

Chinmaya Smrithi



A Bi-Monthly News Magazine of the Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC)

Volume 30, Number 1, January 2020



The year is never new. Time is a continuous flow. Yet in Time each one of us can **RENEW** ourselves. Thus New Year arrives only when you Renew yourself. Let us give up all meanness and habits of thinking small. Let us fully surrender to Him who is the All. Let us think **BIG**, rise above the ripples created by the tragic Ego in others. In our love and large heartedness let us forgive all others and keep them in our care and concern. That would be a **HAPPY NEW YEAR**.

-Swami Chinmayananda

Invoking the grace and blessings of Gurudev at the dawn of a new decade

Foreword: Swamiji's Message



Editor's Note: [Our beloved resident Swamiji, Swami Dheerananda addressed the attendees at the New Year's day Pooja in Chinmaya Somnath. Please find below excerpts from his address to the members shared with us by Samatha Yarragovula].

Swamiji expounded on verses from Bhagavad Gita Chapter 9 to elaborate on the purpose of this vision, identifying the hurdles in the path and explaining how to overcome these hurdles to live a meaningful life filled with permanent joy. The Divine Vision is to seek the higher knowledge of the Self and spiritual enquiry through a Healthy Body, Pure Mind and Brilliant Intellect.

However, because of ignorance and delusions, people try to seek the permanent happiness through objects of this world, which in itself is not permanent. This is like trying to expect sweetness from salt, which will be forever a vain hope (Mogha Aasa). To satisfy these hopes and desires people perform various vain actions (Mogha Karma) to gather and protect more objects and pleasures with the help of useless knowledge (Mogha Jnana). Those who have entertained these vain hopes, when they realize that their dream is impossible, such people resort to Rakshasic and Aasuric behaviours and invoke the extreme rajasic and tamasic gunas, resulting in more sorrows.

On the other hand, those who turn all their attention exclusively to the Great Self and acquire the knowledge of Consciousness- the changeless reality which is the source of all beings as well as illumines all changes; such Great Mahatmas always invoke the divine qualities of love, kindness, compassion and always revel in the Glory of the Lord.

But how to practice this vision while living in this object centric world? Swamiji explained in detail the advice given by Sri Adi Sankaracharya, using a verse from "Siva Manasa Puja". We must live our lives knowing that the Lord is the Self in all beings, Mind and Intellect filled with mountain-like firm faith in God, Guru and Scriptures. All physiological functions- the five pranas, are the Lord's family, always ready to help us fight against all low

tendencies and false values. Lord's home is our body. Engage and enjoy only the pure, clean and unadulterated sense pleasures and offer it as a worship to the Lord. Enjoy Sleep like a serene Samadhi state. Every step of our feet should be an Atma Pradakshina of the Lord. Every word uttered should be Glorifying the Lord. And every action performed through the physical, emotional and intellectual means must be offered as a worship to the Lord.

In conclusion, Swamiji urged all to take a Satya Sankalpa- a vow of the Divine Vision for the year 2020 and beyond. With the right knowledge and practice, he assured, that everyone is capable of this vision. Swamiji reminded all to Love, Serve and Give so that this divine knowledge can be facilitated for generations to come.

Calendar and Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

- Feb 1st/2nd: Think Big, Think Chinmaya – Global Satsang with Swami Swaroopananda
- Feb 21st: Mahashivaratri celebrations at Chinmayam, Silver Spring and Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly.
- March 25th – April 2nd : Tulasidas Ramacharitmanas recitation at Chinmayam, Silver Spring.
- March 21 -22: Geeta chanting competition at all three centers.
- May 2nd: Chinmaya Jayanti celebrations from 5 to 7 p.m. at Chinmayam, Silver Spring.

Study Groups

- Please contact Sri Ravi Ravichandran ji by email at ravi5211@yahoo.com , if you are interested in for30th ming or learning more about study groups.

Bookstore/Library

- Browse Books, CDs, DVDs, etc. online at www.chinmayapublications.com Contact Sevak to order (Vijay Singh at Chinmayam, Subbarao Kari at Chinmaya Somnath and Bijay Dash at Frederick)

Next Edition of Chinmaya Smrithi

- Articles for the next regular bi-monthly edition – Mar 2020, are due by Feb 29, 2020
- Email submissions to smrithi-editor@chinmayadc.org.
- Browse Past editions at www.chinmayadc.org/Smrithi/Smrithi.htm

Useful Links:

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust www.chinmayamission.com
Chinmaya Mission West www.chinmayamission.org
Chinmaya International Foundation, E-Vedanta Courses www.chinfo.org
Chinmayam Chapter – Silver Spring MD website <http://chinmayam.chinmayadc.org/chinmayam-chapter/>
Chinmaya Somnath Chapter – Chantilly VA website www.chinmayasomnath.org
Chinmaya Frederick Chapter –Urbana MD website <http://www.frederick.cmwrc.org/>
Chinmaya Richmond Chapter – Richmond VA website www.chinmayarichmond.org
CMWRC – Washington Regional Center www.chinmayadc.org

Please Note

The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of Chinmaya Mission or CMWRC

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BV students – Bhuvan Devarsu

Please contact us if you are interested in joining the editorial staff!

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News & Tidbits

Gita Jnana Yagna

Swami Dheeranandaji conducted a 4-day Jnana Yagna based on Chapter 9 “*Raja-vidya raja-guhya Yoga*” from December 26th to December 29th at Chinmaya Somnath. The talks were well attended. In this chapter, Lord Krishna reveals the most confidential and the greatest knowledge of the Self to Arjuna. Using relatable examples in his most humorous style, Swamiji explained the complex “relation-less relationship” of the Lord and the world.

Recorded version of Swamiji’s talks are now available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Izi3phAz07U>

New Year Day Pooja

The new year was celebrated in style at both Chinmayam, Silver Spring and Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly. At Chinmayam, the Vishnu Sahasranamam chanting was followed by Shloka chanting including the Guru Stotram and Guru Ashtothara Shata Namavali. Children then shared their new year resolutions followed by a game of jeopardy and messages from Medha and Arvind Bhagwatji. For details, refer to the full article in this edition. At Chinmaya Somnath, the New year 2020 was welcomed with Vishnu Sahasranamavali and Pooja. The event was very well attended by over 300 members. After the puja, Swami Dheerananda and Vijaykumarji addressed the audience. Event concluded with delicious Mahanaivedyam. Swamiji’s inspiring message on this occasion is presented in the foreword section.

Vinaya Priya Aradhana

At Chinmaya Somnath, started off with a melodious live musical event. Krishnapriya Tirumala and Vinay Mallikarjun, our very own Balavihar graduates, presented a jugalbandi of devotional music based on classical music and songs based on the same Ragas used in movies. They were accompanied by Swetha Narasimhan on Violin and Ajay Ravichandran on Mridangam. Both Vinay and Krishnapriya took time to briefly explain the background and meaning of the songs which helped the audience understand the songs even better. Thanks to Swamiji for envisioning this program and gracing the event. It was a grand success with packed auditorium.

Arpanam

Please refer to the CMWRC website to learn more about this exciting new consolidated fundraising initiative. It offers the Chinmaya family an opportunity to donate at various levels on an on-going basis to support the current and future growth of CMWRC. Inspired by Gurudev’s message that true loving is not in passive taking but in dynamic giving, the program is expected to help the mission pay down its debt while also positioning it for future growth to continue to spread the spiritual message of Vedanta. Donors making an Arpanam pledge may fulfill the pledge during the calendar year, and all tax-deductible offerings, such as Gita chanting registration, membership, Bala Vihar, enrichment, Guru Dakshina, event sponsorship, etc. are recognized towards the fulfillment of the pledge.

Please make your pledge today !

Gita Jayanti and Tapovan Jayanti

This year, Gita Jayanti fell on Dec 7th. To mark the occasion, there was a celebration at Chinmayam. During the Balavihar sessions, the senior students from Chinmayam and Tapovanam spoke about their favorite verse from the Bhagvad Gita and answered questions from the audience about the life lessons they have learnt from the Gita and the mission in general. It was encouraging to see the senior students’ understanding of the concepts and their plans to use these ideas practically in their life going forward. There was a program in the evening in which the children chanted the Tapovan Shatkam and Gita verses 1-17 (Chapter 9).



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WASHINGTON REGIONAL CENTER

Swami Dheerananda's New Year Invocation

Hari Om! Hari Om!

Invoking for All a Healthy Body, Pure Mind, & Brilliant Intellect to Enthusiastically & Joyfully
Greet The New Year 2020!



Sri Gurudev said,

"The real Guru is the pure intellect within; and the purified, deeply aspiring mind is the disciple."

"We may often give without love, but we can never love without giving."



Let us invoke Sri Gurudev's Divine Grace and Blessings to discover our Pure Intellect and the
Purified, Deeply Aspiring Mind within us! Let us Serve, Love, and Give to Purify our Mind!
Let us invoke our Pure Intellect to Meditate! Let us Realize the Glorious Divine Self Within!

Gange Hara Hara!

Jai Jai Jagadeeshwara!



CHINMAYAM
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URBANA, MD

CHINMAYA SOMNATH
CHANTILLY, VA



For more information, visit
CHINMAYADC.ORG



Bala Vihar

Enriching our children with the great knowledge of Sanatana Dharma through scriptural stories, games and activities. Join us every week as we learn about values and ideals with laughter and joy!

'Children are not vessels to be filled, but lamps to be lit.'
- Pujya Swami Chinmayananda

Registration for 2017-18 Now Open!



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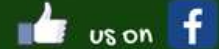
Location:
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Arpanam

An Offering of Gratitude | Annual Fundraising Initiative

Whoever offers Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water,
that I accept, offered by the pure-minded with devotion
Geeta Chapter 9, Verse 26

True loving is not passive 'taking'
but a dynamic 'giving'
- Swami Chinmayananda

Pledge Today Generously

-  *Patram (Leaf) - \$2700 and above*
-  *Pushpam (Flower) - \$5400 and above*
-  *Phalam (Fruit) - \$10,800 and above*
-  *Toyam (Water) - \$21,600 and above*

**Grow Spiritually and Help Our Center
Expand to Serve More**

Thursday Class Commencement

Our Thursday classes will resume on **Thursday, October 3th, 2019** from 7-8:30pm in **Kailas Niwas**, and we will continue our study of **Vivekachudamani**.

In preparation for our study, please...

- Arrive before 7:00pm. If you arrive after 7:00pm, or after Aarti has begun, please wait in the foyer and enter once Swamiji begins the lecture.
- Bring the Vivekachudamani text to every class. Contact Vijay Singh if you need to purchase a book.
- Bring a japa mala to class.
- Help with classroom set up if you arrive early

Zoom Access Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/872939557>

Zoom Webinar ID: 872-939-557

Follow us on Facebook!

Exciting news! We now have a Chinmayam Facebook page for our Silver Spring center where we can showcase our vibrant community, events and activities. **We request all members to "follow us" and "like us"** to receive important updates, information on events and special guests, photos of your children in Bala Vihar, quotes from our Gurudev, and more. Updates will be sent to your phone or email accounts. **Don't be left out - join now !**

Step 1: Login at Facebook.com (or join Facebook by creating your profile - it's free and easy)

Step 2: Search Chinmaya Mission DC

Step 3: Click on "Like" and "Follow"

Step 4: Click on "Invite Friends" and send the page to your friends, members and non-members.

Publicity team needs volunteers who are active on social media! Please contact Amita Jain, amitajain815@gmail.com

Chinmayam Learning Center

Chinmayam is now available for rental services!

We are delighted to announce your single destination for enrichment programs!! Presenting the Chinmayam Learning Center, weekdays and weekends!

For more information, please contact: Raja Kirkire, rkkirkire@gmail.com,
Meena Sankar, meena17.sankar@gmail.com





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Chinmaya Vanaprastham

An initiative to help people over sixty years

Learn to make life healthy, serene, comfortable, purposeful and happy by gracefully aging through spiritual living



CHINMAYA SOMNATH

Sunday, February 16th 2020

2.30 PM - 5.00 PM



Opening prayer - Suresh Ramakrishnan

Pranayama tips and technique - Jay Kalathil

Vedanta in the Vanaprastha stage of life - Medha Bhagwat

Aging and Bone health - Dr. Sangeetha Bala

Closing prayers - Dr. Sangeetha Bala

CHINMAYASOMNATH.ORG



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**MAHA
SHIVARATRI
CELEBRATIONS**

through the 4 kalas
February 21st, 4:00 PM
through
February 22nd, 5:30 AM



at
Chinmaya Somnath

4350 Blue Spring Drive, Chantilly, VA 20151

PROGRAM DETAILS

4:00 PM - 9:30 PM	1st Kala - Rudrabhisheka, Paduka Puja & Cultural Programs
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Silent Japa with chanting of Shiva Manasa Puja
6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	Rudrabhisheka, Paduka Puja and Stotra Parayanam by Shloka class children
9:00 pm - 9:30 pm	Cultural Program by Bala Vihar children
9:45 PM - 12:00 AM	2nd Kala - Bhajans/Kirtans and Meditation
9:45 pm - 11:45 pm	Bhajans/Kirtans by Chinmaya Somnath Group
11:45 pm - Midnight	Message by Vedanta Teacher, Meditative Silence
12:30 AM - 3:00 AM	3rd Kala - Rudrabhisheka /Paduka Puja with Bilva Ashthotara Stotra Archana
3:30 AM - 5:30 AM	4th Kala - Sri Rudra japa, Rudra-Krama & Trishati Archana, Lalita Sahasranama and Vedic Arati

Mahaprasad will be available from 8:30 to 9:30 PM



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based on

Living Vedanta

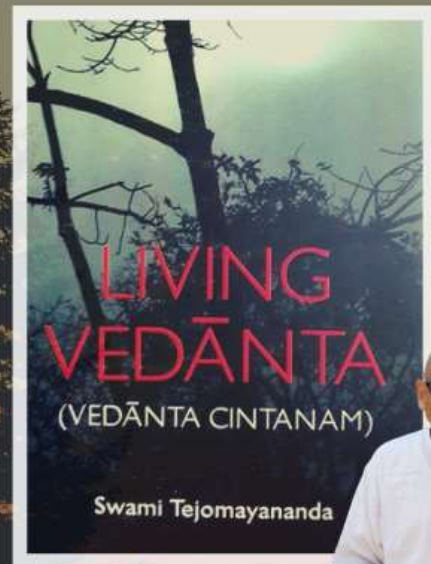
by Swami Tejomayananda

SATURDAY

FEBRUARY 29TH

9.00 AM - 4:30 PM

Led by Arvind Bhagwat





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Little Krishna

June 29 - July 10
8:30am - 5:30pm



Little Engineers

July 13 - July 24
8:30am - 5:30pm



Around the World

July 27 - August 14
8:30am - 5:30pm



**Super Early Bird
Pay by May 18**

7 - 9 weeks - \$225/week

5 - 6 weeks - \$250/week

**Early Bird
Pay by June 5**

7 - 9 weeks - \$250/week

5 - 6 weeks - \$275/week

Regular Pricing - \$300/week (Half day option - \$150/week)

After Care - 5:30 - 6:15 pm \$50/week | \$15/day

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to

SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2020

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THEME: BHAGAVĀN GAṆEŚĀ

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CHINMAYAM
SILVER SPRING, MD
JUL 13 - AUG 7

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URBANA, MD
TBD



Early Registration (till March 31, 2020): \$1200 | Registration (from April 1, 2020): \$1400

Must attend all four weeks (where applicable) | Sibling Discount is available

Register at chinmayadc.org/summercamp | For more information, email us at summercampinfo@cmwrc.org

STUDY VIVEKACUDAMANI with Swami Dheerananda

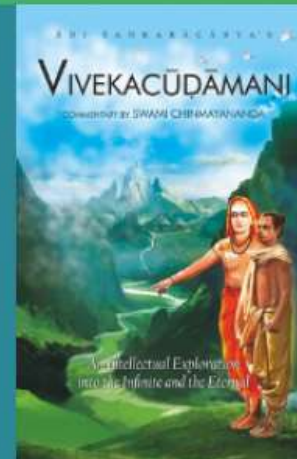
Every Thursday
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm (EST)
at Kailas Niwas

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The class is live streamed via Zoom. Please use the information below to access the live stream video and/or audio.

You can also sign in using this QR code

<https://zoom.us/j/872939557>
Zoom Webinar ID: 872-939-557



2020 Geeta Chanting Competition

2020 Geeta Chanting Competition

CHANT GEETA | ENCHANT KRISHNA | CELEBRATE CHINMAYA

All are invited - Children, Youth & Adults

CHAPTER 9 | VERSES 1- 17 | THE ROYAL SECRET

Memory | Memory & Comprehension | Reading
Reading & Comprehension | Writing (Reflection)



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46 NORWOOD ROAD
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MARCH 21, 2020
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Registration Fee: Individual \$25 | Family \$50

Register Today!

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27TH CHINMAYA MAHASAMADHI ARADHANA CAMP

Chinmaya Mission San Jose | Hyatt Regency Hotel, Burlingame CA | 30th July to 3rd August 2020

**Super Early-Bird Registration Open for
27th Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Aradhana Camp
Read Below for Details**

**Don't miss out on significant cost savings -
Register ASAP, before September 15, 2019 to take
advantage of the Super Early Bird Discounts!!**

Hari Om!

Chinmaya Mission San Jose is very happy to announce that we are blessed with this great opportunity to host the 2020 Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Aradhana Camp.

Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda left His bodily form on 3rd August, 1993. Each year, Chinmaya Mission Worldwide observes this Holy Day as Chinmaya Aradhana Day honoring His Life and Legacy. The spiritual growth we are reaping today is the result of the tireless work of our beloved Pujya Gurudev and the flow of knowledge we have received from Him. We worshipfully contemplate on Pujya Gurudev and His constant Grace and honor His Life and Legacy by observing the Aradhana camp on His Mahasamadhi day.

The Theme of this camp is "**2020 - The Perfect Vision**". Pujya Swami Swaroopananda, the Global Head of Chinmaya Mission will conduct the camp with many of the Swamins, Brahmacharins and Teachers of Chinmaya Mission. There will be discourses on Adi Shankara's composition "**Maneesha Panchakam**" conducted by Swami Swaroopananda ji. Discourses on Bhagavad Gita chapter 2 "**Sthitaprajna Lakshana**" will be conducted by Swami Shantananda ji. There will be interactive workshops, panel discussions, and several fun filled and informative activities planned for the whole family. There will be Shishu Vihar, Bala Vihar, CHYK, Sethukari tracks also to incorporate an enriching experience for all age groups.

We humbly request support, participation and blessings from everyone in our Chinmaya Family. As this Perfect Vision is being brought to us by the various discourses and activities during the Mahasamadhi Camp in 2020, let us hold out our hands and receive these blessings. We invite the entire Chinmaya Family to come together to participate in the function.

You can register to the camp

at <https://forms.chinmayamission.com/v2/forms/5c96811ed0443d00011255d5>

Please register by September 15, 2019 to take advantage of the Super Early Bird Discount of 10%.

To help raise awareness for the Chinmaya family and beyond, we have the following materials to share. We would deeply appreciate if you could share it with your friends, neighbors and family members.

Flyer: Here is the flyer for the event <https://chinmayaanaradhana2020.org/flyer/>

Website: The website <https://chinmayaanaradhana2020.org> has all the registration information and other details. Please note that there is a 10% reduced registration fees if you sign up by September 15th 2019. There is an additional 1 % discount if you pay by check. Also, you can spread out the payment over 3 months, if you wish.

Promo Video: Please check out the promo video prepared for the event. Here is the Promo Video <https://chinmayaanaradhana2020.org/welcome-video/>

Please reach out to any of the following sevaks if you have any questions or comments.

Lakshmy Prakash Lakshmy prakash@cmsj.org 510-378-1264

Ramkumar Subramanian ramkumar.s@cmsj.org 408-893-6637

In His Service,

MSC 2020 Organizing Team

Chinmaya Mission San Jose



CHINMAYA MISSION® WASHINGTON REGIONAL CENTER
Maximum happiness for maximum people for maximum time



Chinmaya Vishwavidyapeeth | An Appeal



CHINMAYA
— VISHWAVIDYAPEETH —

(DEEMED TO BE

UNIVERSITY

— UNDER SECTION 3 OF UGC ACT 1956 —

WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION BUILT ON INDIAN WISDOM

Hari Om Chinmaya Family,

The World Chinmaya Sevaks' Conference was a grand opportunity to connect with the global Chinmaya Mission Centre representatives and we are overwhelmed by the support extended to the **Chinmaya University**.

Chinmaya University founded on the principles of Purity, Spirituality, Practicality and Innovation, our core mission is to blend the ancient and time-tested wisdom of India with present day knowledge fields. It is breaking new ground where necessary and adopting the merits of all that has come before, but always leaning towards the winds of innovation. Striking a careful balance between the old and new, the organization offers common streams of courses with unique electives and supplementary subjects, with an intent to mould the teenagers of today into well-rounded, responsible, value-grounded, young adults that contribute to the nation, and the world at large.

Learn more about Chinmaya University by clicking this [link](#).
Like Chinmaya Vishwavidyapeeth on [Facebook](#).

Attached are additional materials for your review and get insights into Chinmaya University:

1. [Swami Advayananda's presentation](#) about Chinmaya Vishwavidyapeeth's unique Vision & Inception (video)
2. [Chinmaya University - An appeal for support](#) (video)
3. [Chinmaya Shree: Bi-annual Newsletter of Chinmaya University](#) (PDF)

Chinmaya University looks forward to your **continued support and engagement** in the years to come. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any information or clarification.

In His Seva,
On behalf of Dr. AppaRao Mukkamala
Managing Trustee

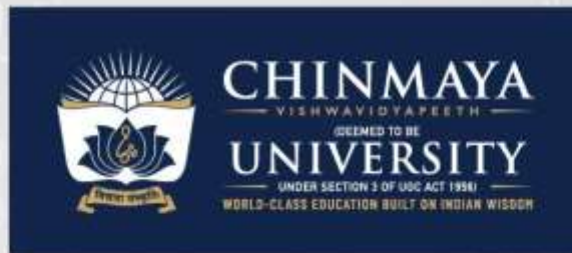
Swami Advayananda's presentation : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AO9ts04tSM8&feature=youtu.be>

Chinmaya University: An appeal for support: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NADht0NBRxM>

Chinmaya Shree: Bi-Annual newsletter of Chinmaya University:

https://gallery.mailchimp.com/80619a985e5d6e34c2ba01298/files/a46d5eac-b4e8-44f6-94b1-9b553915eb57/CVV_Newsletter_Dec_2018_Volume_1_issue_1_Final.01.pdf

Learn more about Chinmaya University at: <http://www.cvv.ac.in/>



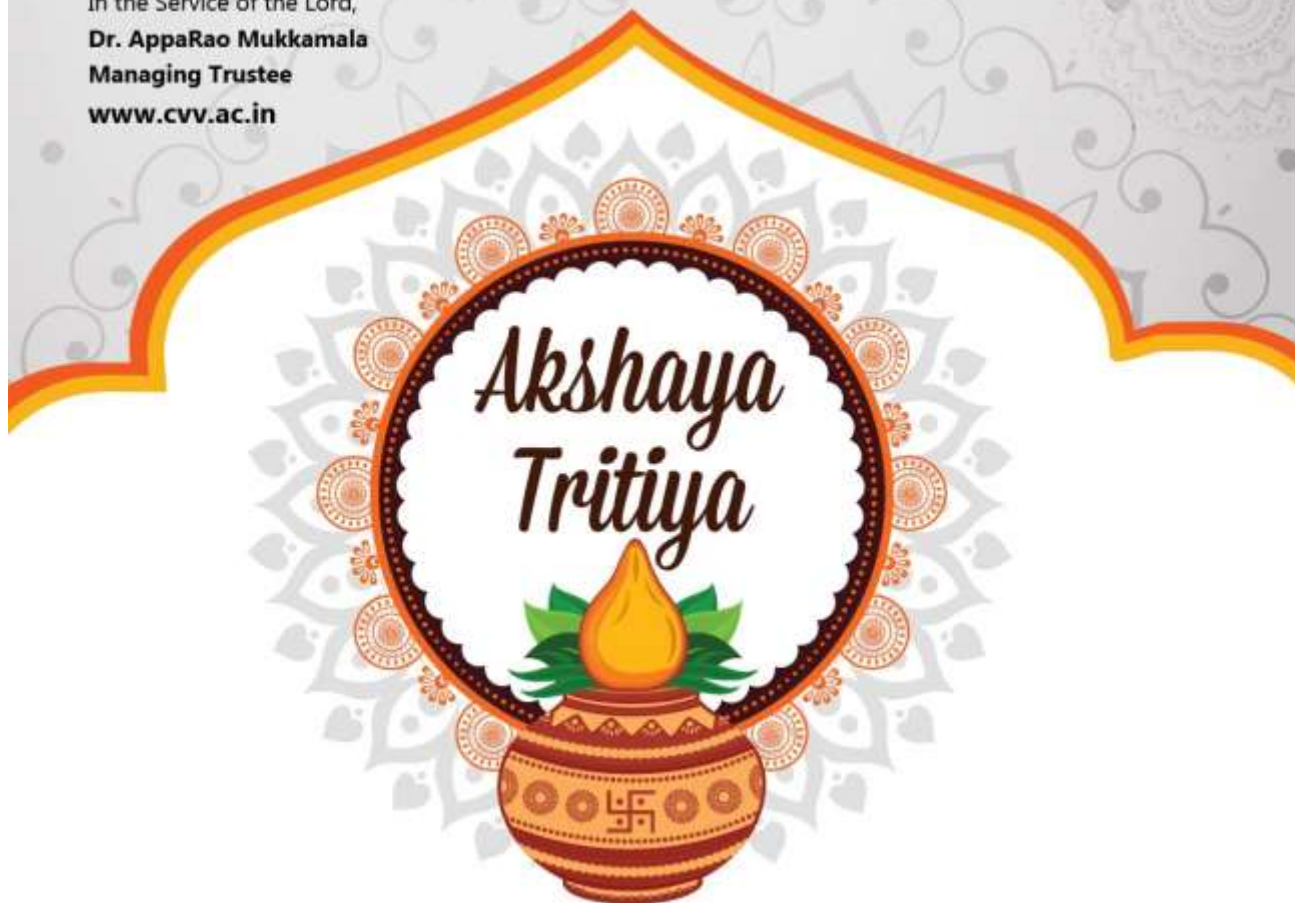
Greetings from Chinmaya Vishwavidyapeeth on the auspicious day of AkshayaTritiya. This sacred day marked the beginning of Satya Yuga and it is said that all sat-karmas undertaken on this auspicious day become Akshaya (अक्षय) that is 'imperishable, eternal' in the sense of 'prosperity, hope, joy and success'.

The Chinmaya Vishwavidyapeeth Trust expresses deep gratitude to all the well-wishers, supporters, donors, students and their parents, faculty, staff and the community that is supporting the University. On this auspicious day Chinmaya University is launching the **Vidya Lakshya Nidhi (विद्या लक्ष्य निधि)** schemewhereby a donor of ₹1 lakh (USD 1500) per year for 5 years, will be titled **Vidya Mitra (विद्या मित्र)** – a friend of the Chinmaya Vishwavidyapeeth, and the donor's name will be permanently engraved on the donors list at the Chinmaya University. In Puja Guruji Swami Tejomayananda's words, Vidya stands for Vishwavidyapeeth and Lakshya means the goal or aim. May this endeavour build an Akshaya Nidhi or Eternal Bounty for the Chinmaya Vishwavidyapeeth to serve the global community for posterity.

We invoke the grace of Bhagavan and blessings of Puja Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda on all the Family members that have and are supporting the Chinmaya Vishwavidyapeeth.

Thanking You,

In the Service of the Lord,
Dr. AppaRao Mukkamala
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Maha Shivaratri Celebrations Through the four kalas Feb 21st, 4.00 pm thru Feb 22nd, 5.30 am

CHINMAYA SOMNATH
4350 Blue Spring Dr,
Chantilly, VA - 20151

Mahaprasad will be
available from
8:30 PM to 9:30 PM

6:00 PM - 9:45 PM

1st Kala - Rudrabhisheka & Paduka Puja, Stotra
Parayanam by Shloka class
children + Cultural programs

9:45 PM - 12:00 AM

2nd Kala - Bhajans/Kirtans
and Meditation

12:30 AM - 3:00 AM

3rd Kala - Rudrabhisheka
/Paduka Puja with Bilva
Ashtottara Stotram with
Archana

3:30 AM - 5:30 AM

4th Kala - Sri Rudra japa,
Rudra-Krama & Trishati
Archana, Lalita Sahasranama
and Vedic Arati

SAVE-the-DATE & Sign-up for Program Participation

[Click here](#) to sign-up for participating in the music/dance/drama or for general support.
Last day for sign-up is **January 26, 2020 (deadline extended)**.


**2020
Chinmaya
Jayanti**



Saturday, May 2nd 2020
5:00 – 7:00 PM – Event Celebrations
7:00 – 8:00 PM – Dinner

46 Norwood Road
Silver Spring, MD 20905

*What we have is a gift from Him.
What we do with what we have is our gift to Him.*





Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center

46 Norwood Road
Silver Spring, MD 20904
Chinmayam.org

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To enjoy this week long event of chanting
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**Celebrating Ramanavami
Singing Glories of Lord Rama**

Venue: Chinmayam, Silver Spring; March 25 to April 2, 2020

Date	Day	Time	Date	Day	Time
3/25/2020	Wed	6:30-9:00 pm	3/30/2020	Mon	6:30-9:00 pm
3/26/2020	Thu	6:30-9:00 pm	3/31/2020	Tue	6:30-9:00 pm
3/27/2020	Fri	6:30-9:00 pm	4/1/2020	Wed	6:30-9:00 pm
3/28/2020	Sat	2:00-10:00 pm	4/2/2020	Thu	6:30-9:00 pm
3/29/2020	Sun	3:30-9:30 pm			

For more information and for details of help, email at ramayana@chinmayam.org

We look forward to make this a grand event

Maha Shivaratri



Friday, February 21, 2020

Chinmayam /46 Norwood Road

Silver Spring, MD 20905

www.chinmayadc.org

Chinmaya Mission, Silver Spring Celebrates

5:00-7:30 a.m.	Shiva Manasa Puja, morning
4:15-5:15 p.m.	Shiva Manasa Puja, early evening
5:15-6:15 p.m.	Vedic Chanting - Sri Rudram
6:30-7:00 p.m.	Stotra Parayanam - Chinmayam Shloka Class
7:00-7:30 p.m.	Lord Jagadeeshwara Puja
7:40-8:45 p.m.	Bhajans / Dances on Lord Shiva
8:45-9:00 p.m.	Nirvana Shatakam
9:00-9:45 p.m.	Maha Prasad
9:45-11:50 p.m.	Bhajans and Naama Japa
11:50-12:05 a.m.	Conch Blowing, Silence and Maha Arati

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Contact: Andrea Beri (443) 472-0819 / andreaberi123@gmail.com



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New Year Celebrations at Chinmayam, Silver Spring

Alisha Mahajan

This year our New Year's event in the mission was a great success! The entire lobby and common area were decorated by our very own Chetana auntie, and it was done excellently! For those of you who were able to make it, we hope you enjoyed the festivities and even if you were unable to attend, here is a quick recap of the day!

We started it off bright and early with the Vishnu Sahasranama, which was led by Chinmayam student, Anagha Shastry. This was then followed by the Invocation, which was sung by Shriji's shloka class children (coordinated by Kamakshi Aunty). Then, we chanted the Guru Stotram immediately followed by the 108 names of Sri Gurudev. After finishing the puja, we transitioned into the children and adults sharing their New Year's Resolutions!

We wanted to ring in the New Year by sharing our inspirational goals and targets. From becoming more involved with Chinmaya Mission, to developing a better connection with God, many adults (and children) set spiritual goals. Many children also set academic goals such as getting straight A's or bettering their current reading habits. Our personal favorite was a kind brother promising to be "less annoying" to his sister for the New Year; let's see how that works out! We are very proud of everyone who shared their New Year's resolutions, and we hope for everyone to follow through and keep working towards these goals!

After sharing all our resolutions and reflecting on them for a minute, we split into teams for a very fun game of Ramayana Jeopardy. There were four teams: Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna. It was a close competition, but everyone did a great job and it was lots of fun! We all learned some interesting facts about the Ramayana and all the kids had a good refresher of their earlier Chinmaya classes! Following the very competitive game of jeopardy, we had our two amazing guest speakers, Acharya Arvind ji and Acharya Medha ji speak to us.

They shared about their wonderful experiences in their 2 years of training at the ashram. They also shared their insights as to why we are not able to keep up our resolutions, after hearing the children and adults share their resolutions for the upcoming year! We want to thank them once more for sharing their insights as to how

we need to change our way of thinking and focus more on the positivity in life.

We wrapped the festivities with bhajans sung by the Bhajan Group and a wonderful lunch where we were able to reflect together on our resolutions as well as the words of wisdom shared by Acharya Arvindji and Acharya Medhaji!

We have uploaded the pictures from the event at the following link, so please make sure to check out!

<https://youtu.be/JD8hgOPA7S8>

We can't wait to see everyone next year, and we hope 2020 brings lots of happiness and good memories!



New Year Celebrations at Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly

Samatha Yarragovula

On the first day of this year, January 1st 2020, we had the good fortune of receiving blessings and hearing a wonderful message by Swami Dheerananda, resident acharya of Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC), who inspired all the attendees to have a vision. Just as we wish and aspire for a perfect 20/20 vision physically throughout life, he encouraged each to have a similar ***Divine Vision 2020***.

To read the full message, please refer to Swamiji's foreword section in this magazine.

Reproduced below are some photographs from the New Year's Day Pooja at Chinmaya Somnath.



Shraddhanjali

Samadhi of Swami Siddeshananda

ॐ

Swamins, Brahmacharins and Members of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide

Dear All,
Hari Om!

Swami Siddheshananda of Chinmaya Mission Pune, took final refuge at the feet of Pujya Gurudev, today, 9th December, 3:40 am, in the Mauli Ashram, at Pune.

An engineer by profession, Swami Siddheshananda's deep interest in Vedanta brought him to the portals of Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Mumbai. An alumnus of the Vedanta Course Batch, 1998 – 2000, he was given Brahmachari Deeksha in 2000. Posted to Chinmaya Mission Pune, from 2000, Swamiji worked with complete dedication, to spread Pujya Gurudev's message. He received Sannyasa Deeksha from Pujya Guruji, Swami Tejomayanandaji on Shivaratri Day of 2012.

Swami Siddheshananda's missionary zeal was instrumental in establishing Chinmaya Mauli and the Chinmaya *Vitthal Rukmini* Temple, in Pune. His contagious energy and enthusiasm inspired thousands to live the 'Gita Way of Life' and turned Pune into a vibrant Chinmaya Mission centre.

Known for his smiling demeanour and deep compassion, Swami Siddheshananda was always available to Mission members and devotees.

Our respectful homage to Swami Siddheshananda.

At His Feet,

Swami Swaroopananda



Swami Siddeshananda

Gita Jayanti Reflections

Tapovanam and Chinmayam students

Chapter 3, Verse 26

na buddhi-bhedam janayed ajñānām karma-saṅginām

joṣhayet sarva-karmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samācharan

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।

जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥ 26 ॥

Let no wise man unsettle the minds of ignorant people who are attached to action; he should engage them in all actions, himself fulfilling them with devotion.

Hari Om, my name is Maanini. I am chanting Verse 26 from Chapter 3.

We know the literal meaning of this verse listed above. Another way to put it is that if wiser, self-realized men advised common people, they would misunderstand and renounce action. I chose this verse because Chapter 3 is mostly about action and in my opinion action is one of the most important aspects of living because we would be nowhere in our lives if we were simply idle, as life is dynamic and constantly moving. Our Gurudev compared life to an ever-moving river and if we were to be idle, “plunging ourselves midstream and standing with upraised hands, crying out to our generation to halt” as he described it, we would be swept away. Instead we should work to the best of our abilities, remembering the Lord. As I mentioned earlier, inaction will get us nowhere in life. Even if we are on the wrong path, the only way to get back on the right path is to act. An example from my own life is when I have to start a complicated art project. I usually don't know where to start and I get overwhelmed by my anxiety, causing me to leave it for another day. That day usually ends up being the night before it is due. Then I end up getting even more stressed and it's not my best work. Now taking a step back, if I had started to work on it when it was assigned, either by making a sketch or planning out my steps and supplies, it would have been immensely better than leaving it all for the night before. My takeaway from this verse is that only through action will we reach our destination. Otherwise if we stand still, our lives will slowly, but surely pass by. We should continue to fulfill our responsibilities cheerfully and not let inaction be an obstacle on our path to success. Thank you and Hari Om.

Hari Om, my name is Bhuvan Devarsu, and I have chosen Chapter 2, Verse 51.

karmajam buddhiyuktā hi phalam tyaktvā manīṣiṇaḥ

janmabandhavinirmuktāḥ padaṁ gacchantyanāmayan

The literal translation is:

The wise, possessed of knowledge, having abandoned the fruits of their actions, freed from the fetters of birth, go to the State which is beyond all evil.

In this statement, Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna why an individual who stays truly devoted to their work never experiences any negative consequences. Often we complete our work with the desire to gain something from it, whether it be a job promotion or getting into a good college. While these provide motivation, if we let them take control, we may get too attached to the ideas, causing stress and devastation if we aren't able to achieve them. But if we complete our work just for the sake of completing it and gaining the satisfaction that it gives, we will be able to maintain a more lasting happiness.

Over the past couple of months, this has been very real to me. As I've been applying to colleges, I've grown increasingly anxious, worried about which ones I will get into. I've often found myself poring over school assignments, feeling each problem could make or break my admission. But in reality, there is nothing else I can do about my admission, other than wait for the decision to come out. So, keeping this verse in mind, I've learned to just focus on the assignments themselves, attempting my best on each one. This has allowed me to maintain a peaceful mind, not only reducing my stress and giving me the chance to enjoy my senior year of high school, but also giving me the optimism that I can and will get into a college of my choice.

Thank you, and Hari Om.

Hari Om. My name is Vishnu Lakshmanan and today I will reflect upon Chapter 3 Verse 21.

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते।।3.21।।

Reflection: Verse 3.21: The literal translation of this verse is said to be "whatever a great man does, that other men also do; whatever he sets up as the standard, that the world follows". So, in terms of today's world, this verse says that if you have following and have influence, whatever you do will be followed by other people. I would like to start off saying that I am not a person with very much influence, as I have not done anything yet that is deserving of it. At my stage of life where I don't have all the mans to do this. But the great people that I follow include people that have made a change in the world such as Elon Musk and Bill Gates. Their principles inspire me to make a change, and to make the world a better place than it was when I was born. However, as I discussed in class with my peers and my teachers, the word "great" doesn't always equate to having done something massive, nor does it mean that one has amassed a huge amount of wealth. These are just ideas that are believed in today's time to generalize the few individuals that most of the public attempts to emulate and follow. The word great can be defined as anybody who performs service selflessly and for the benefit of others. Allow me to give an example that can be seen in the real world. In 2017, Apple, a company with major influence in the technology market released the iPhone X. This phone came with a new design that Apple termed as the "notch". Before this, no big smartphone manufacturer had put a notch onto their phone, but soon after the release, many other small companies followed Apple and put a notch onto their own phone even if it didn't serve any overall purpose. I believe that this example fully illustrates this verse because it shows that a company with major influence could do something very polarizing such as a design change, and regardless of how it sells, other companies will still follow what Apple has put into the market. Another example of this verse comes in the form of Mahatma Gandhi. During India's freedom fight, he preached non-violence, and that played a role in getting Indians their freedom from Great Britain. About 15 to 20 years later, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. used the same methodology preached by Gandhi to advance the rights that African Americans had during the Civil Rights Movement. Dr. King's emulations of Mahatma Gandhi show that Gandhiji's actions are reflective of what a great person should do, and according to this verse, it will be followed, not only by Dr. King, but also others, such as President Nelson Mandela (when he led South Africans to get rid of the apartheid). Now I would like to give an example from my own life. I don't really have an anecdote that can define or relate with this verse, but I have always

tried to perform actions that can be replicated by others, so that those actions can inspire others. I don't know how effective this has been for others to replicate, but the way I try to perform actions won't change. This is one of my favorite verses because it is, in my opinion, one of the easier ones to implement in life. Throughout the rest of my life, I will keep the same outlook that if I perform actions that are the best for everyone, then it will inspire others to act the same; hence, making the world a better place for tomorrow. Thank You and Hari Om.

Hari Om! My name is Shivani Sawant and I chose chapter 1 verse 30. Arjuna says, "The Gandiva bow slips from my hand and my skin burns all over. I am also unable to stand, and my mind is whirling around as it were." So, the main thing I noticed about this verse is that you can sort of pinpoint the moment when Arjuna starts to give up. The Gandiva bow slips from his hand and he starts to use excuses to let his fears get the better of him. This sort of resonated with me because I felt and I think we have all felt at some point this one feeling, really specific palpable feeling that I tend to get the better of me. There are many anxiety inducing things that can spark this feeling in all of us, but I think a simple one that I feel anxious about is raising my hand in school. I am a very quiet person and not a big fan of attention from people I do not know very well, and I tend to shy away from speaking up. Let's say I am in class and the teacher asks a question. It's one that I know the answer to pretty well. So, the teacher is standing at the front of the classroom. The answer is on the tip of my tongue; it is not that hard. Nothing is stopping me. I am starting to raise my hand. And then the doubt comes creeping in. Why is the room so quiet? I don't want to be the only one answering. What if I get it wrong? And this is where like Arjuna, the fear starts increasing and the mind starts whirling. I get paralyzed and unconsciously start lowering my hand almost like a metaphor for the Gandiva bow slipping through my fingers. This feeling of being paralyzed, letting your mind run away and letting that fear rush in. This thought of your body reacting and preventing you from doing what needs to be done is one that I think the Gita does a good job of capturing in this verse. This is when Arjuna's mind starts to race; when his worries start to cause his thoughts to race at 100 miles/hour. He starts coming up with excuses like how war is gruesome and destructive; he does not want any kingdom or pleasures if it means killing his relatives. Never mind the fact that before he saw the other side, he was more than ready to fight the war; never mind that all attempts at stopping the war had failed; it was going to happen regardless of whether he did

anything. Arjuna is a great warrior who has fought in countless wars before and he never felt anything like this. It wasn't the bloodshed; it wasn't the moral ambiguity of war that was stopping him. It was the fear of fighting his family despite the fact that he knew that it was his duty. It's here in this moment of paralysis that he starts to give up and make these excuses. When your brain is scared, it almost goes into fight or flight mode. Your brain starts coming up with a multitude of reasons to justify leaving that situation. Going back to my example, once I start lowering my hand and giving up, I will start thinking that it is fine. It is not like my teacher needs me to answer the question. She will probably answer the question herself in a couple of seconds. On some level, I am not wrong. The teacher is not relying on me answering the question and even though I am talking myself out of answering, it is not going to have any real impact. It is just a question. But what happens when it starts meaning more? Sure, I am not going to fight in any ancient familial war but what if my friend is getting made fun of in front of me? And if I am too scared to stick up for them? What if I really, really want something but I talk myself out of getting it? What if I let my fear talk me out of doing the right thing? There are countless reasons to study the Gita but this verse struck me because it highlights an important reason. We need to study the Gita to learn how to do the right thing even when our minds are giving us thousands of reasons not to. Adversities and obstacles are always going to be there. Nothing about them is going to change no matter how much we keep running away from them. The only way to do the right thing in the face of adversity is to gain knowledge like Arjuna did later on in the Gita and change how we look at the problem so that we can get past our fear.

Hari Om! Thank you. That was my take on it.

Anant Josyula

Chanting Chapter 2, Verse 13

Dehinosmin Yatha Dehe Kaumaram Youvanam Jara

Tatha Dehantara Prapthih Dheerastatra Na Muhyati

Just like the Atman within us passes from childhood to youth to old age, at the time of death, the Atman passes into another body. The wise are not confused by this fact.

A few weeks ago, as part of my school's annual senior retreat, I was sent to the middle of nowhere, absolutely nowhere; where I could see absolutely nothing other than

mountains, cornfields and a single pond. In any case, I stayed here for four days completely disconnected from the rest of the world. No phones, no computers, just with one hundred twenty-four other guys from my graduating class. In hindsight, a large part of how quickly I forged bonds with classmates who I might otherwise never have talked to was how curious we became about one another's life when we were separated from the worldly distractions of our daily routines. We began asking questions about each other's spiritual beliefs and subconsciously found parallels between them. When the conversation took a turn to ask me for an explanation about reincarnation; with no means of quoting Gita verses or summarizing commentary from the internet, I was left dead in the water. In any case, this verse stood out vividly in my head. I began explaining how according to many scientists, 98% of the molecules in our body change during our lifetime: yet we continuously attach ourselves to our body. On the other hand, Hindus believe that our Atman remains throughout and simply transforms into another body after death. In other words, my Atman is not restricted to my body; when my body dies, my Atman is capable of taking form in another body. My friend Matt who comes from a half Jewish-half Catholic family was in the room and began explaining to me how the verse resonated with him. In the New Testament, John the Baptist is quoted as being a reincarnation of the Prophet Elijah. Though seemingly insignificant at the time, this parallel drawn by Matt showed me that if I take the initiative to present my Hindu beliefs to my non-Hindu friends, they will be responsive and in turn, have a better understanding of my religion. In this example, I was lucky to be placed in an environment that fostered such discussion away from all distractions. But it does go to show that if each and every one of us stopped to discuss spirituality with our non-Hindu friends in an intimate manner, they will have a better understanding of our religion and respect us in such a way that I don't think we could have otherwise gained. I encourage all of you to find a verse that resonates with you and use the Gita as a tool to engage in such conversations.

Hari Om and thank you.

Hari Om! My name is Harini Kannan and I will be talking about Chapter 2, Verse 38 which is:

Sukh dukhe same kritva labhaalabhau jayajayou

Tatho Yudhaay Yujuvasva Naivam Paapam Avapsyasi

The literal meaning is *“Having made pain and pleasure, gain and loss and victory and defeat the same, engage in battle for the sake of battle. Thus, you shall not incur sin.”*

In this verse, Krishna is describing to Arjuna the attitude with which he should approach the battle. Instead of thinking about the results or the small anxieties that he has, he should focus on the cause for which he fights. Essentially, this verse is about keeping one’s balance and not worrying about all the external things. I want to break down this verse into parts and talk about how each part applies to my own life. Specifically, as it related to the college application process. The first part is the three examples that Lord Krishna gives - having made pain and pleasure, gain and loss; victory and defeat the same; these three examples are a subtle nod towards the body, mind and intellect. Victory and defeat are at the body level - it is a physical awareness of the good and bad. In my life, when I was giving my college interviews, if I let myself get nervous and get fazed by the fact that I am in front of a person who is very well accomplished, my voice is going to get high and I am not going to think through my answers properly and I won’t be able to win i.e. do well in the interview.

The next two are the mind and intellect. Gain and loss are at the mind level and the pleasure and pain are at the intellect level. These two go hand-in-hand; so, I will talk about them together - gain will lead to pleasure and loss can lead to pain. On the positive side, if I get admission into a college that I really want to go to, I get instant gratification, a sense of happiness and validation because I got into a college that I really want to go to. That has both short term and long-term implications. I am happy in the instant, but I also know at the intellectual level that it will help me throughout my life. On the flip side, if I don’t get into a college that I really want to go to, that can cloud my balance. It can throw me off because if I get too affected by the fact that I did not get something I really wanted. In order for that not to cloud my balance, I should continue to put my best foot forward and think about the bigger picture - why do I want to go to college - why am I doing any of this - what is my purpose? As the verse says, by treating all these results with equanimity, I won’t get thrown off balance.

This leads to my next point which is to engage in battle for the sake of battle. Instead of thinking about these inevitable rough bumps in life because that is going to happen no matter what and you cannot expect them to stop. So instead of thinking about those, I have to stay

true to my nature and keep going with what I feel is right. Do what I should be doing for the sake of doing it. Instead of for the rewards I am going to get or anything external that is happening in my life.

Finally, it says that *“thus you shall not incur sin”*. But what is sin? Does it mean that I am going to hell? No, the Gita describes the ladder of fall and how attachment and desire lead to intellectual death. If I keep worrying about my desires, then I am eventually going to inflict that sin upon myself. That is not going to take me anywhere in life. As the Gita transitions from Chapter 2 to 3 in this verse, it talks about the attitude in which you act. How should you move forward in your actions? As I transition into the next stage of my life i.e. my life in college; I am going to start about how I can have the most impact. What kind of actions can I have to help others around me from a state of balance?

Thank you. Hari Om!

Hari Om! My name is Ratna Ramesh and I have chosen Chapter 3 Verse 3.

Shri Bhagavan Uvacha

Lokesmin Dwividha Nishta Pura Prokta Maya Anagha

Jnanayogena Sankkhyanaam Karmayogena Yoginaam

The Blessed Lord said:

In this world there is a two-fold path as I said before, O sinless One. The path of knowledge of the Sankhyans and the path of action of the Yogins.

Historically, I am terrible at making decisions. Whether it is something as miniscule as choosing a shirt for a presentation or something as important as choosing a college, I want a clear-cut path on what to do. Unfortunately, there is no one-size fits all medication that I can use for all my decisions. The two forms of Yoga mentioned in this verse are Jnana Yoga or the Yoga of knowledge and Karma Yoga or the Yoga of action. When to apply one or both of these depends on the temperament of the individual as well as the context of the situation. To me, these forms are becoming kind of like tools in a toolbox. Whenever I am faced with a tough situation, the best way to get out of it is to figure out the appropriate tool. To explain both of these further, Karma Yoga is acting without attachment to the outcome. Whether I realized it or not, I have been told much the same thing since kindergarten in much simpler terms. Do

the right thing even when no one is watching. For me, this means choosing to keep up with my dance practice even when the teacher is out of town not because I will get yelled at when she comes back but to keep in shape and keep improving. Another example would be choosing to stay up and help a friend with an assignment at 11:59 not because it will change my grade but it could make all the difference to how they are doing in a class. Jnana Yoga is self-reflection. For me, this is setting goals to make sure I use my time wisely and reflecting on what I could have done better. This will help me change my to-do list for the next day accordingly. However, there are many situations where I need to improve in applying Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga. For one, when it comes to studying for a test, I learn all the material with a goal of doing well in the test. I know my focus should be on retaining the material rather than the grade; so that is something I am focusing on doing better this year. Even though making decisions is not exactly my cup of tea, having the tools to work through them is making the process a lot easier. I would like to think of picking a tool like one of those Yes/No flowcharts. If the situation involves other people, proceed to box A; if the situation is individual, proceed to box B. But unfortunately, that is not the way it works. I am learning that sometimes when one path does not work, another one might; sometimes it is a combination of multiple paths. This year, my goal is to become more refined in how I tackle difficult situations and make tough decisions and to stop asking my mom to pick my shirts for me.

Thank you! Hari Om!

Hari Om! My name is Ameya Sriram and I chose Chapter 3, Verses 8 and 9.

Niyatam Kuru Karmatvam Karmajayo Hi Akarmanah

Sharira yatrapichate Na Prasadhyetha Akarmanah

YagnyarthaatKarmanonyatra LokoyamKarmabandhana

Tadartham Karma Kounteya Mukta sangha Samachara

You should thus perform your prescribed Vedic duties since action is superior to inaction. By ceasing activity, even your bodily maintenance will not be possible.

The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice. Do thou, therefore, O Son of Kunti, perform action for that sake alone, free from all attachments.

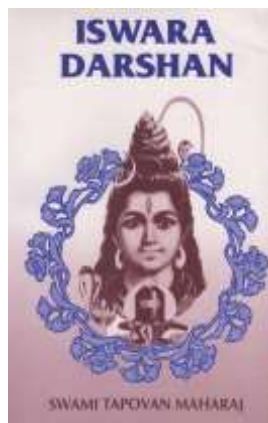
Sacrifice always seems to have negative connotations. It means giving something up or losing something. But we are not sacrificing. We are doing Yagna. In Swami Chinmayananda's words, Yagna is a social, national, communal or personal activity into which the individual is ready to pour himself forth entirely in the spirit of service and dedication. In performing that act of Yagna, you are helping the world around you. The caveat is that if you perform the Yagna with a selfish desire of achieving enlightenment, you are losing something. You are losing not only self-improvement but the perspective of living in a world connected to you. Since everything is Brahman including your Self; by hurting yourself by being selfish, you are hurting everything around you are right back where you started. To me, these verses are reassuring. I am always worried about what actions I should take and what the right decision is. But these verses are telling me two things. Do good and be kind. Not only is it a perfectly achievable goal; it is the most that anyone can do. So I am not lesser than for not being able to do anything else. By being kind to myself, I am doing good to the rest of the world. By being good to the rest of the world, I am doing good to myself. I am often very hard on myself and don't allow myself to be proud about who I am or what I have done. I am always thinking about what else I should be doing. I can't afford to rest; everything is leap years ahead of me. I have to keep moving. This attitude is especially prevalent during college admission season. However, these verses tell me that I am never unworthy because I am always doing some action whether it is breathing or sleeping and that is a good divine thing to do. Understanding that my acceptance of myself leads to help for everyone else means that I can be selfless and still help myself. These verses do not mean that one should forget about oneself and give everything you have to a greater cause. It just means to forget about yourself and give yourself room to breathe because that is righteous too.

Hari Om! Thank you.

Messages from an autobiography of a Mahatma -16 (Iswara Darshan)

Sitaram Kowtha

Editor's Note: *In this series, selected excerpts from the book "Iswara Darshan" by Pujya Swami Tapovan Maharaj of Uttar Kashi, are provided by Sitaram Kowthaji to inspire the students of Vedanta to delve deeply into the glories of a mahatma who inspired our sadhguru, Swami Chinmayananda.*



Part 2 Chapter 6 – Visit to Amarnath and Back to Rishikesh

Leaving Sri Sarada Temple

Swamiji spent a month and a half at Sri Sarada Temple upon a Himalayan peak in Kashmir, experiencing the unbroken joy of God-realization. Having decided to make a pilgrimage to Amarnath, Swamiji bowed down at the shrine of Sri Sarada Devi and came out of the temple with the Brahmacharin. He found a large number of people including the brahmin family waiting to bid him goodbye. With great love, they accompanied him to Krishna Ganga, thinking of those happy days associated with him. The women folk also came out of their homes watching the departing holy man with tearful eyes.

Even brutes return love for love, then why wonder if men and women are moved by affection? Ordinary people, even while they hate, wish for friendship and love from others, just as people indulging in sin, look for fruits of merit (punya). Love all. Love everything. Love always. To make this world a place of love, there is no other way.

Journey to Amarnath

The path took him through Rudravani and Ksheerabhavani, and he reached Srinagar. He noted that the people in this region – Hindus and Muslims, lived

amiably. He also noted that customs have taken hold and have enslaved people. Customs are made for man; man is not made for customs. The enslavement to customs is the source of inequality.

Boat rides in Srinagar reminded him of Kerala. Lovely lakes and beautiful landscapes all around. He stayed in a tent adjacent to Durganag Mutt. Many sannyasins who were on pilgrimage to Amarnath gathered at the Mutt. Among the sannyasins, only a few are students of scriptures, most were outward focused. Even among those who were sincere students, only a very few turned their gaze inward, towards realization of God.

Swamiji's journey took him along Dugdha Nag river. The trek was difficult, but his needs for food and rest were taken care of, thanks to Bengali and Kerala sannyasins who had met Swamiji previously. He reached lake Seshanag. He took bath in the milky white lake, which was beautiful, extensive and cold. Surrounding the location were snow-covered peaks. Next day they reached a famous plain called Panchatarangini. No eye will be satiated with the beauty of its appearance neither can words capture its loveliness. Next day, they reached Amarnath cave on the banks of river Amar Ganga.

At Amarnath

Swamiji had darshan of the Lord of Amarnath, who confers immortality to man in the form of frozen ice and felt blessed. He was filled with wonder at the sights of the beautiful object – frozen ice forms of Gods and Goddesses, around him. The enlightened ones say that even though the world of movable (sentient) and immovable (insentient) is unreal, as the forms of the Supreme Self, they are real. So, even a blade of grass deserves our respect. For those who have understood the truth of the saying 'Ishavasyam idam sarvam', all this is perfectly clear.

Return Journey to Rishikesh

Swamiji made his way back to Srinagar, and upon reaching its outskirts, he decided to go to Gautamnag and stay at a Mutt that was reputed for serving Sannyasins. Upon reaching the Mutt, he was welcomed and provided a place to rest. While engaged in general conversation, one serious minded Pandit interjected, "from your very look it is clear that you are a very learned man. Please explain to

us therefore, what is meant by ‘Kalathayapadishtam’”. Swamiji, annoyed by such impertinence, said, “alas, no place seems to be altogether free from fellows proud of their bits of learning, perverts whose intelligence has been dimmed by pride. They have no tact, no patience and no peace of mind. It is not yet ten minutes since I reached here after an exhaustive travel. Yet you seem intent on bothering me with such discussion. What I want now is not questions and answers and debate and argument.” The Pundit withdrew and served fruits to Swamiji. He begged for Swamiji’s forgiveness. The next day Swamiji, after lunch, with the Pundit seated near him, began discussion on Kalathayapadishtam. This topic is included among the fallacies in Nyaya Shastra. We are familiar with it under the term ‘Badhita’ or refutation. It is defined as ‘Kala Neeta iti’. And then Swamiji expounded on comments by Vatsyayana and Udyotkara. Thus, he satisfied the questioner.

Swamiji spent a few days there and taking bath in Guatam-Kunda. He then made his way to Srinagar and stayed in Narayan Mutt. After some time in Srinagar, he traveled to Jambu nagar by motor coach. He stayed at Raghunath Temple. Hoping to get bhiksha from the temple, Swamiji sat in a corner of the temple. There was no sign of food as noon time came and went. Swamiji remained seated and left it up to Sri Ramachandraji to meet his need. Around 4PM, a householder with some women folk prepared food and served Swamiji. It is a common experience of the faithful that the merciful lord fulfills wishes of his true devotees in unexpected and mysterious ways.

Swamiji, traveling alone soon reached Rishikesh by train. Just as ugly things become dear to us through long association, so also, lonely travel, without home, relations or money becomes dear to us through long practice. Living in solitary forest without help, and traveling without valuable possessions are trifles and within easy reach. But, establishment in the Self is far more difficult and beyond easy achievement. A man may stay on a peak or a holy teertha or in his own home or in the village. It is immaterial. What really matters is whether the mind remains fixed on the Supreme Self night and day. “These saintly men live in solitude without any possession of their own. Blessed indeed are they.” So do the men in the town praise such sadhus. But they never care to examine if the sadhus are devoted to God. Wild animals like bears too live in caves in the forest with no possession of their own. Hence O man, forget not your True Self. Try to remember it at all times. It is that alone that shines through all creatures movable and immovable. It alone is

the way to cross the sea of worldliness and enjoy supreme bliss. Everything else is an illusion.

Back in Rishikesh

Swamiji took up residence in a dilapidated hut associated with Sr Ramana Ashram and served by a devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Sri Govindagiri. Soon Swamiji moved to a nearby hut and had it rebuilt with the help of other sadhus. There, he resumed a routine of taking bath in Ganga and spending time in deep contemplation. At the request of sadhus belonging to Sri Ramakrishna order and a few others, he started teaching Upanishads and other texts on Vedanta. At the same time, he regularly attended Bhashyas on Brihadaranyaka Upanishad at Kailas Ashram.

Thus, he spent many days mostly in solitude. He took bath in benumbingly cold Ganga, went out for bhiksha for one meal a day, refused to accept any comfort offerings, stayed silent, and avoided feasts and other opportunities accorded to sadhus.

Observing his discipline, many started calling him respectfully as ‘Viraktan’ – one with no attachments. Alas! How can people at a single glance judge whether one is attached or detached in spirit? Still, it is a habit with people to form an opinion of others with startling suddenness. These judgments do not affect the man of true renunciation.

Swamiji’s fame gradually started to spread. The most prominent among the sannyasins of Rishikesh at the time, for their erudition and character, were Sri Advaitananda Swami of Gujarat, Sri Swayanjyothi Swami, Sri Sivananda Swami of Tamilnad and Sri Krishnacharya Swami, a famed Sanskrit scholar. They became Swamiji’s intimate friends. Among them, Swamiji had met the famous Swami Sivananda, president and founder of Divine Life Society earlier and developed admiration for the service he had undertaken. Now they regularly engaged in conversations.

Is there a Jivan mukta state?

Some accept the notion of Jivan Mukti, others do not. What is Swamiji’s view?

Swamini: “I am happy, I am unhappy. My son is dead. My money is lost. I am in great straits.” Such states of worldliness is common to all unenlightened ones. Similarly, “I am not of the world; I am the eternal, ever pure, Self-conscious, and ever free Brahman; in me there are no joys or sorrows resulting from worldliness”, this

state of emancipation is experience by all the enlightened ones in this physical existence itself. This being the case, it is not possible to deny the state of Jivan Mukta (the liberated state while in body) even as it is impossible to deny the state of bondage.

No pleasures and pain – are they mere words?

Swamiji: he who has no feelings of 'my' and 'mine', and has realized the Self, cannot have pleasures and pain as before. After all, it is the attachment to sensuous objects that cause bondage resulting in pleasure and pain.

Are they not affected by gentle breeze or fire, etc.?

Swamiji: Who can prevent that? So long as one is in the body, he cannot but be subject to the laws of nature. He cannot avoid agreeable and disagreeable sensations altogether. What is suggested here is not the total destruction of sorrow, but their reduction only.

If that is so, how can one reach the state of liberation which is absolutely free from pain and sorrow, and which is full of bliss?

Swamiji: True, one cannot, in the worldly sense. But, from the point of view of reality, a knower of Brahman reaches the state of liberation, free from sorrow. It is in pursuance of that view of reality that Savvagna Muni, and advocate of Avidya Vada (Brahman is the locus and the object of ignorance), places "Sadyo-Mukti" (immediate liberation) in the place of Jivan Mukti. In spite of this, if the ancient Acharyas approvingly accepted the idea of Jivan Mukti, it was because they realized the defects that would follow from non-acceptance of it.

Swamiji's following grew and he no longer had to seek bhiksha and often there would be surplus after feeding other sadhus. So, Swamiji would have the excess food delivered to a feeding house. The fact that so long as he remained in Rishikesh, he was supplied unasked with agreeable food in large quantities, shows the devotion of the residents of the place to sadhus and their strong faith in them.

Sri K. Krishna Nair, Editor of Manorama

Swamiji received a letter from Sri Krishna Nair, editor of Manorama, "The printing of the first part of the book on Kailas Yatra has started. We wish to prefix Swamiji's photo and an account of Swamiji's life to the book. So, please send us, as early as possible, a copy of the photo and a brief sketch of your life". After his pilgrimage to Mount Kailas, whenever he got time, Swamiji had written

brief accounts of his journey, in simple language interspersing moral and spiritual discussions between interesting descriptions and sent them to the editor of Manorama, to whom he was bound by many ties before he became a sannyasin, for publication in his paper.

Swamiji declined to send the photo or a sketch of his life, "It does not seem necessary to add a sketch of the author's life or affix his photo". For the benefit of the public, it is good to publish the book."

Onwards to Uttar Kashi

As winter came to a close, Swamiji decided to travel to Uttar Kashi. At Uttar Kashi, he resumed stay at Kailas Mutt. He started teaching some aspirants books on Vedanta. He often sat on a rock in quiet contemplation, with many thoughts passing his mind.

Teachers of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, being afraid of sorrow and pain have propagated the view "Worldly life is of the nature of sorrow and pain. So, it must be given up. Man can liberate himself only by renunciation". But why should man be afraid of sorrow and pain? If there are sorrowful experiences in worldly life, why not remain in the world and boldly fight them and over them? Simply by refusing to engage oneself in worldly activity, one cannot get rid of sorrow. What will be the state of this world if, out of the fear or sorrow, the world renounces all action?

Sorrow assails him who is doing penance in the forest as well as him who remains at home attending to his daily duties. Even the paramahansa cannot escape it. So long as one is in his body, he cannot escape this altogether. To flee sorrow is merely to waste one's life. It is everyone's duty to do his might to make this sorrowful world a place of joy and happiness. That alone can make the world happier and nobler. One should not flee from sorrow and take refuge in sannyasa. The ancient Acharyas enjoyed Sannyasa for far nobler purposes.

A Malayali Sannyasin named Sri Sankarananda Bharati, formed friendship with Swamiji. He was devoted to Guruvayurappan (Lord Krishna of Guruvaryur in Kerala) and to Sri Ramana Maharishi. At his request Swamiji composed a hymn of five stanzas dedicated to Lord Krishna.

It was winter again. Swamiji decided to travel to snow covered regions. To the north of Uttar Kashi, among the high peaks, there is a famous lake, Dundithaal. He decided to take a bath on a full moon day in the month of Thula (generally October-November) and set out to Dundithaal in a company of few other sannyasins. While the distance can be covered in a couple of days, the path was difficult. A pathway had to be made as the party

presence of wild animals such as tigers and bears. They also saw beautiful birds they had never seen before. There were arresting landscapes of ineffable beauty in every direction. All this filled Swamiji's mind with joy. Thus proceeding with courage and patience, and enduring many hardships, the party reached the holy lake. The lake was circular, surrounded by mountains on all sides. Swamiji spent the night at the lake amidst sights of moon and stars. He took the opportunity to enter into deep meditation.

As the party started their descent back to Uttar Kashi, they were pelted with hail. The return journey became treacherous. Once they reached safety of a village along their way, they realized that barely survived from the jaws

गोपी गोकुलमालपत्सुमुरली सप्तस्वरैर्हर्षयन् ।
 गोपी मण्डलमध्यगः स्मितमुखो माधुर्यवीक्षकः ॥
 गोपालश्चिकुरोल्लसच्छिखि शिखण्डा खण्डदीप्तिश्चिरम् ।
 गोपालाश्रमविश्रमी विजयतां विश्वैकमुग्धाकृतिः ॥१॥
 काशी कुञ्जवती परंचभवतो भूपद्विषो भूरियम् ।
 यत्रास्ते खलु शंकरस्तत्र पदाम्भोजैकभक्तः स्वयम् ॥
 त्वत्पादाम्बुज संभवा पुलिनवत्येषा हि सा जाह्नवी ।
 वृन्दायामिव राधिकेश रमतामत्रैव गोपीयुतः ॥२॥
 शुद्धबुद्धमबुद्धिगम्यमचलं यद्वस्तु वेदान्तिनाम् ।
 तत्त्वं कृष्ण किशोरविग्रह विभो तत्त्वं न किञ्चित्परम् ॥
 राधावल्लभ रामराष्ट्र विलसद्वातेशमूर्तिर्भवान् ।
 नेहेऽन्यं पुरुषार्थमात्मनि सदा संक्रीडमानोऽस्त्वलम् ॥३॥
 बिभ्राणोऽनरुणं शरीरमरुणे स्थित्वापि तं भासयम् ।
 लोकानां गुरुरप्यगौरवनरैः क्रीडंश्च बालक्रमैः ॥
 सच्च त्यच्च हि यस्यरूपमपि च प्रच्छेदि दुश्चेतसाम् ।
 श्रीलः श्रीरमणः श्रितामरतरुः कृष्णः स पुष्पातु नः ॥४॥
 भट्टश्रीरथविल्वमङ्गलयतिः प्रख्यातभक्ताग्रगौ ।
 दृष्ट्वा यादृशरूपमक्षिजनुषोः साफल्यमासेदतुः ॥
 तद्रूपं तव दिव्यदिव्यमनिलाधीश प्रभो कृष्ण मे ।
 साक्षादक्षिपथं गमिष्यति कदा चित्तंच वद्विष्यते ॥५॥

made progress. Villagers they encountered along the way tried to stop them for fear that Gods of Dundithaal will be angry and rain down hail and storm upon them and destroy their paddy fields. Swamiji observed that superstition is not limited to such mountain folk. Once they reached the other side of the forest, they noticed

of death.

Later, Swamiji made a trip to Jamunotri. After four days of journey they reached their destination. Swamiji went into the village to seek bhiksha. After going to several homes, he finally reached one home where an old lady

offered him wheat flour after prostrating to him. She explained that at that later hour of the day, everyone in the house was out on errands. She suggested to Swamiji to cook and eat. Swamiji replied that he did not know how to cook. The old lady got angry, “you do not know how to cook, but at the same time you wish to eat! Though you are unskilled in cooking, you are at least skilled in eating.” Administering such a loving rebuke, she engaged herself in cooking, preparing some food and fed him. The sweetness of such loving rebuke and the ambrosial food is as uncommon as unforgettable.

Swamiji enjoyed the sights at Jamunotri, took bath in the warm waters of Tatakunda and worshipped Yamuna (Kalindi). Soon thereafter, he returned to Uttar Kashi and decided to spend the winter in Rishikesh. At Rishikesh he was warmly received by Swami Sri Govindagiri of Ramanashram. From then on, he spent winters in Rishikesh and would stay at Ramanashram. In addition to his penance, he would conduct teaching sessions for those aspiring to study Vedanta and engaged in spiritual discussions with other Sannyasins.

Around this time, Swamiji received a letter from the editor of Manorama. Swamiji’s writing on Kailas Yatra, Part I was published and was well received. Swamiji was provided with copies of the same. Learning that the book was selected as a nondetailed text in Kerala schools gave Swamiji sense of gratitude that his effort to serve his mother tongue was not in vain. Swamiji started to write in his simple, elegant form, on his visits to temples and places in Himalayas. These were later published under the title, “Himagiri Viharam”. (Chinmaya Mission has published the same in English under the title, “Wandering in the Himalayas”).

Swamiji continued to write in Malayalam – commentary on “Bhakti Darshan” by muni Sandhilya; translations of Bhashyam (commentary) on Isha, Kena and Katha Upanishads by Sri Sankara.

The Knower of Brahman

A Sannyasin’s life is unattached and free. To people, attachment brings bondage, detachment liberation. So, by realizing man’s true nature, he should break off inner attachment; by the practice of no-possession, he should break off external attachment as well.

A knower of Truth, who indulges in activities, will be detached in spirit but externally he gets bounded; he loses his freedom. So long as one retains one’s body, one cannot sever all external attachments. A man can renounce everything else, but he cannot renounce his body. Yet, by

the observance of non-possession, he can escape from most of the ties. In the measure of his renunciation and freedom, he approaches his ideal as a Knower of Truth.

Some hold that one should engage oneself in activities for the good of the world even if hereby he is to suffer distractions and bondage. Other say that one should enter into the unbroken state of Samadhi (where mind is fully merged in the Self) leaving aside all external activities. According to the qualifications of the aspirant, both these views are sound and are not contradictory.

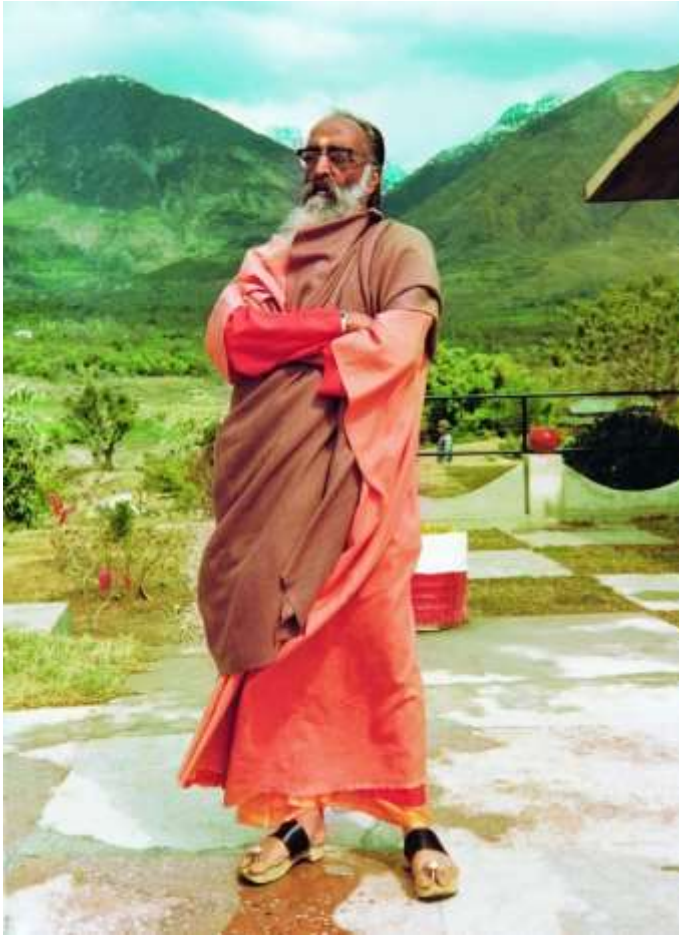
The knower of Brahman, who has broken off all ties, has no fear of bondage whatever be his activities. He remains as unattached as lotus leaf in water. As Self alone is the cause of joy, he remains happy in the Self, free from love, hate, fear and all kinds of excitements. The steadfast man in whose eyes pleasure and pain, friend and enemy, honor and dishonor are all the same, is a knower of Brahman. He who has conquered the senses and made them his slaves and become their master is the knower of Brahman. One who lives in the present without joy or sorrow, without thinking of the past or the future, is regarded by the learned as a knower of Brahman. He is a knower of Truth who remains passive as a mere witness leaving the senses to their activities. He alone sees truly who sees the eternal, unattached, pure, wise and free Self in every creature and everything. This direct vision is the vision of God. He who sees God becomes God. He is the knower of the Self.

Who that has become one with the Supreme Self by direct perception and is absolutely desireless, will relinquish the world and life of activity for fear of attachment? Whether he lives in meditation or engages himself in action, it is all the same. Since he sees everything homogeneous, he cannot fall from the state of Supreme Peace.

To Be Continued

Gurudev Uvacha

Inspiring Quotes from Pujya Gurudev Chinmayananda



[Editor's Note: Continuing the series of inspiring quotes from Gurudev sourced from the weekly Chinmayam announcements].

Krishna's advocacy...."right action and conscious resistance to all positive evil"."Active resistance to Evil" is the central idea in the doctrine expounded by Krishna in the Geeta.

No amount of study is of any avail. Fulfill the reading with meditation. Through meditation crawl up to the arena of Joy and Peace. There in the Topmost Tower we shall meet away from all disturbances. Come, I am waiting for you.

The Religion of Vedanta calls upon man to rediscover himself to be nothing short of God Himself.

The Blissful Self is not the tearful Jiva!

To mistake the idol for God or the form of Guru for the Infinite is to mistake the container for the contents....

Spirituality begins when you commence 'non co-operation' with your mind.