

Chinmaya Smrithi



A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center

Volume 18, Number 1 -- January 14, 2008

Happy New Year from Sundaram Stars !!



- Silver Spring Sundaram II Artists: Atman Panigrahi, Aditya Krishnan, Nihir Nanavaty, Priya Kulkarni, Giridhar Gopal Srinivasan, Nithin Venkatraman, Vishnu Veeraraghavan, Anuj Mehta, Manisha Sunil, Soumya Fattanayak, Isha Darbari, Neel Rajan, Karthik Nathan, Sandhya Piratla, Lasya Komaragiri, Vikram Nambiar, Abir Muhuri
- Collage: Chetana Neerchal
- Silver Spring Sundaram II Teachers: Mangala Rao, Chetana Neerchal

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Next Issue: March 2008, Articles due by Feb 20, 2008; Submission Instructions on the Website

CMWRC Events, News, Etc

Upcoming Events

- Youth Seva on Jan 21 to observe Martin Luther King day - Food for Homeless
- Shivarathri - Thursday March 6th
- Mahasamadhi Camp with Guruji Swami Tejomayananda July 28 – Aug 3rd at Rocky Gap in Cumberland, MD. Registration has started.

Gita Chanting 2008

- Registration has commenced. There is still time to register. Please check with your local chapter coordinators for further information.

Study Groups

- There are a number of study groups in the DC area. We have an article in this issue describing one study group in Herndon.. Please contact Mr. Vijay Kumar by email at vijaykumar@rocketmail.com, if you are interested in forming or joining a study group.

Bookstore/Library

- <http://www.cybermatics2.com/cmadmin/PriceListMay2007.pdf> This link provides a list of publications available through Chinmaya Mission.
- Please contact Mr Vijay Singh by email at publications@chinmayadc.org to request any publication.
- Further information at www.chinmayadc.org, publications link

For up to date information on Events and Library/Bookstore, please go to www.chinmayadc.org website.

Useful Links:

www.chinmayadulles.org

Washington Region – Dulles VA Chapter website

www.chinmayava.org

Washington Region – Springfield VA Chapter website

www.chinmayafrederick.org

Washington Region – Frederick MD Chapter website

www.chinmayamission.org

Chinmaya West Website

www.chinmayamission.com

Chinmaya Mission Trust

Editorial Staff: Raju Chidambaram, Sitaram Kowtha, Swamiji, Acharyas, Chapter Coordinators and Bala Vibhar students: Harsha Neerchal, Srikanth Kowtha, Asmi Panigrabi

Submit Articles to Smrithi@chinmayadc.org. Find Instructions at www.chinmayadc.org Smrithi link (Choose document titled, "Submitting Articles")

New Year Greetings

Acharya Vilasiniji's message to the CMWRC family



*May this New Year bring you greater and greater goodness,
happiness, and success!*

**kshanam pratikshanam yan-navam navam
tat-ca sundaram sat-ca tat-shivam
varshanutanam te shubham mudam
uttarottaram bhavatu siddhidam
--Swami Tejomayananda**

**Be a noble person in life.
The tides of circumstances and the tussle of happenings
May toss us hither and thither, may buffet us up and down,
But stay noble in your thoughts and actions
And you will be ever safe.
--Swami Chinmayananda**

**Wishing our beloved Chinmaya Family
a beautiful and blessed 2008!**

Hari om!

Orlando Family Camp 2007 with Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Srikumar Gopalakrishna

Chinmaya Mission Orlando hosted the US National Family Camp in 2007 (Dec 24-30) conducted by Swami Tejomayananda, Worldwide Head of Chinmaya Mission. The Family Camp was held at the Wyndham Resort in Orlando, Florida. There were a host of Swamis, Brahmacharis and Chinmaya Mission Acharyas, 300 full time and 200 part time adults from centers and 125 children and CHYK from all over the USA and overseas. Acharya Vilasiniji and Anant Sarmaji were present along with about 15 of us from the Washington D.C. and Salisbury area.

On December 23, CM Orlando held the Bhumi Puja for its new Classroom Expansion Project on the ashram grounds in Casselberry, Florida, in the presence of Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda and several Acharyas. The Camp started on Dec 24th evening with the inaugural program and spanned 6 days of divine satsang. The adults began their day with Meditation early each morning, lead by Swami Shantananda. The main text for the Camp was Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2 (Sankhya Yoga) with 3 discourses each day by Guruji in the main auditorium. There were two discourses in the morning and one in the evening. Chinmaya Arathi followed the evening talks, with Guruji leading the Arathi. There were additional daily satsangs and pravachans by different Acharyas in the morning and evening. The days were packed with absorbing talks, preceded by divine bhajans, and interspersed with satsang. Numerous Acharyas were present for participants to discuss questions and seek guidance.

One very interesting talk was by Swami Siddhananda on a virtual tour (Yatra) of the Chinmaya Char Dham (Siddhabari/Uttar Kashi, Chinmaya International Foundation and Sandeepany Ashram in Mumbai). He took us on a mental tour of these places and shared his experiences of these wonderful Chinmaya facilities and why they were so special.

We all got opportunity to provide Bhiksha for Guruji and other Acharyas on different days. In between the numerous discourses, there was the Chinmaya Book Store with so many books/CDs/DVDs and other items to browse. Coffee, tea and snacks were in abundance and the weather in Orlando was gorgeous to talk small walks. The meals were delicious and plenty. The Youth had great sessions with games and discussions. The Balavihar program had numerous activities, coordinated by the different Acharyas and teachers in attendance.

After dinner each evening, there were cultural programs, dance and garbha and ice cream socials. On December 29th evening, there was a Banquet dinner with a special cultural program. The Camp ended on Dec 30th morning with Guruji's final talk, Gurudakshina and a Vishnu Sahasranama puja.

It was with a heavy heart that we bid farewell to Guruji and other Acharyas and the numerous participants, many whom we came to know well during the six days together. However it gives us great joy that we as Chinmaya Mission DC will be hosting the next Family Camp by Guruji in the USA – the only such family camp in the USA during 2008. Guruji personally spoke about the Mahasamadhi Camp and asked all delegates to keep themselves free to participate. We all came back stimulated to face the New Year, and full of ideas for our Camp. The thought of hosting such a wonderful event should stimulate us all towards the seva in making it successful. It will be our offering to the lotus feet of Pujya Gurudev.



“To be patient means to suffer something that hinders or hurts us, and still retain our self-composure. How many difficulties, with their consequent unpleasantness and discord, could be smoothed over and almost entirely eliminated by patience. Patience always elevates and strengthens our character. We need it not only with others but also with ourselves” -Swami Chinmayananda

Special Chinmaya Projects presented by Pujya Guruji at the Orlando Camp

Srikumar Gopalakrishna

On two separate evenings, Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda made special presentations to the entire audience. The first day was a presentation on **Upanishad Ganga**, a TV series produced by Chinmaya Creations (a media wing of Chinmaya Mission). The purpose of this series is to bring the message of the Upanishads to the public through the popular medium of television. It will emphasize the central Upanishadic message that human life is rare and precious and its main purpose is to enquire into and realize the Supreme Truth, which is the support of this world and the Self of all beings. This message will be brought forth through interesting episodes from the various Upanishads and Vedic literature. As Guruji said – *‘there is Mother Ganga who originated from the head of Lord Shiva and flows down blessing all of us, there is the Vedanta Ganga that flows from the mouth of Mahapurushas like our Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda and there is the Upanishad Ganga that will flow from the television to provide knowledge to the masses.’* The TV Series will be directed by Dr. Chandraprakash Dwivedi of Chanakya Series fame and will be produced professionally. The core team of Chinmaya Acharyas and scholars from Chinmaya International Foundation will provide the material for the series. Pujya Guruji invited all who value this project to donate generously.

On the second day, Guruji made presentations on the **Chinmaya Vibhooti** project. Chinmaya Vibhooti in Kolwan (near Pune) is a Vision Center to keep Sri Gurudev’s vision alive. It will serve as a retreat/training multi-purpose facility that can host about two thousand delegates for Camps and Training sessions. It will have an exhibit (*Chinmaya Jeevan Darshan*) on the life of Sri Gurudev and also host a residential school for Indian Classical Music and Dance called *Chinmaya NaadaBindu*. We need to spread the message to as many people as possible and create awareness. Chinmaya Mission welcomes help in any form (volunteer work, teaching and donations) for this project. Guruji invited everyone to visit Chinmaya Vibhooti on the next trip to India so that they could see for themselves, the progress being made and be inspired to participate.

Acharya Anant Sarma made a presentation on the Chinmaya International Foundation and the Chinmaya E-Vedanta course. More details on this course can be found at www.chinfo.org. This was followed by a presentation on the Chinmaya International Residential School (CIRS) in Coimbatore by Gautam Varma, a current student at CIRS. Details on our CIRS can be found at www.cirsschool.org





Chinmaya Mission®

Washington Regional Center

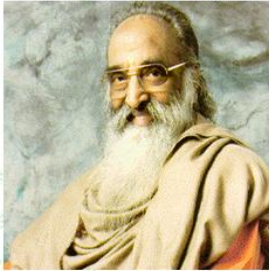
Mahasamadhi Family Camp 2008

Mon. JULY 28 – Sun. AUGUST 3, 2008

At Rocky Gap Resort, Cumberland, MD

NEAR WASHINGTON, DC

Conducted by **Swami Tejomayananda**



Listen to Mundaka Upanishad and absorb the timeless teachings to experience our inner Self, from Swami Tejomayananda, head of Chinmaya Mission worldwide. Several acharyas will be present for meditation, satsangs, and children's activities.

The backdrop for the retreat is the serene, nature-filled, award-winning Rocky Gap Resort and Lodges (www.rockygapresort.com), in Cumberland, Maryland. The resort is surrounded by hills and an alpine lake and is adjacent to Rocky Gap State Park. It combines the best of quiet resort luxury and the calm serenity of mother nature. The entire lodge has been reserved for use by the Mission during the retreat.

ADULTS

- 3 TALKS A DAY BY SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA ON MUNDAKA UPANISHAD
- MORNING GUIDED MEDITATION, GROUP DISCUSSIONS, DISCOURSES BY ACHARYAS
- UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN A MAHASAMADHI DAY PUJA WITH PUJYA GURUJI AND ACHARYAS

YOUTH

- TALKS, DISCUSSION, Q&A LED BY ACHARYAS GEARED TOWARDS COLLEGE STUDENTS & YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
- OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES INCLUDING NATURE TRAILS

CHILDREN

- BALA VIHAR CLASS ACTIVITIES BY ACHARYAS AND DEDICATED TEACHERS
- CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, EVENING BONFIRE AND OUTDOOR GAMES ACTIVITIES

Registration is now open—Download form, more info at www.chinmayadc.org

E-Mail: mahasamadhicamp2008@chinmayadc.org



Bala Vihar

I can make a difference by....

Vibha Sastri

Shivam, Silver Spring

The vice president called Al Gore
Said there was too much global warming
It is increasing and becoming more
He said everyone should try to make a difference

I can help the world by reusing plastic
I can walk instead of driving
Which saves gasoline and gives me exercise too
You can recycle paper in bins that are blue

There are other ways to make a difference
Here is one you should do everyday
Once you finish drinking from a bottle
If it's plastic throw it in recycling I say

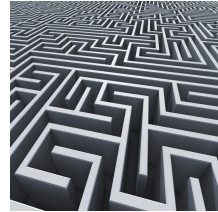
I can do some more things
I can help older people
By planting flowers for them
I can also help them cross the road

Differences can be big or small
You can help the homeless and poor
By giving your old or new clothes
Always give a helping hand and make a difference



Life Is A puzzle

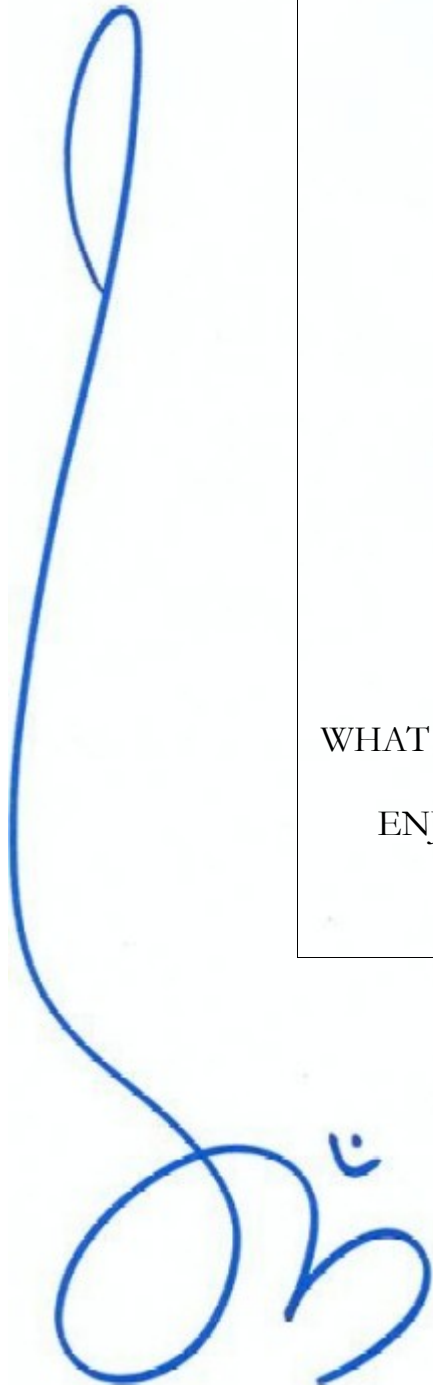
*Meghana Shankar
Sundaram I, Springfield, VA*



LIFE IS A PUZZLE.....
A PICTURE FULL OF SURPRISES
A MAZE....A MAZE, OF DELIGHT & MISERY
JOY AND SORROW
LIFE, LIFE, LIFE.

TURN OVER ALL THE PIECES
MAKE IT LOOK RIGHT.
CAREFULLY PUT IT TOGETHER .
YOUR LIFE IN FRONT OF YOU.

WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY OR SAD,
EXCITED OR MAD,
WHAT MAKES YOU ALL THESE EMOTIONS IS YOUR LIFE.
FILL IT IN..., FIND A MATCH
ENJOY THE PICTURES OF YOUR CONFUSING, YET
BEAUTIFUL LIFE



I Can Make A Difference

*Juhie Vyas
Bala Vihar & 8th Grader, Houston, TX*

Having a little sister is a huge responsibility,
It may seem so simple, but trust me it's not easy.
She bugs you, she bothers you, and she makes you want to pull out your hair,
But just for her you are always there.

I can make a difference, in my sister's life
By helping her to deal with peace, and to deal with strife.
I should be a role model, someone she can look up to,
Someone who can guide her, and show her what to do.

When she goes to school, my sister learns many things,
In math, about numbers, in history about kings.
But it's my job to teach her how to be a friend,
I need to listen to her, up until the end.

I should have a loud, powerful, and clear voice,
To help her make the correct and ethical choice.
Because, you see, if I get angry and show my wrath,
She will start to wander down that path.

Whatever action I make, no matter big or small.
She makes a mental note of it, and tries to do it all.
So when I go to do something bad, I must stop and realize,
How what I am about to do, will stay in my sister's eyes.

I can make a difference, by getting good grades,
And then be proud of her when I see the "A's" she makes.
If she is struggling, or needs help of any kind,
I will help her, and plant seeds of humanity in her mind.

But when she is older, and a nice human being,
I can't take credit for her good deeds.
Because having an ego, and being vain,
Take away all of the beauty you have made.

All of my words and all of my actions,
Are being watched by my sister, with rapt attention.
Through having a younger sibling, I have learned something,
Anything and everything I have without her, is absolutely nothing.



Juhie Vyas and sister Ashney

Rama

*Atman Panigrahi
Sundaram, Silver Spring*

Rama killed Ravana
With the help of Sugreva

Rama is very noble
And destroys evil

He is very courageous
And also righteous

Rama is very brave
But definitely not naïve

He is an incarnation of God
Precisely Lord Vishnu

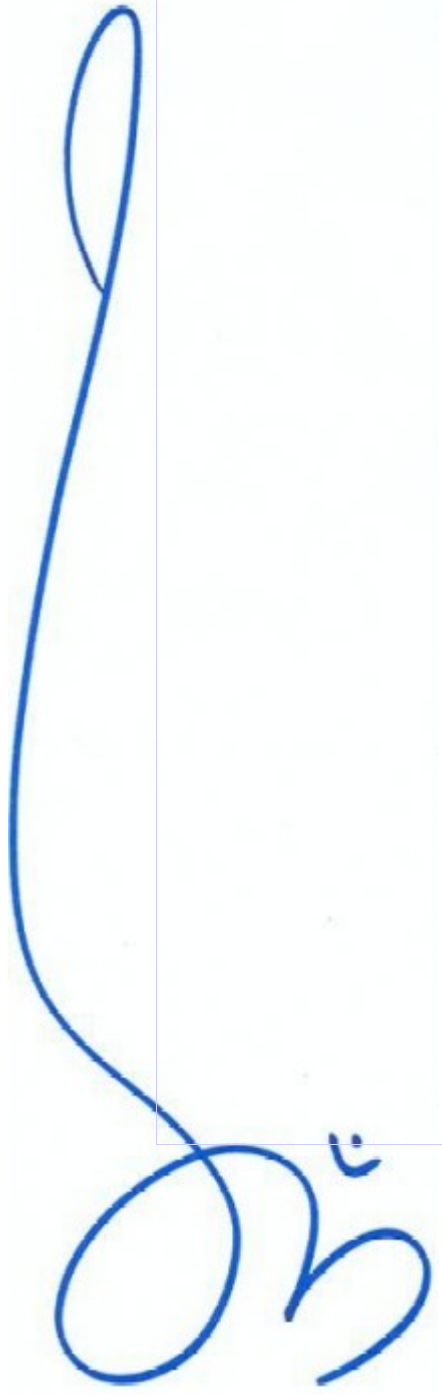
Rama is an example of a wonderful human being
That hopefully all of us can be!



-1-



(Human)



Bhiksha: Redefined

*Malini Nambiar
Frederick*

Definition: Bhiksha- a meal offered to a sadhu.

Once a month, members from the Chinmaya Mission Frederick Chapter can voluntarily visit the Washington Regional Center in Silver Spring. Monthly bhikshas offer a great opportunity to experience one of Swami Dheeranandaji's lectures followed by a delicious lunch made collectively by the above mentioned members.

It is always a pleasure for my sisters and I to join one of the classes in the main center. I love being able to meet and interact with new people around my own age. Also, although the material my class studies back in Frederick is the same as in the main center, there is often a difference in the approach, which is refreshing. I extract additional meaning from the text just by seeing the concepts in a different light. I know that my parents also enjoy listening to Swami Dheeranandaji's, and occasionally Vilasiniji's, lectures and look forward to any occasion where this opportunity presents itself.

After the class session, we all go to eat lunch. Before driving down, some of the visiting members prepare a dish or two to serve to Swamiji. I myself have either made a dish or assisted my mother in making a dish whenever we go for the bhiksha. It is very satisfying to make food for others. All of the dishes taste so much better when you make them yourself, especially if the purpose is unselfish. The lunch is always very

enjoyable due to the casual environment. We all feel as if Swamiji has invited us into his own home and is trying to make us feel comfortable instead of the other way around. The conversation is lighthearted and very amusing as well. And if anyone has any questions concerning the lecture or some aspect of abstract spiritualism, they can go right ahead and ask Swamiji. It is like sitting down to a meal with one big happy extended family. After all, to quote a very familiar statement, "we stand as one family, bound to each other with love and respect". Following lunch, after a short break, it is tea time. Sometimes, while the adults (and occasionally children) are drinking tea, we play caroms, trade jokes, and sometimes even play games with Swamiji on his cell phone! Unfortunately, the afternoon comes to an end all too quickly and we must head home, satisfied nonetheless.

As I said before, these monthly bhikshas are a wonderful experience that give us a chance to interact with different people, gain extra spiritual understanding, bond with people whom we already know, and offer our respects and thanks to Swamiji who has provided so many years of high quality teaching and merriment. I know that these pleasurable times have made a lasting imprint on everyone involved and that I will always treasure them in my growing archive of Chinmaya memories.

Thank you and Hari Om.

What is the effect of preservation or non-preservation of the environment on the culture of a community?

*Asmi Panigrahi
Tapovanam, Silver Spring*

This year in our Tapovanam class, we have been learning about what shapes Hinduism, and the culture of its followers. We also took a field trip to The Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley. Here we learned about the state in which the land was currently in, human influences disturbing the fragile ecosystem, and steps being taken to save it. The biggest interruption that could pose a serious risk to the eco-life was the construction of an inter-county highway passing straight through the woods and wetlands where we hiked. There were houses and even an elementary school less than one mile away from our path, resulting in a potential threat not just to the plants and animal life, but also to the people living so near to the future construction site.

This led our class to a very important question, which was *what is the effect of preservation or non-preservation of the environment on the culture of a community?* In today's society, especially in our area, development and construction is a constant part of our daily lives. It is nothing out of the ordinary to see land being cleared to build shopping complexes, traffic being stalled because of road construction, or expansion of neighborhoods and re-districting of schools due to rising student populations. We see dead deer and raccoons hit by cars lying on the side of the road, and we don't think twice about the scene. But how does this all affect the culture of a community?

It all boils down to the respect society has for its environment. It may not seem that important, but if we cannot appreciate what God has already given us, how can we appreciate what we try to do ourselves? If a painter wants to paint, he cannot soil and tear his canvas, expecting a masterpiece. In pursuit of making a more "perfect" community by development and construction, we are ruining the natural beauty and balance of our surroundings. Stores, malls, roads, factories, even us as individuals will come and go, but everything is nothing without the earth and its resources. Factories can be built to manufacture goods for our convenience, but how convenient is it really when the fumes and waste chemicals emitted by these factories pollute the air we breathe and the water we drink? Roads and highways can be built in attempts to decrease traffic congestion, but then instead they increase air pollution and take away the habitats of animals.

The community's values slowly weaken, and the minds become more and more selfish. The culture becomes more me, me, me. *I want a 10 acre amusement park, so build it. I want a bigger house, I want an SUV, I want more, more, more.* Who cares if I'm wasting energy, or destroying nature? I want to live my life *now*. Like our revered Swami Dheerananda has told us, we start giving importance to the lesser in life, and forgetting about what truly is valuable.

With preservation of the environment, a culture can last peacefully for a long time. In rural villages in India where not many ultra-modern technologies are used, life has been lived the same way for many generations. The people respect the environment, chopping just the wood they need for fire, plowing just the land they need for food, and in turn their lives prosper. Preserving the environment shows gratitude for the things in life we have. If people can learn to live with what they've got, rather than what they want, the true well being of everybody's body, mind, and intellect is perpetual.



Which Road Should We Take?

*Harsha Neerchal
Tapovanam, Silver Spring*

Sweet grass, a nice breeze, what more is desired? A herd of deer peacefully graze, enjoying the last few days before the weather turns cold. Bzzz. Some deer turn their heads toward this sound. Bzzz. The strange noise gets louder. A man holding a chainsaw appears. A large tree falls. The deer scatter. More trees fall...

The muddy, opaque water of a nearby creek slowly moves along, looking more like sludge than a stream of water. Children are at play, and dark smog hangs above them. A child's hoarse, scratchy cough punctures the silence...

* * *

Nineteen miles of road will be built as the consequence of construction of an inter-county connector (ICC). The construction of the ICC will obliterate a large forest, which today, is home to some of Montgomery County's oldest trees and purest streams. Charles R. Drew Elementary School is merely 25 yards away from where the future road will pass. The addition of millions of tons of carbon dioxide will directly affect the children attending this school for the worse by causing overexposure to carbon dioxide. Many animals necessary for maintaining the balance in our biosphere will be displaced. The removal of the forest that the ICC runs through will be devastating for the Montgomery County ecology.

The state of Maryland and United States governments ignored the environmental implications of an inter-county connector considering them as trivial when authorizing the construction of the ICC. The state began purchasing people's land without properly informing them about the consequences about an ICC. Now, the state has full control of the area that they wish to use for the ICC, and plan to start construction as soon as possible. Halting the progress of a road that would have such dire ramifications on the people of Montgomery County is a must!

* * *

Sweet grass, a nice breeze, what more is desired? A herd of deer peacefully graze, enjoying the last few days before the weather turns cold. The cool, transparent water of a nearby stream flows smoothly, like a snake slithering through the grass. Children are at play, and light fluffy clouds float above them. A high pitched laugh pierces the silence. Near the deer, a nearby bush rustles. The deer freeze, their ears pricked up. A fox leaps out of the bushes. The deer scatter...

VEDANTA COURSE 2008 - 2010



HIS HOLINESS SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA
HEAD OF CHINMAYA MISSION WORLDWIDE

INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR THE 14th VEDANTA COURSE (in English)
(Study of the Upanishads, Bhagavad Geeta, and other Vedantic literature)

ELIGIBILITY : University graduates men or women unmarried, free from family encumbrances
Age 20 - 30 years
With a sincere interest in the study of Vedanta and a zeal to propagate the message of Rishis.

CHIEF ACHARYA : Swami Tejomayananda

RESIDENT ACHARYA : Swami Advaitananda and other visiting Acharyas of Chinmaya Mission

COURSE DURATION : Two years
Residential
No holidays

APPLICATION DEADLINE : 15th March 2008

CONTRIBUTION : Contribution payable by international students / Guest students towards boarding, lodging, medical expenses etc; will be communicated at the time of interview.

INTERVIEW : Personal interviews of all candidates will be conducted. Specific locations will be intimated.

After completing the course students may opt to work for Chinmaya Mission or pursue their individual goals.

APPLY TO : To receive an Application Form please e-mail to jagadis@vsnl.net or write to The Chief Executive, Tara Cultural Trust, Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Saki Vihar Road, Powai, Mumbai - 400 072, India.

Study Groups

CMWRC- HERNDON STUDY GROUP

Vikram Prabhu

The Herndon Study Group has been around for approximately 20 years. It started at the home of Kishan and Veena Gupta in Herndon, VA. Incidentally, the Guptas were one of the earliest hosts to Gurudev in Massachusetts when he first came to the U.S. The group has 8-12 members and meet on Friday evenings at 8 pm. Over the last few years we have rotated the meetings each month at the homes of the different members (in Fairfax, Reston, Herndon, Chantilly and Sterling.) The format is always discussion based on assignment to each individual of specific shlokas or section from the text that is being followed. Communication is mostly by e-mail.

The class was started in 1989 by Vijay kumar and later handed over to Dr. Sadananda. The text was Bhagavad Geetha. Dr Sadananda led the discussion for more than 10 years. Dr D. C. Rao is the current teacher and Vikram Prabhu is the coordinator. Dr Rao comes approximately once every 3 weeks; the class is then held on a Saturday afternoon. Recent stress has been on practice and its incorporation in day-to-day life. The group recently completed Swamiji's "Meditation and Life" and have started Chapter 16 of the Gita. Previous texts have included Bhaja Govindam, Atma Bodha, Tatva Bodha, Self Unfoldment, Gita Chapters 1-6, Vivekachudamani, etc. Future plans include Chapter 17 of the Gita, Narada Bhakti Sutra, and Upadesha Sara.

The group consists of very dedicated students who are eager to learn the vedantic knowledge and is an excellent contribution to the Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center. I, apart from conducting his coordination responsibilities, also serve as the study group leader. The Address is: 3511 Nodding Pine Court, Fairfax, VA 22033

The Herndon Group always welcomes interested people either to observe and hopefully join us as members. Given the nature of the Washington DC area there is a constant turnover of people but we have managed to keep a core of 6-8 members. About more information about the Herndon Study Group, please contact me by phone or e-mail.

Contact information: Vikram Prabhu 703.983.6776 (W), and 703. 904.0171 (H) E-Mail Address: vprabhu@mitre.org



www.cirschool.org

*A school where every tenth student is a teacher
A class room under the skies over 100 acres
Lessons that come alive through dance, drama and song
Sports as thrilling as rock-climbing and National Cadet Corps
A curriculum that goes far beyond academics*



Chinmaya Vision Programme

Integrated
Development

Indian
Culture

Patriotism

Universal
Outlook



Ensures a perfect balance of work and play, providing all modern educational facilities, together with a healthy blend of traditional values to **500 students from 22 states of India and 17 other Countries**

**Registration open for CBSE Classes V - IX & XI
and 10th Batch of IB Diploma Program**

**Countrywide Entrance Examination
Sunday, January 27, 2008**



- ▶ Merit - cum - Means Scholarships available • Registration Form, Entrance Examination - Syllabus Outline, Objectives & Scheme of Assessment and Sample Questions are a free download from the website ◀



CHINMAYA INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

*a unique fusion of culture and academics - the best of the east and the best of the west
(a co-educational institution setup in 1996 by the Central Chinmaya Mission Trust)*

Siruvani Road, Coimbatore 641 114, Tamil Nadu - Ph: 0422 261 3300 Email: admissions@cirschool.org

A Message to the Youth: Applying the Lessons of the Gita in Today's World

*Phalgun Prativadi, M.D.
(currently in residency program)*

(Friend of the Mission, article sponsored by Mrs. Aruna Nathan)

It should be the goal in the teen years into early adulthood to build a character and personality that will ultimately bring success and fulfillment. Certainly education is an important part of this process, but I would like to explore how the Bhagavad Gita and the fundamental teachings of Vedanta can guide the youth in this endeavor. It is my impression that many youth today feel that such sources are archaic and inaccessible, and they don't relate to them or don't seem to find any application in their individual lives. I think most young people would agree that developing self-confidence, concentration, mental and emotional strength and stability, insight into how to work efficiently, and how to deal with success and failure, are all important and worthwhile characteristics to develop early in one's life. Shaping your identity, character, and personality into a positive self should be on everyone's mind, and there are definitely basic lessons from the Gita that can be applied towards this, and I hope to introduce a few concepts in an approachable manner.

The Bhagavad Gita contains the essential concepts of the Vedanta philosophy, and much of it is dedicated to explaining the nature of knowledge and work. Life is ultimately driven by the knowledge we accumulate, and the work or actions we do. Ideally, both should co-exist in equilibrium; that is to say, knowledge is useless without its application (work), and work is futile without proper knowledge. The highest knowledge is knowledge of the Self. Volumes have been written as to the definition of the Self, but suffice it to say for our purposes, that this involves an awareness of who we are and what we can become. Knowledge is awareness; awareness of what we are, how we interact with our surroundings, and how this interaction ultimately affects us. Knowledge is power; to have this awareness of the internal and external nature gives us the power to forge our own path through proper work and action. We must start considering some basic ideas as to our nature and how we interact with the world around us.

We can conceptualize our nature as being comprised of our body, mind, intellect, and soul. Great thinkers like Swami Vivekananda and Swami Chinmayananda adapted these words to describe various degrees of our being, and their participation in our existence. We live by interacting with the world around us, starting fundamentally with our bodily senses. We perceive with our senses, and this perception is itself an action, bearing its effects on the mind and intellect, including pain, pleasure, fear, anger, desire, etc. These effects may drive us towards other actions, which bear their results, and so on. So, we can consider that some knowledge of ourselves can be gained here; being aware that we are constantly being effected by our environment, and react to it through these various modes of pain, pleasure, desire, anger, fear, etc.

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If I can at least be aware of this phenomenon, then I have the potential to control it, or at least confront it. The Gita teaches us that those who are able to control their bodily senses, and these reactions and perceptions, achieve a steady mind. When these perceptions, reactions, and emotions compel us towards some action, they are obviously controlling us, not vice versa. Awareness, however, can be the first step to take control of ourselves and our surroundings. It is not necessary to get rid of all these things right away, but merely to be aware of what they are and how they affect us. For example, everybody desires certain things; they want to be popular, they want to get into a certain college, they want certain material things, and that desire drives those who are not aware to act blindly. Any work we do through this mode is done again with lack of awareness, and its results affect us without any control on our part. However, an awareness of this internal nature of ours, gives us the control, and can allow us the choice to act properly. If we desire something, and we are aware of that desire, we have an element of control through the choices we can make, and can detach ourselves from it. The Gita teaches us that detachment could ultimately make oneself the master of their own nature. Not only desire, but anger, fear, laziness, any aspect of our personality can be subjugated through our knowledge and awareness of their source and character. Being aware of how our senses and perceptions lead to these various reactions is a first step towards self control and self knowledge.

With this self knowledge we work; it is not that we remain inert. The Gita describes it as part of our nature to work, to have action. Arjuna appropriately asks Krishna to clarify which is the higher path – the path of action, or the path of renunciation, since Krishna refers to both early on in the Gita as enlightened paths. It is a crucial question; it would determine whether it is better for Arjuna to fight dutifully, or to renounce everything and go meditate under a tree. Krishna answers Arjuna by pointing out that the path of total renunciation is for those who have attained that state already, first through the path of dutiful action. It is the idea of conquering the external nature through Karma Yoga, which is the philosophy of righteous action. So, righteous action with detachment is the path to pursue first. The Gita explains how we work towards certain goals, and want to attain the fruits of our labor. However, the Gita says that if we blindly allow ourselves to be affected by the results of our labor, then ultimately it is the success and failure of our actions that control us, and not the other way around. We want to have the control over our actions, so again we must be self aware when we work. This allows for work without attachment to the action or the fruits thereof, and gives us the stability and control. That inner stability is the foundation to building self confidence, self respect, and the mature character that can bring satisfaction and fulfillment into any life.

Today's youth, more than ever, need some sort of guide as they make the transition into adulthood. They are constantly bombarded with information and technology which can be unnerving, and it is easy to lose focus and become dissolved in that. Everyone wants to become an individual, unique in their character and accomplishments, and the first step has to be self awareness. A character of substance can only be developed by this type of knowledge and awareness in everyday life, and the very basic ideas presented here are a good starting place. The Bhagavad Gita is unimaginably profound, taking the philosophy to its very limits. It is forged through the real plight and dilemma of Arjuna on the battlefield, which is symbolic of the tensions every one of us face in our lives, and Krishna's advice and teachings to Arjuna can show us the way. Concepts of Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Jnana Yoga all offer perspectives to the human condition. Yoga means unity, and these four pillars of Sanatana Dharma shed light on the knowledge that paves the path to spiritual progress. While it is available to everyone, regardless of race, creed, or religion, it would truly be a shame if today's Hindu youth neglected this pristine and very practical source of knowledge that they have inherited. It is every parent's responsibility to bring that aspect of our tradition into the lives of the next generation.

Vedanta philosophy has stood the test of time precisely because it answers questions that are themselves timeless. How can one start to really take control of their life? How to attain lasting happiness? What is the best way to choose and achieve our goals? How can one control their fears, anger, desires, and disappointments? How do I accept success, and deal with failure? I encourage today's Hindu youth to start asking these kinds of questions early, and let them spark a spiritual inquiry about the Self. Draw knowledge from the Gita, and our great thinkers like Swami Vivekananda and Swami Chinmayananda, who pierce to the very core of Hindu philosophy, just as the Bhagavad Gita does. If you feel at anytime that intellectual or spiritual spark, do not neglect it. Recognize it, hold onto it, and nurture it carefully, until that spark ultimately becomes the source of self illumination.



Analysis of the Mind-1

Sri K. Sadananda

Mind has been the subject of analysis both by psychologists as well as by philosophers. There are books and books dealing with the mind, trying to unravel the mysteries of the mind. Here I present my understanding, examining the mind from various angles along with how Vedanta looks at the mind. Those who are exposed to J. Krishnamurthy's lectures are familiar with his statement that one's mind is 'conditioned' by one's culture, tradition, religion, up-bringing or, so to say parental or society's 'brain-washing'. One is a believer or non-believer, Hindu, Muslim, Christian or any other denomination, one is a dvaitin, advaitin, or vishiShTaadvaitin, either by default or by choice, all are due to one's mental conditionings brought out by where, when or to whom he is born, and the environment or surroundings he grows up. There is no truth in any of these conditionings, since they are conditionings that take one away from the truth. The mind gets cocooned in a shell or moves from one shell to the other. Even if one makes a choice of selecting a path or system to follow, say, advaita philosophy, even that choice is influenced by the value system that is grown out of some conditioning. Subjectivity gets involved in and through conditioning. My beliefs or my conditionings become an integral part of 'I', the individual. All systems of philosophies that essentially rely on 'belief' systems will eventually lead to reconditioning of the mind. The biggest problem that arises as a result of conditioning is that pure knowledge cannot take place in a conditioned state of mind – mind is not free to learn. Mind can learn only when it surrenders all its beliefs.

The essence of this teaching is 'any process used to uncondition the mind, itself conditions the mind', since there cannot be any 'process' that is free from conditioning. Hence, Krishnamurthy declares 'truth is a path-less land'. Truth is not a belief; it is a fact. – Hence his famous statement – 'truth is not an understanding as an understanding as thought, but an understanding as an understanding as a fact'. In other words, 'truth' is not conceptualization as a thought, but needs to be assimilated as a fact. Let me illustrate this by a simple example. If I say 'I am man and not a dog or horse or a floor-mat to step on' – is this a thought or a concept or an 'idea' that I have to repeat many times until it sinks into my belief system? – It is the truth, whether I believe it or not- is it not? That is the understanding as a fact and not a thought. Once understood, there will never be a confusion regarding my identity as a man.

Science deals with facts or truths and therefore do not rely on 'beliefs'; even it questions the basis for beliefs. It is purely objective and therefore independent of whether one believes it or not. No physics teacher need to come or will come to my house on Sunday mornings, like some of religious fanatics do, to say that I should believe in Newton's laws of motion, otherwise I will go to eternal hell. Scientific facts are revealed through deductive or inductive reasoning based on observed experimental data. Here we are dealing with objectifiable facts that are distinct from the subject, who is investigating. Scientific truths are verifiable by controlled experimentation.

However, philosophies as well as religions are concerned with the ultimate truth that cannot be objectively verifiable. For example, the existence of heaven or hell or is there life after death or life before the birth, is there a God who is the ruler of this world, etc, can not be established by objective experimentation. Objective scientific investigation that relies on perception and inference as the basis for establishing scientific truths cannot be relayed upon to establish the ultimate truth. Hence 'truth is a pathless land' sounds good to be true. In addition, that 'any truth that is established based on conditioned mind cannot necessarily be true' is also understandable. How to discover this ultimate truth, using the mind that is free from any conditioning? That 'how' question itself becomes invalid, if one is seeking a methodology to discover that truth that is pathless.

'That the truth is pathless land' can be true only if that truth is absolute and infinite and not relative. There cannot be any path for the infinite. Infinite includes all paths and cannot be reached by any path. Hence, Vedanta calls the truth as 'agraahyam (incomprehensible), adRiShTam(imperceptable), avyapadesyam (indescribable), avyavahaaryam(non-transactable), achintyam (unthinkable), aparamyam (unknowable), etc'. Examples, such as removing a thorn by a thorn or removing the poison in the body by controlled medicine, which by itself is harmful for the body, etc., are provided to show how unconditioning of the mind can occur with proper saadhana or process, which is nothing but a judicious controlled conditioning. If the truth cannot be known by any means, since all means are finite, then it must be self-revealing and self-existing entity. However, from Vedanta perspective, even though the truth is self-evident, and self-revealing, conditioned mind cannot recognize the truth due to its conditioning. Therefore, the mind should be processed or prepared to 'absorb' that revelation. A 'Hare-Krishna' devotee remarked, 'brains need to be brain-washed, since it is muddled with wrong concepts, which obstructs the freedom of the mind'. However, that processes that cleanses and purifies the mind should be such that it should free the mind rather than recondition it. It should not take the mind from 'iron shackles to gold shackles'. In essence, the process that unconditions the mind should be self-destructive without conditioning the mind again by that very process.

In addition, if the truth is infinite and absolute, the mind that discovers the truth cannot itself be away from the truth, since nothing can be away from the absolute-infinite. That is, mind itself should be part of the truth, since truth being infinite cannot exclude anything. Finally, infinite cannot be made of parts (infinite plus, minus infinite is infinite only). Therefore, mind cannot be part of the infinite either. Thus we have a peculiar situation, where mind need to discover the truth, and that truth cannot be discovered by any means since it is not an 'object', for discovery, conceptually or other wise, and therefore cannot become a subject of discovery. In addition, since the mind being part of the truth which has no parts, the very realization of the truth should dissolve the notion of separateness of the mind from the truth. Hence, the truth is sometime called 'of transcendental nature' implying that it is not of the kind that objective scientists are familiar.

Hence, the realization of the truth involves a delicate process of unconditioning the mind which is called 'yoga', requiring a guide or a teacher or guru (gu stands of ignorance and ru stands for the one who removes), as emphasized by Vedanta. It is well accepted that a guide is required to do advanced research in any field of science. It is therefore understandable why Vedanta insists guidance by a teacher who is well qualified. Qualifications obviously require a teacher to be well established in the truth (brahma niShTa), and also gone through the mental discipline needed to guide the others to proceed in the pathless path. For insurance, Vedanta insists on a particular time-tested methodology (called sampradaayam, a system of teaching) so that process of unconditioning the mind occurs slowly in steps without getting locked up in the process itself. This is technically called as adhyaaropa apavaada, adhyaaropa is the conditionings of the mind and apavaada involves deconditioning the mind in stages. Conditions or adhyaaropa are superimpositions that distract the mind from seeing the truth as the truth. Since a student comes with pre-conceived notions (or conditioned mind), the teaching involves removal of those notions (deconditioning) in steps. When the mind is pure, the self-evident and self-existing truth gets self-revealed. Not only the truth is the pathless land, as Krishnamurthy declared, Vedanta goes even one step further to indicate that the self-existent self-conscious and infinite entity is nothing but your own self, where the seeker and the sought or the subject and the object merge into one infinite existent-conscious entity. That is nirvana, that is liberation, which is moksha, this is the Kingdom of Heaven in one's own heart, and that is what all the religions sing and glorify in various ways and is the absolute freedom from all limitations and therefore infinite eternal happiness that one is longing for, consciously or unconsciously, through various pursuits in life, whether religious or irreligious, whether holy or unholy. In essence, human mind is always seeking freedom from limitations, always wanting and desiring to reach that infinite absolute happiness, without knowing that it cannot be gained by any path or pursuit. If one examines one's mind carefully we find that our wanting mind is not happy in having what it wanted, since 'the want to have more' always remains, however much one has.

Superstition

Kamala Harihara Aiyar

(Friend of the Mission, sponsored by Mini Ramchandran)

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Superstition is what one believes to be the reason for what's happening in their life. It's hard to recognize the difference between simple truths and clutter of old and curious customs. These structured norms, over power us without rationale and at times dangerous enough to give a false sense of control. Some are harmless and even funny.

A worldwide phenomenon superstitions and cultures were part and parcel of migrating folks. They carried these form their country of origin like England, Ireland, Scotland and Europe to North America and Canada and added it on to the already existing ones in the land of their adoption.

Is it blind faith or just a mind control mechanism? Good and bad spells, love charms, magical cures are still very much in vogue and practice. Can this mania be vital and essentially helpful or harmful? When and how did they originate and take root in such magnitude? The history of superstition is pretty interesting. Human race from time to time deemed their faiths and observances to be very real and trust worthy. They believed that animals and inanimate objects were capable of transformation and re-birth! Modern scientists have not succeeded in debunking these ideas.

While the First Nation Indians had shamans, Hindus of India, had their own counterpart known as fortune-tellers. Eskimos and other Native people of America and Canada consulted the shaman to ward off evil spirits. Dreams and visions are at times very vivid and real or blurred. This does impact the person's mental and physical bearing. A shaman is summoned who will recite mythical poems to invoke the blessings of the spirit to leave the victim.

This deep faith gives much desired relief! A charm or amulet or magical clothes or carrying magically charged weapon is frequently used to ward off evil spirits. Facing the rising sun to negate the influence of the wicked spirit is not uncommon. A painting of dancing skeletons, believed to be the guardians of the cemeteries, adorns the walls of Nyingba Monestery, Lahasa, Tibet. A belief difficult to dislodge! Can we assume what was originally a sort of counselling tool, over the years, has ended up distorted? Scientific experiments have proved that without any voluntary physical change or movement in the body on the part of an individual, one can affect his or her physiological state simply by using the power of the mind through a focused single point focus.

The winter months in the northern hemisphere are long, dark and monotonous. People lived mostly in doors in an earth or brush lodge or an igloo. The able bodied men went hunting. The women cooked, sewed and took care of domestic chores. The children were in the care of grandparents or other caregivers. This indeed was their time to play games, learn practical skills for survival as well listening to stories narrated by the elders. These imaginary or real narratives were handed down from generations to generation. These myths are recited in poems and singing around at family gathering where the blazing fireplace kept them warm and cosy.

A girl being born from the big toe of a man, the magical robe that could make the wearer invisible and the list is endless. Legends describe women bearing children san physical intimacy with men.

Do we accept the legend that Mahabharata's Kunti, an unmarried virgin, produced children by astral insemination? We love this story that a sage pleased with Kunti's devotion and hospitality blessed her with divine progeny bearing mantras. Her childish prank testing the gift's potency summoned the brilliant Sun God. Frightened Kunti asked his pardon for her hoax. But Sun insisted that since he was wilfully summoned she had to bear his son. That was Karna. Her virginity restored she went on to bear five more sons, Pancha Pandavas. Don't people believe in the Virgin Mary?

The Native Indians version of how the Sun and Moon evolved is fascinating. To punish her brother for acts of offensiveness, the sister chased him with a firebrand. He escaped by flying towards the sky changing into Moon. The girl became the Sun. Her firebrand sparks became stars. They believe that the Sun is constantly pursuing the Moon who is in the dark unseen. The sun and moon are deemed to meet only during the eclipse.

The Hindus have an anecdote about the same planets. The gods and demons churned '*Khsirasagar*' (milky ocean) to retrieve nectar, '*Amrit*' the heavenly potion, for eternal life. A major undertaking, requiring massive physical strength, the *Devas* lured the *Asuras* to help promising to share '*Amrit*'. From this stir up many things manifested from the womb of the mighty ocean.

Lastly the golden pot of *Elixir* surfaced. Fight ensued for its' possession. The cunning *Deavas* cheated the demons with the help of Vishnu who appeared as beautiful *Mobini*. Taking the glistening pot and promising equal shares for all she sat them in opposite rows. Deluding the *Asuras* with her stunning gorgeousness *Mobini* dispensed the nectar exclusively to the *Devas*. None of the *Asuras* noticed this. Vigilant serpent *Rahu*, one of the minor planets, become aware of the con. Disguised as a *Deva* he sneaked between them. Oblivious *Mobini* dispensed a dollop of '*Amrit*' to *Rahu* who at once gulped it. When alerted by Sun and Moon, '*Mobini*' cut off *Rahu's* head with her sword. Defying death, because of '*Amrit*', he came to be known as *Rahu* and *Ketu* the two- part planet.

In retaliation *Rahu* and *Ketu* are deemed eternally chasing the Sun and Moon. During total or partial eclipse one can imagine the serpent *Rahu* trying to gulp the Sun or Moon obscuring light. End of the eclipse sees the serpent disgorges its victim! Today we know that this occurs due to planetary movements.

Hindus refrain from eating or drinking even water. During this dark period Rahu is purported to spit venom not only on his archenemies but on the planet Earth as well. Special *poojas* are conducted in the temples and other congregational avenues to ward off the evil. Charity is offered to the needy in the form of rice and lentils. Pregnant women are kept in darkened rooms to prevent the harmful rays of the 'eclipsed' Sun or Moon's infiltration on to the unborn!

Orthodox folks do believe and give credence to and observe these rituals diligently. Is it because during eclipse light, needed for digestion, is very low and hence abstinence from food will reduce chances of indigestion and resultant suffering? Once the eclipse is over a purification bath is mandatory before food!

For Eskimos the Auroras or Northern lights are supposed to be hand held torches by spirits seeking souls who have just died. Thus they can be lead over the abyss terminating at the edge of the world where a narrow path way leads to the land of brightness and plenty. Only the dead and Ravens can go to this place. Messages to departed ones are sent through these spirits. Hindus too revere the crows as they are deemed to represent the dead. Many households, even today, offer spoonfuls of cooked rice and dhal with a dollop of ghee to crows before lunch.

Hindu traditions decree that all religious observances performed properly carries its reward. Erudite priests conduct these rituals. Three generations of the dead are remembered when 'shardha' is performed. 'Pinda' (cooked rice balls) are offered first to crows at this anniversary ceremony. Crows are invited in all earnestness by shouting 'caw' 'caw'. Much disappointment will be evinced if they don't show up. If the crow pecks at this offering it's a sure sign that the departed souls are satisfied and their blessings are given. Superstition or otherwise these customs still continues. May be it was societies way of distributing money and food to the priests and others who participate in the function. Every religion has their own way of remembering the dead. Should a calamity or mishap occur in the family who has neglected to remember their dead the reason is attributed to the curse of frustrated souls, for they are believed to be awaiting this memorial service in the spirit world.

Rituals are codified in scriptures as how to appease the soul and mend the lapse. The crows or ravens seem to enjoy special reverence in many cultures. The planet Saturn has the crow as his vehicle of transport. The Queen of England has a whole retinue of guards to take care of them in the Tower of London! Monarchy trusts that if a raven is injured or dies calamity is sure to follow the Royal family.

How did the crow get his black colour? An Eskimo legend is that an owl was trying to dress the raven with a beautiful white dress. The raven jumped about annoying the owl who emptied a blubber lamp over burning him. The crow cried 'caw, caw' and flew around fanning the fire some more. The white dress was charred. From that day the Crow is black all over. The Canadian First Nations believe that the Raven stole the sun and released it into the sky, thus bringing light to the world and it's inhabitants. With this light came the consciousness of mankind. How delightful!

That the present Queen of England, some aver, has her own superstitious streak. It's said she insists that spilled salt be thrown over the shoulder, all candles be lit from the same spill, and never has 13 people sitting down to dinner!

A needle should never be handed over, but always be placed on a surface to be picked up. It makes sense to avoid being pricked and infected with. Spilling mustard seeds means an argument or fight is sure to ensue. Sweeping the house after sunset is prohibited. If the house has to be swept after sunset the dirt is accumulated to a corner of the room to be discarded after daybreak. Why? To prevent any valuable small objects being thrown with the grime. All dictions had feasible meaning and application. But over the years habits and beliefs have changed. The usefulness is forgotten and only the superstitious attribute is kept alive as a laughing stock

Hindus cremate their dead. Newborn babies and infants up to age one, upon death are buried after piercing their ears. There is unshakable belief that practitioners of black magic hunt infant's skulls for their trade. But a skull defiled with pierced ears is sullied. This practice is prevalent even today in some places. From womb to the tomb the influence by the planets and stars are accepted, respected, understood and practiced.

Do you ridicule that spirits and fairies live in trees? In Kerala lumber bought for building purposes is alleged to inherit the curse of the resident evicted 'spirits'. Homeless and angry they will follow their original habitat to reside in the beams, doors and window frames of the new premises. They may harm the occupants. To appease and drive them out satisfied rituals are performed at midnight by sacrificing a cockerel amid chanting of holy prayers and smoke of incense. Frightened that the disgruntled spirit may yet claim the life of the first entrant to the new house, an elderly person will volunteer to make the initial entry not fearing their own impending death! This practice enjoys strong fervour.

In certain parts of New Found Land, Canada the belief in witches and their dark powers are widespread. Opening the door on a stormy night might let in a restless spirit seeking shelter and difficult to dislodge. Some spirits had to stay on in earth to expiate some secret sin before entering eternity. These unquiet spirits took refuge in old trees and people dare not cut them down or even go near them. 19th century Newfoundlanders believed that passing a child through a dogberry tree prevented them from the scourge of measles, smallpox and many other childhood infections. A hundred year old dogberry tree was considered sacred and was fenced in. Legend was a hunch back child was passed through the crook of the tree and was cured.

The deity Lord Ganesha is always worshipped and his blessings are invoked even for minor undertakings. Wisdom Incarnate he's the remover of obstacles. Belief is that he was the scribe for the sage Vyasa, author of the epic Mahabharata. Little wonder that in South India elephants are revered as personified Lord Ganesha! A child will be passed under the belly of a domesticated elephant to spare the child of illness. It is a common sight for such elephants to make their usual rounds. The mahout is paid cash and the beast is fed on coconut fonts, fruits and other goodies for their services. What a way to earn a living!

Some member of the Cahill clan is known to have the gift of healing. Legend is that Christ, on his way to Calvary, bestowed this gift on a member of this clan for help received. Even today one such person of this clan is noted for curing the ravages of St. Anthony's fire causing swelling and burning.

Sri Lankans never fail to leave a small amount of food after dinner for the visiting nocturnal fairies or gods to bestow prosperity. Hindus places a grain of rice, before extinguishing an oil and wick lamp, for the lamp fairy's appeasement. They are meant to visit these sites after all have retired for the night.

Belief in mysterious rituals and black magic are common in many societies of Sri Lanka. These rites are much resorted to in case of ill health or to win or crush an opponent. The indigenous Rodayas of Sri Lanka are deemed to be great enticers and charmers endowed with powers to ward off bad and harbinger good omen. They are capable of casting bad spells if antagonized. In general kids are not permitted to face or look directly at them as their eyes are presumed to be evil! The unwritten law is: never refuse a Rodaya coming for alms for they will curse the offender! So are the Gypsies of India and Romas of Europe. They are wanderers with no fixed abode. They go from door to door singing, predicting coming events and get rewarded as 'soothsayers'.

Polish people believe in the vampires. Legends about the vampire are many. They feared that if the dead are not buried in consecrated graves they turn vampires.

Superstitions will continue to make its' presence felt as long as our world and humans exists!