

Chinmaya Smrithi



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

Volume 29, Number 6, November 2019



Darkness cannot be where light is – Swami Chinmayananda

Foreword: Swamiji's Message



Editor's Note: [Our beloved resident Swamiji, Swami Dheerananda addressed the attendees at the Annual Fund Raiser held in Maryland on November 16, 2019. Please find below excerpts from his short address to the members in which he thanked Swami Sharananda and reminded members to donate generously].

Swami Sharananda in his address just now said "Divinize Your Thoughts" as the one solution to all problems. I would add to it that he is the one solution to all your problems. "Sharana" meaning Surrender. Surrender to the one Divinity behind all your thoughts. Then your Yoga and Kshema are taken care of. Lord Krishna has himself provided this assurance in the Bhagvad Gita (verse 9:22). But for this to happen, one has to surrender one's thoughts, words and actions unto Him. Recognize Him behind every thought, word and action. Once you recognize the divine, the divine alone shall flow through you.

The recognition of the divine is important and can make miracles. Reminding the members that the outstanding loan for the Chinmaya Somnath building is currently 9.1 million, Swamiji persuaded the members to donate money so that our mission can continue to invest in our children who are our future. Using his typical sense of humor, Swamiji told the audience that he already has the money; he has just kept it in the pockets of the members and they should feel free to donate it back to the mission. At a minimum, members should make sure that the interest on member loans is reduced which itself would amount to almost half a million dollars. He reminded members that if this divine thought comes to them, they should recognize "Chinmaya", the divinity behind this thought.

Verse 9:22 from the Bhagvad Gita

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

*ananyāśh chintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣhām nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣhemam vahāmyaham*

Meaning: To those men who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, to those ever self-controlled, I secure for them that which is not already possessed (Yoga) by them, and preserve for them what they already possess (KHEMA).

Calendar and Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

- December 7th: Geeta Jayanti and Tapovan Jayanti at Chinmayam Maryland from 5 to 6 p.m.
- December 26th – 29th: Geeta Jnana Yagna on Bhagwat Gita Chapter 9 Verses 1-17 by Swami Dheerananda at Chinmaya Somnath.
- January 1st: New Year celebrations at Chinmayam and at Chinmaya Somnath including Vishnu Sahasranamavali and Paduka Puja
- March 21 -22: Geeta chanting competition at all three centers.

Study Groups

- Please contact Sri Ravi Ravichandran ji by email at ravi5211@yahoo.com , if you are interested in forming 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 – Jan 2020, are due by December 31, 2019
- 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

Editorial Staff: (smrithi-editor@chinmayadc.org)

Editor: K.A. Lakshmanan

Advisers: Sri Raju Chidambaram, Acharya Vilasiniji, Pujya Swami Dheeranandaji. Sitaram Kowtha

BV students – Bhuvan Devarsu

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

News & Tidbits

Diwali Celebrations

Diwali was celebrated on November 2nd at Chinmayam. As part of the celebrations, members brought in a variety of dishes (56) as part of the Chhapan Bhog Govardhan Pooja. Members danced some Garba. Swamiji gave an inspiring message on the significance of Diwali which was then followed by Mahaprasad.

registration, membership, Bala Vihar, enrichment, Guru Dakshina, event sponsorship, etc. are recognized towards the fulfillment of the pledge.

Please make your pledge today !

Annual Fund Raiser

Swami Sharananda gave an inspiring key note speech at the Annual Fund Raiser held in Maryland on November 16th. Speaking on the topic of finding the one solution to all the problems, Swamiji advised us to look deeply into the divinity which is the source of all our thoughts. Recognizing the divinity behind all the thoughts will help us find happiness. The CHYKs presented a moving presentation on their interactions with Swami Dheerananda who was recognized by the members for his spiritual guidance and encouragement to CMWRC over the past 30 years. Pictures from the AFR can be accessed here at the link below.
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/DHhbZkKbfmjhjR3w8>

Global Satsang

The global head of Chinmaya Mission Swami Swaroopananda conducted the first ever Global Satsang on October 3rd. He reached out to Chinmaya Mission members across the globe and gave an overview of the exciting projects being undertaken. He also reached out to members to sign up for volunteering for projects so that they can continue to take the good work of the mission forward.

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

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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

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YOGA &
MEDITATION



LANGUAGES



Classes starts from September 2018

VISIONARY ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS FOR
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT & VALUE EDUCATION

Classes are offered for children and adults. We provide an ideal environment for integrated physical, intellectual and spiritual development.

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



CHINMAYA MISSION WASHINGTON REGIONAL CENTER



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**

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



Celebrating Gita Jayanti and Tapovan Jayanti

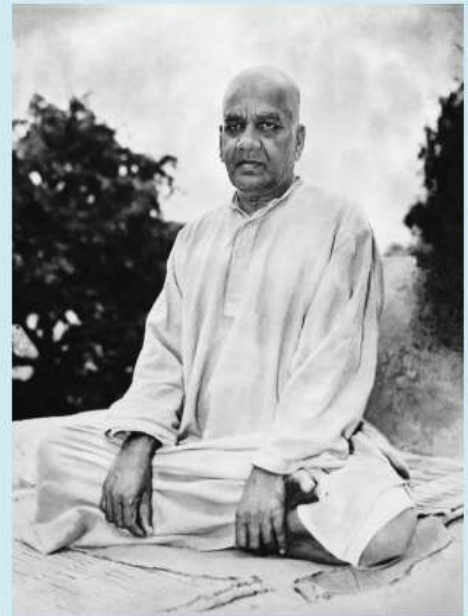
Chanting of Tapovan Shatkam and Chanting of
Bhagwad Gita
Chapter 9 Verses 1-17

Prasad from Swamiji after chanting

Date: Saturday December 7th
Time: 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Venue: Chinmayam

Requesting all Summer Camp children to participate.



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)

CHINMAYAM
46 NORWOOD ROAD
SILVER SPRING, MD 20905
MARCH 21, 2020
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Registration Fee: Individual \$25 | Family \$50
Register Today!
cmwrc.chinmayadc.org/geetachanting



CHINMAYA MISSION® WASHINGTON REGIONAL CENTER



BHAGAVAD GEETA JNANA YAJNA

(continuing series of free discourses)

Geeta Chapter 9

Raja Vidya Raja Guhya Yoga
(Revealing Royal Science and Royal Secret)

By Swami Dheerananda

Swami Dheerananda has been serving the Washington DC area since 1989 when Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda placed him as the Vedanta Teacher for the Washington DC Metro area.

Chinmaya Somnath

4350 Blue Spring Dr, Chantilly, VA - 20151

** Activities for Kids Ages 4+ are planned during the discourses **

DEC 26 - 29, 2019

7.00 PM - 8.30 PM



CHINMAYA MISSION® WASHINGTON REGIONAL CENTER



VISHNU SAHASRA NAMAVALI, LAKSHMI PUJA & GURU PADUKA PUJA

Wednesday, January 1st 2020

10.00 am - 12.00 pm

Chinmaya Somnath

4350 Blue Spring Dr, Chantilly, VA - 20151





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://chinmayaaradhana2020.org/flyer/>

Website: The website <https://chinmayaaradhana2020.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://chinmayaaradhana2020.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



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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

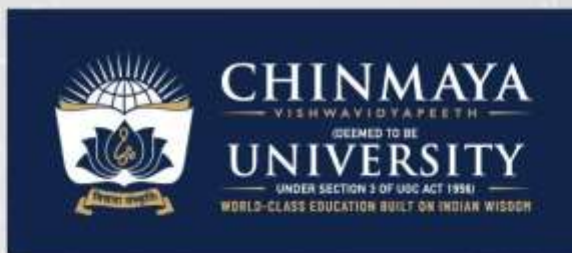
Swami Advayananda's presentation : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AO9ts04tSM8&feature=youtu.be>

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/>



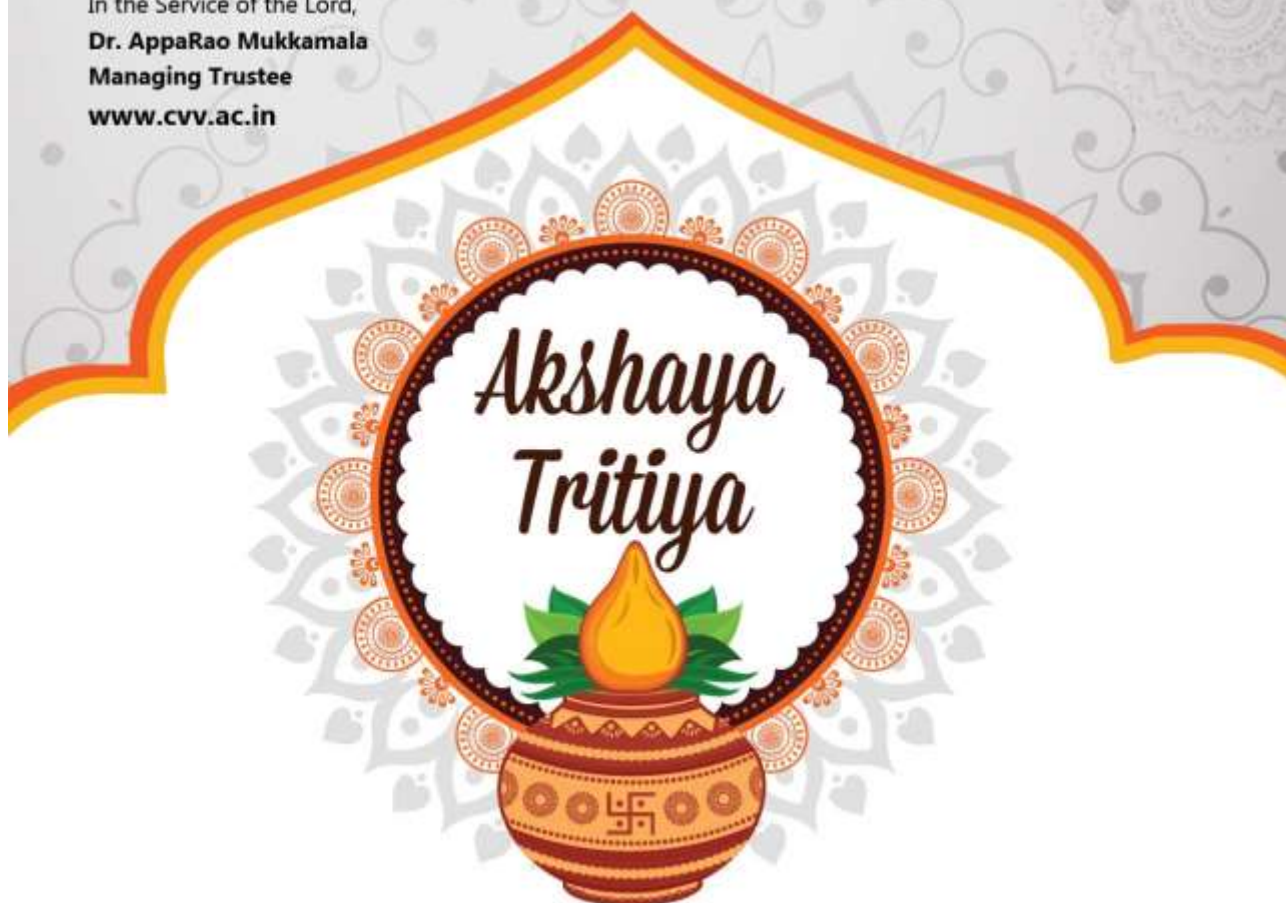
Greetings from Chinmaya Vishwavidyapeeth on the auspicious day of AkshayaTritiya. This sacred day marked the beginning of Satya Yuga and it is said that all sat-karmas undertaken on this auspicious day become Akshaya (अक्षय) that is 'imperishable, eternal' in the sense of 'prosperity, hope, joy and success'.


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
Managing Trustee
www.cvv.ac.in








THE DAY OF LIGHTS!

May all your thoughts be trimmed
to light up in cheer and joy,
and burn steadily dipped in the oil of devotion.
Once a year we must check up our thoughts -
some must be smoky, some gone off.
Refill with the oil and re-light with
the Light of all lights.

- SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA

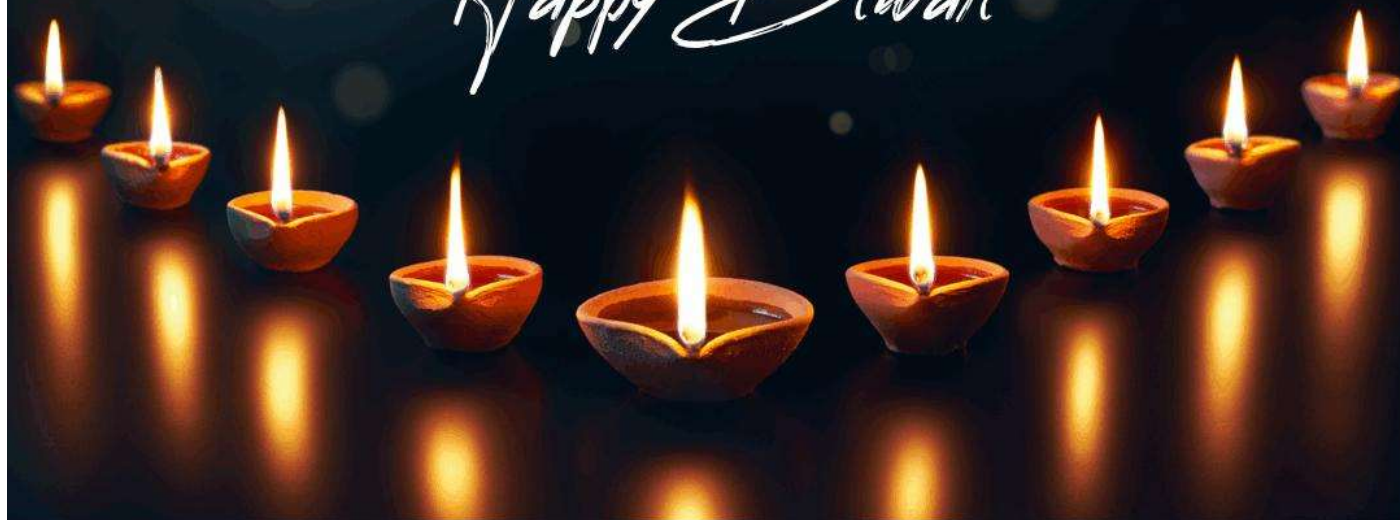






Let the world be lit with your love...

Happy Diwali



SWAMI SWAROOPANANDA





CHINMAYA MISSION® WASHINGTON REGIONAL CENTER



Blessed Self!
Jai Jai Jagadeeshwara! Salutations!

Deepavali Greetings!

*Let Us Celebrate Deepavali by Revering The One
Light of Life Shining in All Life Forms!*



Hari Om! Hari Om!
Unto Sri Gurudev!
Swami Dheerananda



Subscribe to Inspiring Chinmaya Mission Magazines

Mananam Series of Books These are inviting and engaging series of books that go into depth into one selected spiritual theme per edition (Truth, Compassion, Education, Fear- face it, Science of Sciences, and so on) and bring perspectives on it from different thinkers, writers and traditions of the world. The recent editions of Mananam have focused on the life, teachings, inspiration and legacy of Sri Gurudev, in honor of his birth centenary.

Subscription: please write to editor@mananam.org. Current and past editions can be purchased at our bookstores.)

Tapovan Prasad Subscription (print version or E-version). Tapovan Prasad brings out each month - excerpts from teachings of Swami Tapovan Maharaj, Sri Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda, Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda and CM acharyas. In addition, it captures the pulse of Chinmaya Mission world-wide with reports on happenings and upcoming events.

Tapovan Prasad Subscription Instructions:

1. Please go to www.tapovanprasad.com website
2. Click on 'Subscribe-advertise-donate' and select 'Print version
3. Subscription - Overseas'
4. Choose the required subscription package and then Click on 'Add to Cart' and then 'Go to checkout'
5. Please provide username, password, email...details, etc...and proceed.
6. When you click on Axis Bank / CCAvenue payment gateway, enter details and complete the process. (Do revert in case of any problem)

Please consider Other Chinmaya Magazines for your subscriptions:

- Bala Vihar magazine for children, parents and Bala Vihar teachers. subscription link: http://www.chinmayamission.com/balvihar-subscription-overseas/#.WE_LYvkrJhE
- Chinmaya Udghosh - magazine for youth - appropriate for 13-30 year olds subscription link: http://www.chinmayamission.com/our-magazines/chinmaya-udghosh/#.WE_MBPrJhE

Brahmacharis joining Chinmaya Mission West



Brahmacharini Archana Chaitanya grew up in Bentonville, Arkansas as a Balavihar student. In college, Brni. Archana Chaitanya was an active member of the local Chinmaya Yuva Kendra and attended the first batch of the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) America in 2013 under Swami Sarveshananda. Thereafter, she served on the CHYK West Steering Committee and taught Balavihar classes in Bentonville and Dallas-Fort Worth. Brni. Archana Chaitanya attended the 17th Residential Vedanta Course at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya in Mumbai, India under Swami Bodhatmananda. Upon completion of the course this year, she has been posted to serve at CM Dallas Fort Worth. Brni. Archana can be reached at archana@chinmayamission.org



Brahmacharini Shuchita Chaitanya graduated from Austin College with a degree in Spanish & Biology. She then completed Master of Public Health from University of Texas School of Public Health, Houston. She has worked in the research and teaching fields. Brni. Shuchita was a Bala Vihar student in Orlando, a CHYK member in Houston as well as Dallas, and completed the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) second batch under Swami Sarveshananda. Upon completion of the 17th Residential Vedanta Course at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya in Powai, Mumbai under Swami Bodhatmananda this year, Brni. Shuchita Chaitanya has been posted to serve at CM Austin. Brni. Shuchita can be reached at shuchita@chinmayamission.org



Born and raised in Dallas, Texas, Brahmachari Hari Chaitanya has been associated with CMDFW since he was a Kindergartener at Chinmaya Saaket. After graduating from high school, he attended the University of Texas at Dallas and was an active member of CHYK Dallas.

In 2013, Br. Hari attended the first batch of the Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) America under Swami Sarveshananda and thereafter served on the CHYK West Steering Committee, where he coordinated Junior CHYK initiatives. As a CHYK, Br. Hari taught Balavihar classes at Chinmaya Saaket for six years. Upon completion of the 17th Residential Vedanta Course at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya in Mumbai under Swami Bodhatmananda this year, Br. Hari has been posted to serve at CMDFW. Br. Hari can be reached at hari@chinmayamission.org

12th Vedanta Course at Sandeepany Himalayas Deeksha



Swamins, Brahmacharins and Members of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide

Hari Om!

The 12th Vedanta Course at Sandeepany Himalayas, Sidhbari from 2017-2019 was successfully completed, on the auspicious Ekadashi day, 8th Nov 2019, under the Resident Acharya, Brahmachari Visharad Chaitanya.

In the august presence of Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, and Swami Subodhananda, the students received their initiation at the Brahmacharya Deeksha Ceremony.

It gives me great joy to announce their new names below:

Students' Old Name	New Name
Brahmacharinis	
Anita	Brni. Kalindee Chaitanya
Ritu	Brni. Shambhavee Chaitanya
Brahmacharis	
Ravi	Br. Anshuman Chaitanya
Manoj	Br. Ashutosh Chaitanya
Yogesh	Br. Pundareek Chaitanya
Rasananda	Br. Aniket Chaitanya
Suyodhan	Br. Niranjana Chaitanya
Vaishnava Das	Br. Nandan Chaitanya

Photographs of the students of the 12th Vedanta Course are attached.

May the grace of God and the blessings of our entire Guru Parampara be with them, on their path to the ultimate goal of Self-realisation. May their selfless, dedicated seva offered at the holy feet of Pujya Gurudev, benefit us all.

Love

At His feet

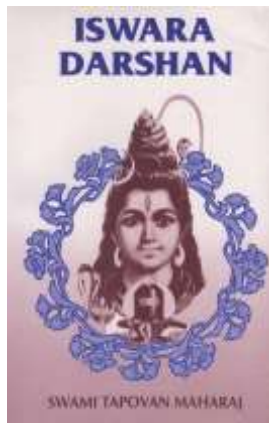
Swaroopananda



Messages from an autobiography of a Mahatma -15 (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 5 – Kumbha Mela 1927 at Rishikesh, Visit to Kashmir

It was spring 1927 and Swamiji had spent the first winter at Uttar Kashi, calling it a spiritual triumph.

Kumbha Mela

It was the time of Kumbha Mela at Haridwar. Hundreds of thousands of people belonging to all stations of life were converging on the holy spot. Generally, people attend these melas either because others do so or because of the curiosity to see extraordinary things. Few indeed are those who good people who do so out of sincere piety or out of desire to associate themselves with good people.

At a Kumbha Mela, one can see men and women roaming about uttering exclamations of wonder. Not knowing what is good, what is evil, what is one's duty and what is not, people labor under the illusion that entertainment and amusement produce good. Some people who esteem themselves as men of 'dharma' install the devil adharma on the throne of dharma and worship him.

Really, the first thing one has to achieve is the ability to discriminate between dharma and adharma. Truth, self-control, ahimsa and other values should be followed. Only then dharma will arise. For lack of noble acharyas,

and proper dharmic teaching, the dissemination of dharma has suffered seriously.

Dharma is not for the pleasure of the doer; nor is the doer for the pleasure of dharma

We need not follow a loathsome custom simply because it is ancient. Only after due testing and necessary modification should one accept a custom. This is the principle to be borne in the mind.

At Kumbha Mela

Swamiji set out to Rishikesh in a company of sannyasins who had become his friends and the Brahmachain. Upon arriving, he initially stayed at Kailas ashram and then moved to a solitary hut owned by Dakshin Natya Mandali. With people converging at Haridwar, it seemed as if Rishikesh and Haridwar had become one large town. As the day of the holy bath drew near, he made his way to Haridwar and took up residence at Kailas ashram there.

The whole place was overcrowded. The environment that distracts all the senses. It is not congenial to a peace-loving sannyasins who had spent years in solitude. Even a single day was intolerable to Swamiji, but he had to spend five or six days there. He visited holy places nearby and listened to discourses based on the stories of the Lord.

The sight of the crowds of sannyasins wearing their distinguishing robes and other signs and belonging to different orders filled Swamiji with interest and wonder. In the forest nearby he came across avadhutas elephantine in size. They were embodiment of dispassion. He discussed Knowledge, Supreme dispassion and renunciation with them. On another day he entered Sanatana Dharma Mahasabha. There, by sheer chance, he met old friends like Goswami. He was received with respect and seated on the dais. He listened to speeches by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and zealous missionaries like Sri Swami Jayendrapuri. He fully appreciated their ardent faith. Speeches by others did not elicit his admiration. They bore no signs of independent and logical thinking. Like the parrots they were echoing the verses of Srutis and Smritis. At noon, the sadhus were treated to a luxurious feast. Swamiji saw sights attractive and repellent, laudable and ridiculous, as

many sadhus converged on consuming the food, especially sweetmeats.

On the first day Vaisakh month, the moment of holy bath had arrived. It appeared like a sea of humans ready to take the dip. Swamiji, enduring discomforts he had never experienced before, managed to take a dip in the famous Brahmakunda. People that only those who have done immense good in past lives can have a holy bath in such a place at such a time, and the bath produces great merit. Various orders of sannyasins, wearing their distinctive apparel, led by their 'Mandaleshwars' came in spectacular processions to have their ceremonial bath in the Brahmakunda.

Sannyasins

Critics ask how many in this gathering, drawn from every nook and corner of India, are real sannyasins. Just as water naturally flows to the lower level and rests there, it is natural for one to desire to live a care-free life. Many, faced with difficulties, find life full of sorrow, seek an easy relief by taking refuge in the life of a sannyasin, which is broad as a royal road and honored by time. People do take it up generally not out of ardent desire for liberation, but out of disappointment and despair owing to failure in life. Many renounce their homes, their relations and friends and take to the life of a wandering mendicant living upon alms. This does not raise esteem for sannyasa, but only bring ridicule and contempt to the institution. Swamiji and Malaviyaji and others engaged in the discussion on distinguishing those who have taken up sannyas in ardent fervor for liberation and those who have taken it up due to disappointments in life. The discussion moved on to the current times where sannyasa is untenable and householders may develop divine qualities and engage in sannyasa in mind and spirit. If a true sannyasa chance comes to be, such a householder may then pursue the life of sannyasin.

Amritsar

After a sacred dip in Ganga, Swamiji decided to leave the crowds and head to Kashmir. He managed to get into a crowded train to Amritsar with Brahmacharin Natesan. Swamiji visited the Golden Temple. It filled his heart with wonder and joy. At the temple, he paid homage to Guru Nanak who had declared in unequivocal terms the equality of mankind, who had asserted that there is only one caste, the caste of man. It was the enlightened Guru Nanak, who like Sri Buddha, Sri Sankara, taught love, cheerfulness, renunciation and devotion of the Self; that

Vedas have not fully understood the greatness of sannyasins; and that sannyasin is God himself.

From Amritsar, Swamiji traveled to Lahore and Rawalpindi. In the bustling city of Rawalpindi, he stayed in a garden called Tapovana, where a Malayali sannyasin was staying, and spent the whole spring there. He then got into a bus heading to Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir.

Kashmir

After a two-day journey, he arrived in the capital city of Kashmir. Srinagar was spoken of as Paradise on Earth. With its measureless and rare natural beauty, his mind was intoxicated. This is dear to the lovers of sensuous pleasures, wealthy emperors and to those of dispassion and renunciation yet penniless sannyasins.

A climate congenial to physical health, plentitude of fruits and vegetables, presence of beautiful lakes and gardens, and forests full of creepers and rare flowers. The natural beauty reminds one of the Creator.

He spent three weeks in a mutt and engaged in deeper topics of Vedanta such as discussions on 'Anandamaya' as 'puccha' (tail, foundation) with scholar well versed in Sanskrit and Vedanta. Swamiji then decided to visit Saraswati temple. It is reputed to be the place where Sri Sankara had ascended the throne of omniscience.

Swamiji's journey took him through forests, snow capped mountains, as the path went along Vitasta River and then Krishna Ganga (a tributary of Vitasta). On the way he stayed at a temple in Sopur on the banks of Vitasta. Here a young Brahmin who had studied in Varanasi approached him. Seeking to engage in debate, he arrogantly challenged Swamiji with questions. Swamiji selectively responded to some with brief answer and kept silent on others. Swamiji was avoiding heated debates and debate victories. Observing the silent Swamiji, the young man realized his error and humbly prostrated. He returned with food and offered it to Swamiji with devotion.

Swamiji finally arrived at Sri Sarada Temple. For seers of God, drunken with divine love, no sorrow will appear as painful. He took up residence in a corner of the extensive and beautiful temple. He worshipped Sri Sarada, the Mother of the Universe, whose nature is knowledge and whose form is the Vedas. Brahman – birthless, undecaying, deathless; one without a second alone is true; and everything else is unreal and illusory. In the eyes of who knows the Truth, who knows that everything one worships is a different aspect of Brahman, the difference

in conception of God and Goddess, one as big and other as small loses all significance and relevancy.

A brahmin family that lived nearby provided food and care to Swamiji with sincere devotion. Swamiji passed time blissfully devoted to the great Goddess in thought, word and deed. He taught Panchadasi and other books on Vedanta and wander in the groves of trees nearby. As days turned into weeks, he continued to be served by this lone family. He felt unease at being a burden on them and contemplated that it was time to leave.

One day when he was teaching Vedanta, a young man dressed in western style, came to pay respects to Swamiji. After the satsang, they discussed spiritual and religious topics. The young man, a Punjabi millionaire and businessman, said, "It is all the merit I earned in my previous lives that gave me this chance to have your holy darshan. I needn't say that the mere sight of such holy people as you, is an elixir for people like me lying in a deadly stupor of worldliness." The young man made arrangement for adequate supplies to the brahmin family so they can continue to provide for Swamiji. Instead of old dry bread, he started to receive tasteful dishes. Thus Swamiji continued his stay and pursued arduous tapasya with complete mental concentration.

As it was the place where Sri Sankara had ascended the throne of Omniscience, Swamiji used to remember the great Acharya always. In Sankara Digvijaya, it is recounted that as Sankara approached the temple, the pundits stopped him. A debate on the holy scriptures followed. The great teacher easily won the day and ascended the throne. The thrust of the argument by Sri Sankara is:

In truth, there is no difference between Jeevatma and Paramatma; the difference is the product of adjuncts. All Vedantic texts insist upon their unity. Neither experience nor inference or anything else can disprove what is asserted in declarations such as "Tat Twam Asi". Upon realizing that rope is a rope and not a snake, the fear of misapprehension vanishes. Thus, one attains liberation from all worldly sorrows on unity of jeevatma and paramatma. Worldly sorrows and joys are the result of ignorance. Only true knowledge will eliminate them, once and for all. Worship, however long, work, however hard, cannot destroy it. Vedanta declares that true knowledge is the means of liberation; ignorance is the natural superimposition of the contraries: subject and object, matter and spirit.

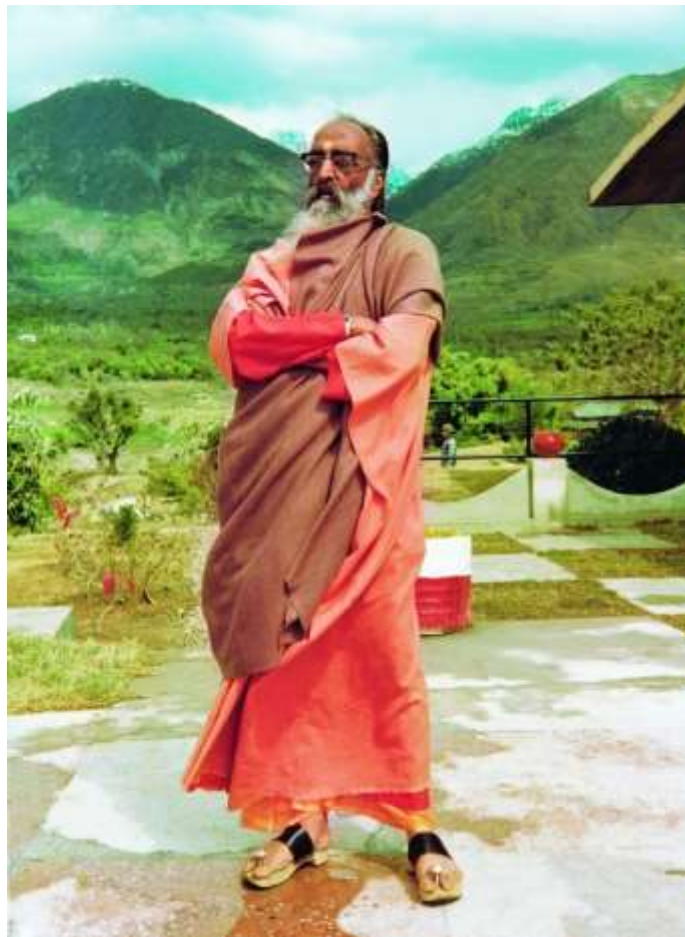
It is man who entertains notions such as "I" and "mine". It is for the annihilation of avidya (ignorance) the

knowledge of non-dual Self is introduced. That is the purpose of the Vedas. In sannyasa, characterized by self-restraint, sravana (listening to the holy texts, discourses) is of the utmost importance. This is the purpose of the Upanishads. All the Vedas deal with Brahman directly or indirectly. Abidance in Brahman is the only way to liberation, there is no other. This is the assertion of the Vedanta. Dwaita by its very nature, illusory. Advaita alone is true. Sincere seekers of liberation should, by all means, avoid all ignorant, thoughtless and yet noisy critics of Vedanta, which alone is pure and logical, transcending all illusions.

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].

Every good thought sent out rebounds with a hundred times its force on the sender himself; so too bad thoughts. Let us, therefore, avoid sending out even a single bad thought.

We must through our service, expand our love for the Lord, with which we must please the Lord to gain the full Lordship within ourselves.

Religion is not an existence divorced from life. It is only a method of quiet searching and deliberate self-adjustment, whereby an individual, so cultured and perfected, can come back to the world to face it more efficiently and more fully.

It is His Grace expressing through us all. Learn to work hard all life surrendering unto Him and watching interestedly both the gains and the losses, all success and failure. That inward stability is the Balance of the Wise.

Try to become aware of, at one and the same time, both your within and without, clearly and completely, fully and exhaustively. This too leads to the greatest meditation.

The Objective realisation of God is only a mental delusion..... God is realised only subjectively. The devotee experiences at the moment of the Divine Vision that Lord alone 'is' and the mortal ego in the Bhakta, who must be the subject in order to converse with the Lord, is realised as non-existent.