* and pujas, or families and friends looking to gather and mingle to share love, good wishes, sweets, and food. Many Chinmaya Bala Vihar children have parents who fondly recall their family Divali traditions and memories in India. It is a blessing to have Chinmaya Mission centers here to provide us home to gather in and celebrate the meaning and value behind Hinduism's sacred traditions.

This year's Chinmaya Mission Washington DC's Divali celebrations were held in its *Chinmayam* building on Saturday, October 26, 2013. Mission families were welcomed with sweets and savory snacks during the evening meet-and-greet hour. An entertaining cultural program offered music by Bala Vihar and CHYK students, a comedic Vedantic play, a *dīyā* dance by women, and Swami Dheerananda's (resident Acharya) special message for the occasion. The cultural program was followed by *rās-garbā* for all CM family members, with music by a live orchestra of talented CHYKs and adult members. The evening concluded with a festive feast and lively spirit.

CHYKs Purvi Nanavaty (vocal) and Vinay Mallikarjun (drum) offered bhajans at the opening of the cultural program and between the acts throughout the evening. A highlight of the program was a Vedantic play, *The Royal Secret*, written and directed by Arvind Bhagwat on how to live with the spirit of Vedanta in day to day life. Swami Dheerananda's thought-provoking words of wisdom made the event complete, as always. He said Divali is a celebration to honor the divine light of Consciousness dancing through everyone, to remind everyone to recognize the one Light that shines within all, to become conscious of this Divinity so that one's actions and thoughts are guided by it. It was a joyous event filled with love and laughter for the entire Chinmaya Family.



Positive Impact of Chinmaya Mission and Its Teachings by Sandhya Gavva

Touching the hearts of many, Swami Chidatmananda (CM Hyderabad) introduced numerous newcomers to Pujya Gurudev's vision and the work of Chinmaya Mission on his tour across the US in August and September of 2013. The extensive tour was sponsored and organized by the American Telugu Association with the aim of fulfilling the need for propagating spiritual knowledge within the Telugu community in the US. This successful endeavor has generated greater interest in the community toward Vedantic teachings as taught by Pujya Gurudev.

The unique tour was solely a road trip that spanned 12,250 miles in 46 days with 30 stops. The journey seemed a modern version of spiritual *yātrās* taken up by India's *sannyāsins* in olden days. It was accomplished by driving every day for a few hours to one place, conducting satsang, and moving on to the next place. The entire east coast, a majority of the west coast, and a few places in the south were covered only by road. Swamiji said it was the sheer grace of Pujya Gurudev and blessings of Pujya Guruji to have achieved such a feat of divine service in such a short time.

The tour also included a White House event in Washington DC wherein Swamiji was part of a panel discussion, "Vision for Youth," that addressed the future contributions of Indian-American youth to society and the world at large. Swamiji spoke on *sevā* and received thundering applause from the audience. Young Americans who attended were also inspired and said the need of the hour was spiritual vision and guidance from guides such as Swamiji.

The impact of the entire tour created waves of transformation. Topics included stress management, divine power, and guided meditation. Attendees felt relieved and peaceful through the stress management sessions, divinized and empowered with the

divine power sessions, and greatly benefited by the meditation techniques to handle a variety of pressures. The radiant joy and beaming smiles left audience members eagerly longing for more and expressing their heartfelt gratitude for the knowledge received.

One attendee said, “Your discourses gave me an entirely different dimension from the traditional viewpoint of God usually taught to us. Thank you, Swamiji, for making it so simple and understandable for people like me.”

“I want to thank you for blessing us with your visit and educating us. We were all impressed by your incredible knowledge and simplistic approach, and how you could relate spirituality to worldly experiences that included modern technology. From my 9-year old son, to my teenager, to my elderly grandparents—all alike enjoyed your discourse. My sincere request to you, Swamiji, is to bless us again with your presence and satsang.” - Lakshman Koka (Riverside, CA)

“It was a blessing for all Andhra families in the Silicon Valley that you visited us and enlightened us with your great spiritual discourse. The families are so happy to have heard and are all requesting us details of your future visits.” - Vijaya Saradhi (San Jose, CA)

The tour covered: Lanham, Maryland; Chantilly/Richmond/Norfolk, Virginia; Harrisburg/Harleysville, Pennsylvania, Raleigh/Greenville/Charlotte/Boone, North Carolina; Greenville/Columbia, South Carolina; Augusta, Georgia; Jacksonville/Orlando/Tampa/Fort Lauderdale, Florida; Houston/Midland, Texas; Morganville, New Jersey; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Phoenix, Arizona; San Jose/Redlands/Riverside/San Diego/Los Angeles, California; Reno, Nevada; Salt Lake City, Utah; Denver, Colorado; and Washington, DC.



Chinmaya Sanchar Mobile App

Visit the Announcements page to see details about Chinmaya Mission’s newly released mobile phone application.

Sundarakanda in New York by Bina Mahabir

Chinmaya Mission New York organized a three-day series of discourses conducted by Swami Shantananda (CM Princeton) on *Sundarakāṇḍa* of Goswami Tulsidāsa-ji at a local temple in New Hyde Park, New York. The talks began on the evening of October 17, 2013 and concluded with a longer session on a Saturday, with short breaks for breakfast and lunch.

In his inimitable style of ease, Swamiji introduced this *Rāmāyaṇa* canto with its literal meaning, “beautiful canto,” and said it is dedicated to Hanumān-jī, who dedicated his life to serving his Lord Shri Rama, who is the epitome of selfless service, humility, and devotion to God. As the talks progressed, the beautifully decorated venue was transformed into a peaceful prayer hall further conducive to spiritual upliftment.

Each session began with a half hour *bhajan* session by various local singing groups and the chanting of *Hanumān Cālīsā* by everyone. *Ārti* was offered before and after each session. After the chanting of *caupāīs* to Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda’s audio CDs, Swamiji’s talks extracted and expounded on the Vedantic principles in each verse. His explanations were educative and inspiring, sprinkling drops of soothing humor between serious Vedantic thoughts, thus enhancing an already rich learning experience. The three-day event was well received by all, and concluded with *ārti* and *prasādam*.

Feature

Easy Sanskrit from CIF to CMW with Swami Ramakrishnananda

Easy Sanskrit Tour
by Shefali Arvind

When Pujya Gurudev established the Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF) in 1989, he envisioned it as a bridge between past and present, East and West, science and spirituality, pandit and public. Pujya Gurudev visited 18 universities in the US to speak and create awareness about CIF. Swami Siddhananda (CM Philadelphia), once an acharya at CIF, recalled that Pujya Gurudev often said, “Adi Shankara should look West.” Over the years, CIF’s electronic and postal home-study courses have been steadily gaining popularity in the western hemisphere. In 2013, with the grace and blessings of the Lord, Pujya Gurudev, and Pujya Guruji, CIF recently took more fledgling steps in this direction when Swami Ramakrishnananda (CIF, CM Chennai) visited North America to promote CIF’s *Easy Sanskrit* books and courses, both of which he authored.

In a coordinated effort by CIF’s Manisha Makecha, CM Princeton’s Shankar Edamadaka, and CMW centers, Swamiji’s tour to spread the value and joy of the study of Sanskrit spanned the length and breadth of the US, as well as Trinidad, over a period of six months. Through this trip, Swamiji met with more than 850 Sanskrit course participants, 5,000 Chinmaya Bala Vihar students, and 6,000 adult Mission members. All the participants unanimously gave rave reviews of the Easy Sanskrit Course, lauding in particular Swamiji’s fun and easy teaching style, which is sprinkled with Vedanta. Swamiji visited 17 centers in total, in this order: CM Boston, Piercy, Portland, San Jose, Austin, Dallas, Los Angeles, Chicago, Ann Arbor, Buffalo, New York, Princeton, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Miami, and Trinidad. Swamiji was reverently received with love and enthusiasm at each center, and his departure left behind attendees

eagerly awaiting his return.

In addition to the Sanskrit course, Swamiji also gave discourses on *Bhaja Govindam*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, and *Shri Rama: An Ideal Man*. He was also the Sanskrit acharya at the first-ever Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) in the U.S. During his tenure at YEP, a six-week residential Vedanta and leadership course organized by CHYK West, Swamiji taught the 31 students Sanskrit in an easy and relatable way they could follow. The students did not have any previous knowledge of Sanskrit's Devanagari script. They learned how to read and write Sanskrit, and created their own rap formats to study the Devanagari alphabets and *Shiva Sūktam*. Swamiji also introduced them to Vedic chanting.

The 16 *brahmacārins* in CM Trinidad's 18-month residential Vedanta Course also got the opportunity to learn Sanskrit the easy way. During his visit there, Swamiji also addressed 150 students of the only *Chinmaya Vidyālayas* outside of India, and spent an evening with 25 CHYKs in a well-received fun and interactive workshop on "World Perfection: 10 Life Skills."



Rave Reviews

"The Sanskrit course was very well received by all the attendees. Swamiji has a great teaching style. I was very much impressed by it and Swamiji's ability to inspire people to continue to study Sanskrit. He was artistic in linking everyone's cooking experiences with the study materials and subtly blending in Vedantic philosophy. Everyone was happy and thankful that they took the course. This was one of the best events our CM center has had in many years. Thanks to CIF for bringing this opportunity to our doorstep."

"The Sanskrit classes over the past couple of days have been awesome. I am learning so much without even realizing or trying. This morning, as we were hurrying for school and work, I was yelling at my sons to get ready for school. My son immediately said, "Mom, did you forget '*ti taha anti . . .*' and sang the entire song. I burst into laughter."

"This class was an invaluable foundation for me to begin learning a language that I've been surrounded by since my childhood in Chinmaya Bala Vihar. Swamiji's presentations made all the grammar concepts really clear and I am continuing to work

on mastering the Devanagari script. As a CHYK, I am so grateful that Swamiji took the time and effort to teach students of all levels, including beginners. I have always loved hearing the Sanskrit language and now I am inspired to start learning it through Swamiji's books and CD. Thanks to Swamiji and CIF for their efforts to prepare and publish this curriculum. It has made a great impact on my life in allowing me to further connect with the scriptures and culture that I treasure so dearly."



CM Trinidad Warmed Up by Vaani Ramkhelawan

During his visit to CM Trinidad November 25-December 4, 2013 Swami Ramakrishnananda warmed the hearts of young and not-so-young, alike, with his versatile and witty interactive style, fluently sharing Sanskrit and Vedantic teachings with an ease common to all tenured professors.

Swamiji's classes were primarily for the second residential Vedanta Course of CM Trinidad being conducted at the ashram in McBean. His teachings reinforced in the students' minds and hearts the vision of Pujya Gurudev, making all the more valuable their learning the "language of the gods." In addition to the Course students, ashram visitors were also fortunate to hear his discourses on *Nārada-bhakti-sūtra*.

During his stay, Swamiji also visited the Chinmaya Vidyalaya students in Couva and conducted a fun, interactive evening workshop for CHYKs on life skills. Swamiji described the warmth and hospitality of Trinidad as similar to India and the citizens of



Trinidad look forward to be graced once more with his presence.

Words from Swami Ramakrishnananda

As Swamiji prepared to return to India, he was touched and overwhelmed by the loving response he received from the CMW Family. He had this to say about his trip to North America:

Everyone at all the Mission centers was most welcoming and hospitable. All the local organizers provided wonderful facilities and hosted all the sessions very well. The course participants, spanning an age range of 10-75 years, were all enthusiastic and eagerly awaited the classes. They all enjoyed learning, and were regular and sincere in attending all the classes. They were good students who were dedicated to the subject.

I enjoyed my sessions and stay at all the centers. It was particularly heartwarming to meet senior Mission members and visit places where Pujya Gurudev had stayed. It was a joy to see the large number of Chinmaya Bala Vihar students across the US, and the genuine dedication of Mission *sevaks* and *sevikās* in striving to inculcate spiritual values, devotion, and wisdom in young minds.



Gratitude from CIF to the CMW Family

Pujya Gurudev chooses his instruments to spread his vision far and wide. CIF is deeply grateful to all the CMW centers that welcomed Swami Ramakrishnananda with open arms. Heartfelt gratitude to all the attendees who made the Easy Sanskrit courses such a resounding success, a success that lies not in numbers, but in the exchange of knowledge that took place. CIF looks forward to providing additional such programs to CMW and the Chinmaya Family worldwide. Visit us online to learn more about CIF and its projects, activities, and publications.

Announcements

Pujya Gurudev's *Jnana Yajnas* via Mobile App

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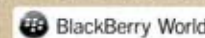
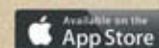
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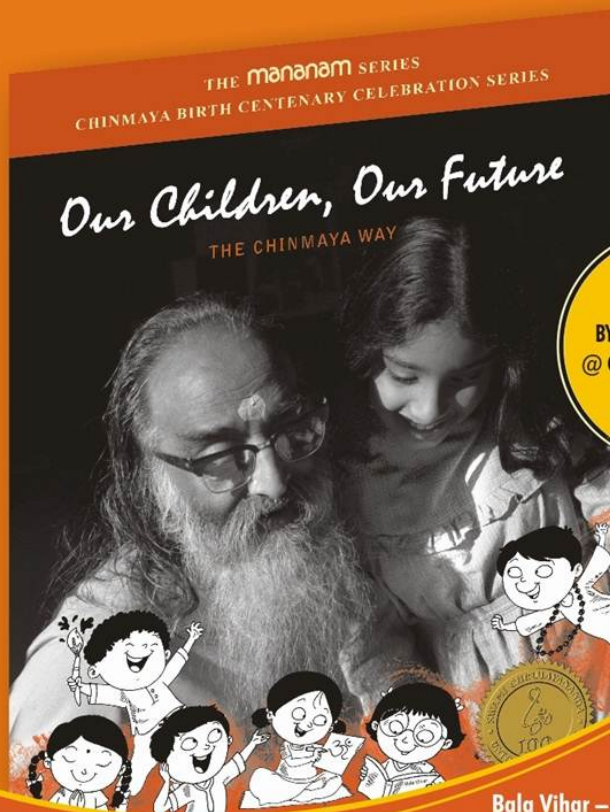


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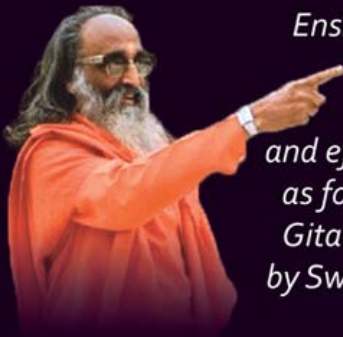
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


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