

Chinmaya Smrithi



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

Volume 18, Number 6 -- November 1, 2008

Happy Deepavali, Thanksgiving & Holiday Season

Election Day – Take the Gita with you (See Article on Page 13)



HIS HOLINESS SRI SWAMI CHIDANANDA

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Next Issue

- January 2009, Articles due by December 20th 2008
- Email submissions to smrithi@chinmayadc.org. Submission instructions at www.chinmayadc.org, Smrithi link, "Information on publishing in Smrithi"
- Contact us at smrithi@chinmayadc.org with your feedback or questions.

Calendar and Upcoming Events

- November 29, 30 – No Classes – Thanksgiving Day Weekend
- December 27-28 & January 3-4 – No Classes – Christmas/New year Weekend
- January 1 – New Year Day puja at Chinmayam
- January 19 – Martin Luther King Day – Youth Seva at Chinmayam – Food for Homeless

Study Groups

- Please contact Sri Vijay Kumar ji by email at vijaykumar@rocketmail.com, if you are interested in forming or learning more about study groups.

Bookstore/Library

- Please contact Mr Vijay Singh by email at publications@chinmayadc.org to order any books, CDs, DVDs, etc.. Browse online at www.chinmayadc.org; and http://www.cybermatics2.com/acb/webpage.cfm?&DID=6&WebPage_ID=2. Review list of Chinmaya Publications by downloading <http://www.cybermatics2.com/Catalog2008.pdf>
- Srimad Bhagvad Gita is online at www.myholygita.com

Useful Links:

CMWRC – Washington Regional Center	www.chinmayadc.org
Chinmaya Mission Trust	www.chinmayamission.com
Chinmaya Mission West	www.chinmayamission.org
Chinmaya International Foundation, E-Vedanta Course	www.chinfo.org
Washington Region – Dulles VA Chapter website	www.chinmayadulles.org
Washington Region – Frederick MD Chapter website	www.chinmayafrederick.org
Washington Region – Springfield VA Chapter website	www.chinmayava.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:

Raju Chidambaram, Sitaram Kovtha, Acharya Vilasiniji, Acharyas, Chapter Coordinators and Teachers. &

Bala Vibhar students - Asmi Panigrabi, Harsha Neerchal and Srikanth Kovtha

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

News in Brief

New at the Book Store

DVD of 'Mundakopanishad' by H.H. Swami Tejomayananda for Maha Samadhi Camp held at Rocky Gap, MD, during summer is now available. Mundakopanishad is one of the major Upanishads. The well qualified student approaches the master, Angeras to quench his thirst for knowledge. The guru explains in detail the nature of body-mind equipment, the example of two birds, one enjoying the sensual pleasures of the world, while the other serenely abiding in Self.

This is a set of 7 DVDs (price \$60). If you like this DVD to be mailed to you, kindly respond to this mail with your mailing address.

– Vijay Singh (vk Singh85@yahoo.com), Bookstore Coordinator, CMWRC

Mahatma Gandhi Day Volunteer Service

Thank you for both of your children participation in today's MKG Youth Volunteer Service Day-2008 (Mohandas Karmachandra Gandhi) Birthday observed on-October 5th, 2008. It was a great success and there were 25 students representing all the 3 sessions. In addition, there were 11 parents assisting in today's efforts. Children have prepared around 500 sandwich. These were delivered to Homeless shelter in Silver Spring. Celebration of MKG Day is the first time in CMWRC, and this year we have this day added as part of our YOUTH Volunteer Service Program. All children will get the youth volunteer service hours for their participation. I hope this success can be posted in Smrithi to encourage future participations.

-Sreenivas, Youth Volunteer Services Coordinator, CMWRC

CMW Residential Course

Chinmaya Mission West (CMW) is pleased to announce its **One-Year Residential Vedanta Course** at CMW's Headquarters, the ashram of *Krishnalaya* in Northern California, amidst the serene Redwoods. The Course will commence August 7, 2010 and end in August 2011. This residential, full-time Course, without any holidays, will be conducted in English.

The classes will be taught in intervals by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda and various Mission Acharyas: Swami Shantananda, Swami Ishwarananda, Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya, and Acharya Smt. Sharada Kumar.

This Course is open to sincere seekers between the ages of 20-70 years. Texts and topics studied will include introductory Vedantic texts, select Upanishads, the entire *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*, devotional texts such as *Ramayana* and *Shrimad Bhagavatam*, Vedic chants and hymns, Sanskrit, guided meditation, and *puja vidhi*. The Course Application is available online—<http://krishnalaya.chinmayamission.org/vedanta-2010.html>—and may be submitted via e-mail. Applications received will be reviewed and eligible candidates will be asked to schedule a personal interview, the details of which will be provided at a later date. Additional details will be posted on the website.

Course Registration: \$12,000 (covers registration, room and board, and books; amount is payable in installments)

E-mail applications/inquiries to: prabodh@chinmayamission.org

Vedic Tradition of Shodashi Aradhana for HH Swami Chidananda

Deepa Krishnan

The sixteenth day following the Mahasamadhi of a great soul is a very auspicious day. In the Upanishads, Brahman is described as having 16 attributes: prana, shraddha, space, air, fire, water, earth, the senses, mind, food, vigor, tapas, mantra, karma, loka (fruits of actions), and nama. A sannyasi is none other than Brahman, and therefore at the time of Mahasamadhi, 15 of the 16 attributes merge with Brahman (the last one, the name of the mahatma remains with us). From the Vedic time, devotees invite 16 sadhus, feed them, honor them, and offer 16 gifts to them.

Many venerable Swamis and Monks were able to attend the program at Chinmayam, on Friday, September 12th, to honor the memory of Pujya Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj and bless us with their presence. The distinguished guests in attendance included:

- Swami Dheerananda of Chinmaya Mission
- Swami Samarpanananda of Divine Life Society
- Swami Atmajnanananda of Ramakrishna Mission
- Swami Brahmarooopananda of Ramakrishna Mission
- Bhante Dhammasiri of Sri Lankan Washington Buddhist Vihara
- Bhante Uparatana of Sri Lankan International Buddhist Center
- Venerable Chanhan Ouk of Cambodian Buddhist Temple
- Venerable Means Chhon of Cambodian Buddhist Temple
- Khenpo Tsultrim Tenzo of Tibetan Meditation Center
- Konchog Ngedon of Tibetan Meditation Center
- Don Briddell of Divine Life Society
- Moo Briddell of Divine Life Society
- Rajeshwari of Divine Life Society
- Acharya Anant of Chinmaya Mission
- Acharya Pramila of Chinmaya Mission
- Acharya Vilasini of Chinmaya Mission

In the following pages is a speech delivered by Swami Chidananda in 1993, in remembrance of our Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda -

Shodashi Puja

LECTURE IN MEMORY OF SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA

by

H.H. Swami Chidananda, President of Divine Life Society

at Chinmaya Mission Chicago, August 30, 1993

Worshipful homage to the supreme, eternal, universal Spirit Divine, beginningless, endless, cosmic being, whom the ancient Vedic Seers and Sages realize in the deepest depths of transcendental meditation. Due to which reason with in Tattwa betas, Brahmajnanis, Jivamuktas, Mahapurushas after thousands of years, millennia, we still remember the great Vyasa, Vasistha, Yajnavalkya, Parasara in the lineage of Brahma Jnanis, the eternal benefactors of the whole human race, for the good they have done to us with adoration and gratitude.

They are the Adiguru descending from the great Dakshina Murthy onwards up to Sri Bhagavan Shankaracharya, and have manifested to keep alive the spiritual living experience of the reality that transcends mind, intellect and speech. That intuitive experience of the Reality, Aparokshanubhuti, is the panacea to all worldly afflictions. Alas, without pursuing it, man is destroying man, destroying the earth and making life more and more difficult.

Descending to this planet of ours in that unbroken succession of Guru-Sishya-Parampara, down the corridors of centuries of revelation after revelation, of this great illustrious luminous lineage, your beloved Guru Bhagavan, Pratah Smaraniya, His Holiness, Sri Swami Chinmayananda Maharaja was illustriously representing this atomic age of ours, keeping it in the same vein of Jnana Yajna which burns to ashes the karmas of countless births and makes a person liberated. Not only did he fill himself with that light and wisdom, but he wanted to share it with everyone.

He preached incessantly for over 44 years doing the greatest dana (charity). Among the danas, however laudable or praiseworthy they may be in the context of socio-economic fields and in human life, Jnana dana is the highest as it liberates them forever from any necessity of other kinds of danas or fame by making them Paripurna (complete) and destroys the ever recurring wheels of birth, death, rebirth and death again. That's why Jnanadana is far superior to anna dana (food), vastradana (clothes) or pitrudana (oblation to forefathers). Aparavidya dana is taktalik (limited utility), not nityaprayojana. But paravidya dana is of eternal use. It takes one beyond the scope of time and change.

After gaining which, there is no return. That is what Swamiji Maharaj Chinmayanandaji was doing until his last breath. Giving, giving, giving only. Going in all the directions of the globe, east, west, north, south, orient and occident, both hemispheres. He himself a vast source of Anugraha and Ashirwada, due to the great experience of the pure knowledge. You are the most fortunate recipients of his bounty (krita). He lived a full life and in every respect completed his mission. He left nothing undone. It is for you who have been blessed by being his followers to carry on his mission. May he give you all the necessary strength, peace, inspiration, humility and unity. If all of you live the mission pledge given, you will feel the oneness of a family and united in sharing tasks and carrying out his work. That is the greatest Gurudakshina. That is the greatest practical demonstration of Guru bhakti. May his vision flourish and make him immortal.

We saw that even though the Being whom he loved and the One who loved him called him back to His heavenly abode, yet he will live through you, work through you and His mission will go onward and onward, progressing by leaps and bounds through you. Just as a son makes a father immortal, tradition makes the Guru immortal. You know Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa attained Mahasamadhi in 1886. Hundreds and thousands herald him. Even today more than a century later, there is a craze because he has become immortalized by his line of Sannyasis in the Ramakrishna Mission. They bring his message to people and he continues to be a living force through them in Guru-shishya-Parampara. That is your privilege that in your heart there is blessedness.

I have come here not only as his Gurubhai, but also as his friend. I cherish a great love for him. We were together for almost two years with one wall separating two rooms, side by side, in the Sivananda Ashram in 1945 and 46. We are grateful for this privilege. He was a man of great humor. He liked to laugh and make others laugh also. He endeared himself to everyone because he cherished affectionate love for everyone.

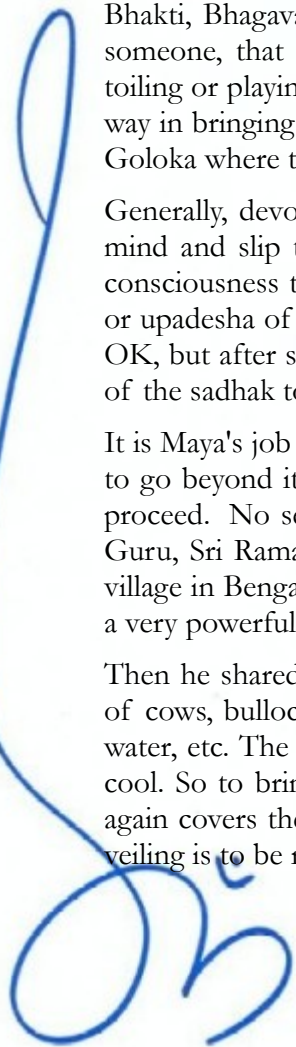
Bhagavan declares in the Geeta to Arjuna, "That devotee is extremely dear to Me." Though for Lord there is nothing of the sort "dear" or "not dear," nevertheless that devotee is very dear to the Lord who propagates the nectarine words of wisdom, as told by the Lord, among the masses and brings them to the fold of spirituality. From this we can clearly understand how extremely dear Swami Chinmayanandaji Maharaj is to his Ishta Devata. As a sannyasin, he worshipped Lord Shiva. But in the heart of hearts, he is a Krishna Bhakta. He himself is Balakrishna and Balakrishna Bhakta.

So he extremely endeared himself to the Lord in propagating the message of Bhagavad Geeta, Krishna Bhakti, Bhagavad Bhakti, living a life of Bhagavad prapti. Therefore, when one becomes very dear to someone, that someone does not want that individual to remain far away for a long time sweating, toiling or playing. So the Lord said, "It is enough. You have done a wonderful work in such a wonderful way in bringing people from Preyas to Sreyas." Therefore, the Parampita wanted him back to the eternal Goloka where the Lord is sporting with His devotees.

Generally, devoid of abidance in our real swarup, which is Bliss, we identify ourselves with body and mind and slip to the lower states of joy and sorrow. How much the teacher may tell us to raise the consciousness to the higher spiritual level, into the swarupavastha through Upanishads and Geetajana or upadesha of identification of Jiva-Brahma, yet the power of Maya is such that, while listening to it is OK, but after some time, man slips back to his old habits of sorrow and misery. So it is the prime duty of the sadhak to lift himself again and again.

It is Maya's job to pull us to the world of joys and sorrows. Teacher's duty is to instruct the disciple how to go beyond it. Swami Chinmayanandaji has already done his duty, so it is only your role to obey and proceed. No secular, educational power or position will help you in this regard. Swami Vivekananda's Guru, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, had not gone to any school. He is from a very small, unknown village in Bengal, had not studied anything. But when his devotion to Mother Kali increased, he became a very powerful instrument in Her hands. By Her grace he became a great spiritual man.

Then he shared his spiritual wisdom in the ordinary village language. The examples he was using were of cows, bullocks, rivers, trees, village ladies going with earthen pitchers on their heads to get drinking water, etc. The village ponds were generally covered with moss. But below that, water is very clean and cool. So to bring water, one had to remove slowly the moss to a distance. After some time, the moss again covers the water. Similarly our mind gets veiled by Maya. So by constant and alert Sat vichar that veiling is to be removed till one's mind is completely purified.



Negating the perishable physical body, the restless mind and imperfect intellect, one has to constantly identify with the inner Self which is eternal, pure, nondual and free from all agitations. This is called Mananam or reflection. If it is done for a period of time, one gets established in that knowledge. After that, for him there is no birth or death, no joy or sorrow. He becomes ever liberated. After that state is reached, however calamitous may be the situation outside, it cannot have any effect on that individual within.

Due to Swami Chinmayananda Maharaja's incessant love for you and mankind, he was trying to elevate you again and again through his discourses on Bhagavad Geeta, the Upanishads and by conducting yajnas. But due to our habitual error of considering ourselves as human beings, we deliberately keep ourselves away from our true nature. Howsoever much the teacher may advise, we slip into that old habit due to lack of personal sadhana and become a victim of sorrows and tribulations. So it is the prime duty of the disciples to strive hard to live the Guru's teachings and become his worthy disciples.

H.H. Swami Chinmayanandaji is a Vedanta kesari, the Geetacharya. He has done a lot for posterity. He is the great revivalist. He had the good fortune of reviving the birthplace of Adi Shankaracharya in South India. It is the duty of all his foreign devotees to contribute to that great cause.

Who is born will die one day. Now where is Bhagavan Buddha and Bhagavan Shankara? Even Avatars have to leave the form. Where is Rama or Krishna Avatara? So never be discouraged by the seeming death of the great master. He is always with you. His presence is always there. Fearlessly, all of you go on the path he has shown you. Now the mission is in the hands of worthy disciples. It will prosper manifold.

Let Lord grant you courage and peace. Hari Om Tat Sat!



Picnic

Saiprasad Ravi
Frederick Chapter

Hi! I am going to tell you about the fun my class had at the Bala Vihar picnic. It was at in Walkersville Community Park. We got there at 10:00 on 5th October' 08. The sky was cloudy, the grass was green and it was a perfect day for a picnic. When I got there kids were playing. The small kids were playing on the merry-go-round. The elder kids helped them rotate the merry-go-round. Our class gathered into a group and we played 3 games. In the first game, there would be 2 teams, one person in each team would be the leader and the other people in the 2 teams would form a circle around their leader. Team A would try to get the ball into Team B's circle. The first team to get their ball into the other teams circle wins. The people on the outside would protect the ball from entering the circle, if it got past the outsiders the person in the center would have to stop it from entering the circle. It was kind of like knights and castles. In the second game each kid got a paper with names of Indian saints, some of the saints were Mother Teresa, Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Sivanandha, Swami Tapovanam etc. In the game adults would have to circle their most favorite saint. When the paper was filled we ran back and showed the teacher. I came in fourth place. Then we played Kho-Kho, a game played in India. After a good game of Kho-Kho it was lunchtime. Kids washed their hands and recited brahmarpanam before eating. There was lots of yummy food. Some of them were Mac and cheese, soda, cupcakes, cookies, pasta and idly with green chutney. After eating the teacher gave us prizes and we returned home.



Bala Vihar

Welcome to Bala Vihar 2008-2009

Anil Kishore
Chinmayam Bala Vihar – Director

Welcome to yet another exciting year of Bala Vihar!!! The summer went fast for many of us but it was great to see all the children back. This summer was particularly exciting with Mahasamadhi Camp at Rocky Gap. We were truly blessed with this beautiful satsanga in the glory of our Master. Those of you who missed it, certainly missed a wonderful opportunity. We had around 120 of our children participate in the activities at Rocky Gap.

Our growth has always been a testament to the hard work of our sevaks and the quality of our programs. As in the past, our classes filled up fast this year too, and we have close to 350 students enrolled at our Silver Spring center. Our Centers in Dulles, Springfield and Frederick also have a healthy enrollment. We continue to strive as one big CM family to bring the best to our community. This spike in our membership brings us hope that we can count on more families to support us and help us further enhance our programs. Our Teacher's Orientation and Planning Session during the summer also went well. It provided us with the opportunity to combine our teaching resources and develop the curriculum for the coming year. Each teacher brought the best in their skills to develop the lesson plans.



For many years, the Mission has instilled values in our children. The strong foundation of Bala Vihar laid by Swamiji and Acharya Vilasiniji has been instrumental in building a strong program. Our strength comes from our children, whose willingness to learn is an inspiration to motivate any teacher. Our strength also comes from our teachers who not only teach every weekend but spend several hours preparing for the class. This year again, we were fortunate to add new teachers to our program as we grow. As our children grow with our program we enjoy their sense of belonging to the mission, their maturity, and their development. We hope to learn from them and provide them the tools to face the challenges of this world.

We also hope that they will cherish their memories here for years to come and hopefully come back to serve as leaders of our community. We are not alone in our endeavors; we have some of the best strengths to help us carry this torch.

Last year in particular, we had the pleasure of our own Chinmayam alumna Pooja Lahori come back to teach not just one, but two sessions!! She is a product of our Bala Vihar and we are proud to see her back. She is also coordinating Chinmaya Yuva Kendra (CHYK) activities of the Mission. Her understanding of our culture as a student and now as a teacher is a blessing that has been showered upon us, and she is back this year teaching in Session III. Vineet Bhagwat, also our alumni and a product of our Bala Vihar, spearheaded the CHYK activity at the Mahasamadhi camp in August. His leadership set an example to our senior students and other CHYK members and opened our doors to those who have lost touch with us.

Bala Vihar

Let me not forget other Chinmayam students who continue to be our source of inspiration. Rohit Gopal taught Hindi in Session III. His determination to teach Hindi helped us give individualized attention to some of our youngest children in Hindi Paathshala. Without his help we could not have done our best. Rohit...best wishes always in all your endeavors. We also have current students who are already our strongest resources - Ramita Dewan (Chinmayam-2) has also been teaching Hindi and at the same time

perfecting her own language skills. Many of our students/alumni have also been teaching Performing Arts classes – Neha Mehta (flute), Niranjana Murali (mridangam with Ajay Ravichandran), Komal Dilawari (folk dance with Tapovanam student Divya Puri), Devatulya Kavathekar (violin with Tapovanam student Vishnupriya Krishnan). All of them have the charisma to be our role models, our future leaders, and our own vision. We are proud of them.

What exactly are our strengths? How can you help?



Our biggest strength has actually been our wonderful students who come to us to learn. They are our inspiration to teach. How could you NOT teach such great kids? We always need teachers to substitute, co-teach or lead several of our Bala Vihar initiatives.



Our strength is also the members/parents who support us in this endeavor, they entrust us with their children so that we can instill the richness of our culture in them. Members cannot always commit to weekly or monthly commitments but they can help teachers in class projects.



Our strength is also in the teachers who inspired by the Chinmaya Movement willingly teach and spend many hours of preparation, and diligently teach the children to their fullest capacity. Each and every one of them has created an environment that is conducive to learning. They never give up!



Last but not least, our strength comes from our spiritual leaders and Gurudev's grace!! Swami Dheerananda and Acharya Vilasiniji. Their support for us and guidance to us has no end!! They continue to lead us, and we can only build upon the strong foundation that has been laid down for us. We are blessed this year to have our new Acharyas Anantji (Dulles) and Acharya Pramilaji (Springfield). They are not new to the area but are back with us as Acharyas and we look forward to many satsangs with them. How fortunate it is to have such a treasure of strengths.

During common time in Silver Spring, Swami Dheerananda's discourses are always motivating, and his style of teaching has increased our membership!! His wonderful ways of telling stories to our children keeps them attached to our Mission. In him, we find our true spiritual leader who is always there for us and never hesitates to listen to us. His confidence and trust in our sevaks gives them the energy to keep on working in serving Pujya Gurudev. He is not only our spiritual leader, but our trusting friend, our guide, and a member of each of our families. A majority of our graduates return to the Mission to meet Swamiji.



Even though our main theme is to teach Vedanta, we also want them to appreciate our culture and heritage. If we have the means, why not provide our children with extracurricular activities at the Mission? We offer Language and Performing Arts at the Mission. Our Bala Vihar classes are enriched with the literature available to us from Chinmaya Publications. Our collaboration with other Centers keeps us enriched with our collective strength. We keep our children involved with performances at Ramanavami, Mahashivaratri and Annual Day. This activity provides mentoring of our youth.

An experience at the Mission is to be remembered by our graduates for years to come. They will cherish their time here and definitely look back and remember the attention they got. At Chinmayam alone, we have around 20 classes in all three sessions with close to 40 teachers and coordinators!! From the youngest Madhuram class to the senior Chinmayam class, all our children participate in a variety of activities. The smiles on their faces testify their learning victories and their sense of belonging to the Mission. This energy can be used as our strength in helping them for a better tomorrow. Our satellite Centers add to our celebrations with their own Bala Vihar productions.

Our Language Classes have also grown!! We started with 10-12 students in Hindi but in the last three years the number has been between 45-50 children. Our dedicated teachers have added to the standardization of our Hindi curriculum, we have 10 teachers for seven levels of classes. We are looking at new ways to spark the linguistic interests of our students who have completed the higher level Hindi textbooks. We added Telugu with three levels of classes and 4 teachers, and Tamil was a new addition during school year 2003-2004. Our linguistic heritage adds to our childrens' understanding and appreciation of our scriptures. We recognize this as one of the best ways to have our future generation read about our culture and society.

Our Arts program has also attracted children. The Bharata Natyam, Mridangam, Folk Dances, Bhajan and Carnatic Music have been offered for the last two years. The Tabla classes have been most popular!! The enrollment has shown that the children have learnt the beauty of our cultural heritage. They learn and use their energy to enjoy the art. The Arts and Language Annual Day has been a presentation of our children's skills. The program is always a big success; it leaves the parents happy and proud. They all feel tied to the Mission as one family united and strong. There cannot be another institution that can blend all these religious, cultural, spiritual values to our children!! It has to be Chinmaya Mission, a place we call our second home.

This is a small world, and it is great because of the Chinmaya Movement!! It is great because of the greatest gift that Gurudev has left us. It is great because of our Acharya Vilasiniji, Swami Dheernanandaji, and most of all our children, who are our torch bearers for tomorrow. Please keep our calendar handy and support our children in all their endeavors. Help us nourish them, support them and provide them the best of everything.

May Gurudev's grace and blessings always be with them for years to come.

**Sri Gurubhyo Namah
Hari OM**



Chinmaya Mission® Bala Vihar

Washington Regional Center, 46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905 www.chinmayaDC.org

DAY/DATE	EVENT
Sat & Sun, September 6-7, 2008	Ganesh Puja and Open House by Session
Sat & Sun, September 13-14, 2008	Language and Performing Arts Open House by Session
Saturday November 1, 2008	Annual Banquet Fairfax Marriott, Fair Oaks VA (Regular BV Classes)
November 29-30, 2008	Thanksgiving Weekend – No Classes
December 27-29, 2008	Holiday Weekends, No classes
January 3-4, 2009	
Thursday, January 1, 2009	New Year's Day Puja Vishnu Sahasra-Namavalli Pooja and Guru Paduka Pooja
Monday January 19, 2009	Martin Luther King Birthday – Youthseva Day – Food for the homeless
Sat-Sun Jan 31-Feb 1, 2009	Parent-Teacher Conference
Saturday, February 7, 2009 12:00 PM to 5:30 PM	Teachers Retreat Regular Bala Vihar Classes
Monday, February 23, 2009 Puja 5:00 AM to 12:00 AM	Maha Shivaratri
March 28-29, 2009 by Session	BV Annual Day -1 by Session
Friday, April 3, 2009	Ramanavami
Thursday, April 9, 2009	Hanuman Jayanti Celebrations
Saturday, April 18, 2009	National & Global Youth Service Day - Bala Vihar performs service to the community Regular Bala Vihar Classes
Saturday, April 25, 2009	Language Annual Day
Saturday May 2, 2009	Chinmaya Jayanti (Seva Day)/Youth Service Day
Sunday May 3, 2009	Geeta Chanting Competition No Regular Classes - Children expected to participate in scheduled activities
Saturday, May 9, 2009 5:00 PM	Tabla Talent Annual Day Regular Classes
Saturday May 16, 2009 3:00 PM	CMWRC Graduation Ceremony Regular Bala Vihar Classes
May 23-25, 2009	Memorial Day Weekend No Classes
Saturday May 30, 2009 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM	Frederick Center Annual Day
Saturday, June 6, 2009 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM	Dulles Center Annual Day
Sat & Sun, June 6-7, 2009	Bala Vihar Annual Day -2 by Session
Sunday, June 7, 2009 4:00 PM	Performing Arts Annual Day
Saturday, June 13, 2009 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM	Springfield Center Annual Day
Sunday June 21, 2009	Father's Day (activity to be announced)

MAY THE GITA BE WITH YOU....**AT THE POLLING BOOTH***Raju Chidambaram*

Come November 4th, many of us will be filing into the polling booth to exercise our most precious right as US citizens. I have now lived in the USA long enough to see nearly a dozen Presidential contests, but cannot recall any approaching the intensity and drama surrounding the 2008 elections. The campaigning has been long and animated, the personalities colorful (-no pun intended-) and the outcome certain to set a historic precedent. Also all this comes amidst an economic crisis of unparalleled proportions when the stakes are high. No wonder, the usual voter apathy has been replaced this time by keen interest, with expectations for a record voter turnout.

Among the voters will be many of our Chinmaya Mission friends who together constitute a well informed and responsible group. Besides being above average in education and social awareness, they also possess something that the average US citizen does not- the knowledge of Gita.

The teachings of Gita are relevant in all situations of life. The polling booth is no exception; in fact the election process illustrates a key teaching of our beloved Bhagavad Gita. What I have in mind is the famous verse in chapter II enunciating our right to action in four terse, incisive phrases.

“*karmani eva adbhikara: te*”- *Your right is only to your action:* The citizen’s right to vote freely without let or hindrance is fundamental to the functioning of any democratic society. That right is guaranteed by the constitution, which itself represents the collective will of the people. We have the right to vote freely for any candidate that we like and also the freedom not to vote for any of them. But our rights in the election process end with that.

“*maa phaleshu kadaachana*”- *You have never the right to the fruits of action:* While we can vote freely, we have absolutely no right to demand or enforce any particular outcome. The candidate of our choice may or may not win. The outcome depends on the collective will of the people. We must cheerfully accept the will of the Totality, the Ishwara.

“*maa karma phala hetu: bhui*”- *Let not the results be the cause or motivation for your actions:* The pre-election polls may show who is favored to win or who is trailing, but our actions at the polling booth should not be determined by these expectations. Our favorite candidate may have a comfortable lead. But guess what may happen if we act too complacently and fail to vote! Similarly, the fact that our candidate is trailing badly in the polls is no reason for us to give up and stay away from the polling booth.

“*maa te sanghostu akarmani*”- *Do not be attached to inaction:* Staying away is not an intelligent option. It is the duty of every responsible citizen to cast his or her vote. Act we must, and act with due diligence. We know that the democratic system works best when each voter exercises the right to vote based on the interests of the country as a whole and not on narrow selfish considerations or personal likes and dislikes.

Gita is the guide *par excellence* at all times in our life, including at voting time.

On the election day, May the Gita be with us.

Hari Om!

Members and Friends

Memory Recall at a Traffic Light

GB Sastri

The human brain is a complex structure. Along with the various functions it handles it constantly produces thoughts. These thoughts are with us while we are doing our everyday chores. As I am typing these words my mind is constructing thoughts somewhere in that complex structure about what I am going to write next. And as you are reading your own mind is wandering with thoughts.

What I wanted to write today was to relate how simple experiences in our daily lives can trigger thoughts that take the mind back in time to events that occurred a long time ago and in the process take you (your mind, really) through a journey that can be exhilarating.

The other day when I stopped at a traffic light and my mind transported me back to 1980. In a flash I went back 28 years. Such exhilaration! And there I was picturing Swami Chinmayananda sitting on a stage in an open-air theater in what was then called Madras, stroking his beard and telling a large crowd of youngsters the meaning of Vedanta. I cannot say that I understood everything he said then but the analogy he used to describe the importance of values and religion stuck in my mind. And the simple act of stopping at a traffic light triggered that memory from so long ago.

Back in 1980, I was in my third year of undergraduate studies in engineering. When the program was announced that Swamiji would come I thought I would just go and see him just to satisfy my curiosity. I had heard such great things about this man. Back then I hung around with a group of friends who belonged to the Ayn Rand Club. We considered ourselves independent thinkers and many of us bought into the western philosophy of “Objectivism” – a philosophy propounded by Ayn Rand. In keeping with the tenets of that philosophy one had to use “reason” to accept or decline anything that is proposed. So with an open mind I went to hear what Swamiji had to say.

I found myself amongst a crowd that was larger than I would see at concerts that were held at this theater- such was the magnetism of this man who strode onto the stage in his orange robes. He explained the significance of Vedanta and in the process used a metaphor – an analogy- that made a permanent mark in my mind. He asked us to imagine a busy intersection in Madras and said “now what would happen if the traffic light is removed or malfunctioned?” The answer was obvious - utter chaos would ensue! Though some people considered the stops to be a nuisance they served a very good purpose- they ensured that discipline was maintained and prevented accidents from happening.

Swamiji went on to say that the mind’s thoughts are like the little cars on the road. These thoughts if they are not processed properly can create chaos in the mind. Religion and the values that it teaches are like the traffic light that makes these thoughts function in ways that create a discipline in our lives. Without religion we have no guidelines in life. No morality. No ethics. In a mind that holds no morals, values, or ethics there can be nothing but chaos.

The light turned green and I had to move on – but I was glad that traffic light made me think about the importance of what the Chinmaya mission tries to accomplish in our lives. Perhaps the next light will take me on another thought journey.



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Attitude and Aptitude – A rendering of Three Gunas

Sitaram Kowtha

The Guna Chart shows nobility in an individual based on their habits and character as demonstrated through their normal or reactive thoughts, words, composure, affinities and actions. Gunas are the attitudes people bring to their daily living, work, relationships and service to the society. The attitudes are categorized into two areas – Saguna and Nirguna. Saguna means being immersed in the attitudes of Tamas, Rajas and Sattva. Nirguna means beyond the attitudes. Divinity or Pure Consciousness is Nirguna, where as the attitudes and aptitudes expressed by humans and living beings are Saguna. Personal evolution in a human is their progress from being 100% Tamasic towards higher gunas of Rajas and Sattva. The Guna Chart in the following page shows the tendencies and expressions that make up the three Saguna categories. A realized master, when in deep meditation in union with his or her innerself is said to be Nirguna. The same realized master, when in the material world is called 'puroshotthama' (noblest being) or 'sthitha-pragna' one who exudes joy and compassion without being deterred by the dualities of life (joy-sorrow, honor-disonor, pain-pleasure, etc.). Sathvic attitude enables one to adopt a more nobler approach to their living, and make it possible for one to jump from Saguna to Realization or becoming Sthitha-Pragna.

In the Bhagvad Gita, Sri Krishna elaborates his lower nature and higher nature (Chapter 7). While God's nature is infinite, one attribute of His lower nature is Saguna; and His higher nature is Nirguna. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa noted after interacting with an Advaitin that God is both Nirguna and Saguna. Thus God is accessible through the Saguna, but to unite with God, one has to take the leap to Nirguna. That is because, as Sri Krishna explained in Chapter 7 of the Gita, the lower nature is in him, but he is not in the lower nature.

In the Ramayana, Kumbhakarna represents the tamasic nature. Kumbhakarna slept for 6 months at a time, and spent his waking time in consumption. Ravana represents rajasic nature. Vibhishana represented Sathvic nature. When Hanuman asked him to recite Sri Rama's name (in Hanuman Chalisa, one verse goes – "tumharo mantra Vibhishana mana", meaning Vibhishana accepted the mantra you gave him – the Sri Rama manthra), Vibhishana followed Hanuman's advice to the point that he gave up his family and possessions to surrender himself to Sri Rama. Vibhishana's purpose for surrender was to seek mercy from Sri Rama for his brother, Ravana, and to save the people of Lanka from destruction – a noble motive.

When Hanuman went in search of Sita to Lanka, he was first interrupted by a mountain king asking him to take a rest, eat fruits before continuing his journey. Hanuman refused, since he didn't want to lose even a second in his search. Thus Hanuman avoided Tamas. He was then accosted by Rakshasis demanding him to fight. He cleverly got around them, thus avoiding Rajas. In Lanka, he conveyed the Rama manthram to Vibhishana. He then recollected Sri Rama's story to Sita in a sweet and humble manner, and delivered the ring to her, assuming a small and reverential form. Mother Sita responded by blessing him as bestower of prosperity, success and goodness (In Hanuman Chalisa – "Ashta siddhi nava nidhi ke daatha, asavara deen Janaki Matha"). Thus, he showed his sathvic nature. When he returned to Kishkinda to give the news of Sita to Rama, he said to Rama, "when I saw Mother Sita, I saw you in her. I had no doubt she was Sita. Now as I see you, I see Mother Sita in you!"

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Thus Hanuman made a leap realizing oneness of God, from Sathvic nature to Sthitha Pragna. Sri Rama gave him the best gift – a hug, and noted that, “you are equal to my dear brother Bharatha”. (In Hanuman Chalisa – “tum mama priya Bharatha hi sama bhai”, “as kahi Sree Pathi kantha lagai”). When one becomes Sthitha Pragna, God embraces the aspirant wholeheartedly. In the Gita, Chapter 7, Sri Krishna says, The Gnani – sthitha pragna is dear to me, and I am dear to him.

The Tamasic nature is filled with ignorance, agony, fear; victim-hood, depression, laziness, with no respect for law, ethics, order, duty

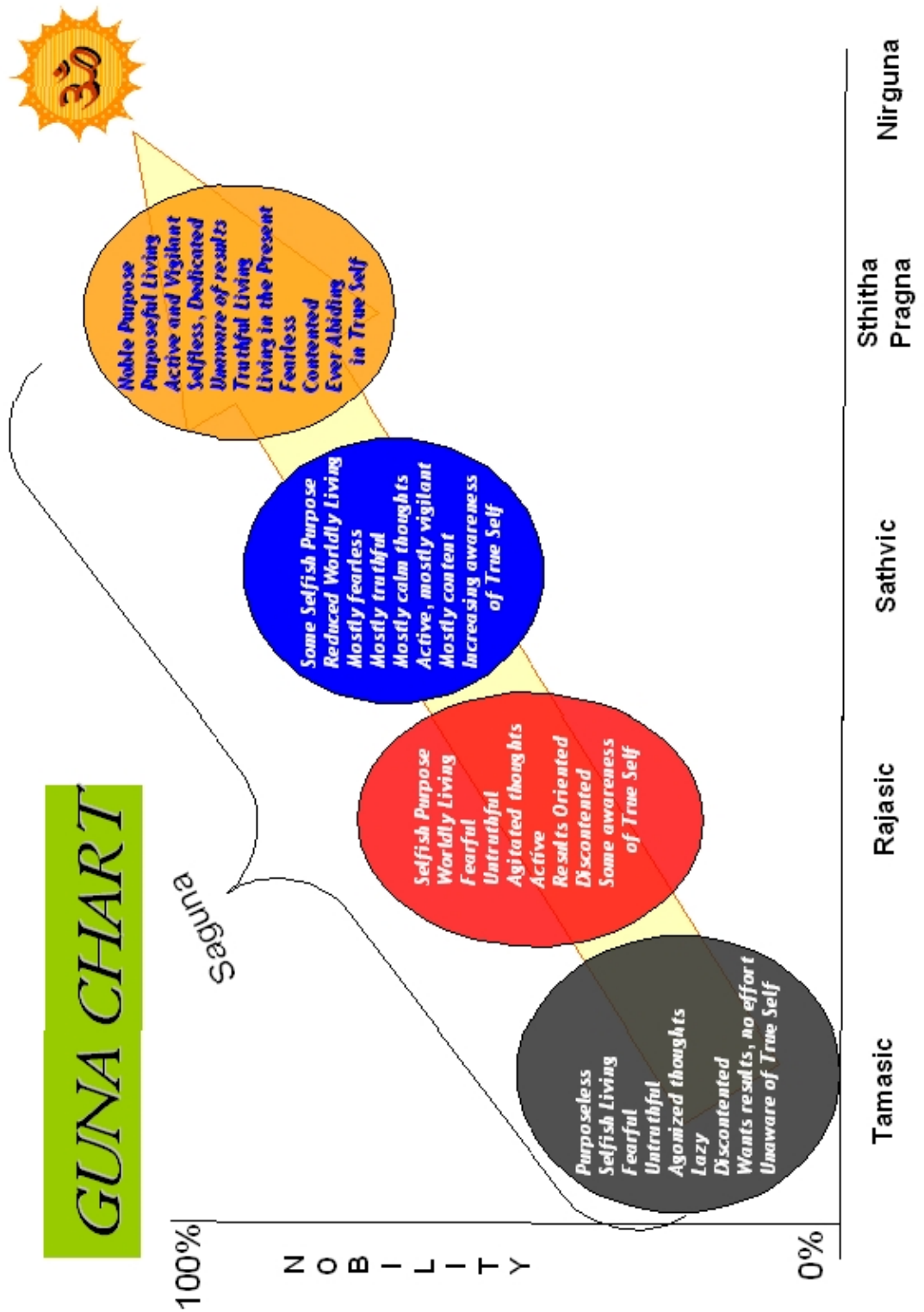
The Rajasic nature is filled with action; attitude that ends justify means; material accumulation, possessions and possessiveness; jealousy; dishonesty; anger; violence; and fear.

The Sathvic nature is filled with peace; calm and collected tendencies; serves as a listener and guide; has respect for ethics and law; duty bound; reflects on past to act better in the future; and sees oneself as an agent and not the doer..

Hari Om!



Handwritten signature in blue ink.



Bhakti is Our Armor

*Guru Prakash,
Chinmaya Mission – Georgia South*

Shishya: Swamiji, Hinduism describes several paths to God, proponents of each claiming that their method is the best if not the only way. I am confused. What is your opinion?

Guru I will tell you what Lord Krishna who is considered as Jagadgur (Guru for all) has said in Bhagavadgita. Bhagavadgita is unique among all our Scriptures because it is relatively short and so not likely to be corrupted. It is the word of the Lord Himself. Bhagavadgita says that there are two paths to reach Him, Jnana and Karma yoga. (1)

Shishya: I do understand the systems of Jnana and Karma to a limited capacity. How does one know which path is suitable for him?

Guru: What path one follows will depend on their 'Nature' or 'Swabhava.' The Lord describes in detail about the 'Gunas.' A few men of predominantly of satvic nature are qualified to pursue Jnana marga. Most people, my dear son, are 'Rajas' in nature and should adopt Karma yoga.

Shishya: Is it possible to practice both?

Guru: Sri Shankaracharya in his commentary on the Gita says that one cannot practice both Jnana and Karma at the same time. Jnana requires seeing Unity and karma diversity. "Therefore by no line of reasoning whatsoever, it is possible to combine knowledge and works. (2)

I want to make you also aware of the pitfalls of these paths. Be aware that even satvic people, who are driven to follow Jnana do have moments of Rajas in them, which could lead them astray.(3) After taking many births a Jnani may reach Him, but that Jnani who knows that Vasudeva is everything is extremely rare.(4)

On the other hand, people with Rajas following the Karma marga are in danger of attachment to the work they are doing and the power, wealth and popularity that work begets; not to mention the seemingly insurmountable sorrow and suffering it creates. They also, just like the Jnanis could easily be lead astray.

Shishya: Are we then doomed to go through the cycle of birth and death again and again? Lord is supposed to be 'Krupalu.'

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Guru: The Lord is definitely compassionate. He has given us a great tool with the help of which we can adopt one of these two paths and that tool is Bhakti. In other words, He is willing to be with us throughout our journey, expecting very little from us in return. Patram, pushapuam, phalam, thoyam (leaf, flower, fruits, water), even a paltry thing given to Him in devotion is enough for Him to lift us from the ocean of birth and death. Devotion towards God is a must whatever path an aspirer chooses to follow.

Shishya: You say a Bhakta should follow Jnana or Karma, but Bhaktas claim they can achieve salvation just being a devotee.

Guru: What you say is true. Bhaktas do claim that they don't do any work. This shows the true compassion of the Lord and the greatness of devotion. The Bhaktas although doing work, know that they are not the real doers. There can be no better example of Nishkama karma or selfless work, when you know you are not the doer. How can you be attached to the work that you think you are not even doing?

Shishya: I don't understand. Are you saying true devotees continue to be in one of the two paths and not know it?

Guru: Think of the great devotees of the past, Krishna Chaitanya, Kabir, Thukaram, Ramdas and Tulsidas. Did they not traverse up and down Bharath leading people to righteousness? Or, write devotional poetry and rewrite scriptures, which to this day are inspiration to many? They were great karma yogis and great Bhaktas at the same time.

Shankaracharya, the greatest proponent of Advaita philosophy also wrote Bhajagovindam and in Shivananda Lahari wrote, **Ghato vaa mrithir pando apyaraunubhi cha dhoomogni rachala Pato vaa thanthurva pariharathi kim ghorasamanam Vridha kantakshebham vahasi tharasa tharka vachasa Padhambhojam shmbhor bhaja parama soukhyam vrijasudhi.**

This is the pot, no, this is only mud,
This is the earth, no, it is only atom,
This is the smoke, no, it is only fire,
This is the cloth, no, it is only the thread,
Can all this debate ever cure the cruel God of death?
Vainly you give pain to your throat,
By these torrent of words,
Instead worship the lotus like feet of Shambu,
Oh, intelligent one, and attain supreme happiness.

All aspirers, whether they are Jnanis or Yogis, need to be Bhaktas to course through these perilous paths. While one cannot practice Jnana and Karma at the same time, Bhakti is essential for both



Shishya: In other words, Bhakti is the 'armored vehicle' that will take us smoothly whether the road we take is Jnana or Karma.

Guru: When the Lord's protective shield is around you, even the most hazardous journey becomes safe.

References:

1 Bhagavadgita 3:3

2 Srimad Bhagavadgita Bhashya Translation Krishna Warrior Chapter 3

3 Bhagavadgita 2:67

4 Bhagavadgita 7:17



Ch. 2 (Sankhya Yoga) Yoga of Knowledge Part 2 of 4 – How to Act

Nilkanth Bhatt, Richmond Chapter

[Editor's Note: This is a series on the message of the Gita]

Krishna explained to Arjuna that the self in us is eternal, immutable and unchanging. However, from Arjuna's point of view this knowledge is too abstract and intangible, so Krishna explained the same truth from a different point of view.

In our observations of the world around us, we see that the existence (of any thing or being) is an unbroken chain of birth (creation) and death (destruction). Childhood's death gives rise to the birth of the youth and youth's death gives birth to the adulthood in one's life. Similarly death of a tree gives rise to the birth of a timber for construction and death of the timber gives rise to the wood columns and beams for a building. Thus birth (creation) always precedes death (destruction). If we accept this fact of nature there is nothing to grieve about death.

From our viewpoint any being was unmanifest before birth. It has now become manifest in life and it will become unmanifest again after death. This unknown aspect of anyone's existence creates anxiety and grief. But if we understand clearly that something cannot come out of nothing, we will accept that, when the being was unmanifest before birth it existed in some form. which form gave rise to the existence of the present form life, and when it will become unmanifest again after death, it will still exist in some form which will give rise to another birth.

Bhagavan says accepting even the logical observations above, Arjuna must perform his duty of fighting the Mahbharat war without grieving for possible death and destruction. If he wins the war he will enjoy the glory and the kingdom on this earth. If he dies fighting this war he will enjoy the place in heaven that the great heroes enjoy when they die while performing their duty. One way or other we never lose, if we do our duty.

Act we must in this life, so we must know how to act effectively and appropriately. Krishna tells Arjuna that one must act in a complete physical, mental and intellectual equipoise. Neither getting upset by pain, loss and failure nor getting too elated by pleasure, gain and success. The outcome of our actions are not in our control. The nature will reward all our actions appropriately. If the results are not conducive to our happiness, we must understand that either the actions were inappropriate or the field of the actions was inappropriate. We must make necessary adjustment to get the desired results. If I work very hard in my yard but the yard is not turning lush green like my neighbor's yard, I must know that I need some adjustment in my efforts. Either the ground is not prepared properly or I am seeding and fertilizing in wrong seasons. Therefore rather than getting disappointed by the results, we must accept the results and learn from them for our future progress.

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Bhagavan says “ To work alone is your privilege, never to the fruits of your work. Neither one should work just in the anticipation of a desired result nor one should get attached to inaction” We control our actions; we do not control how others will react to our actions. We may start a business and put all our efforts in advertising about it. We do not know how the market place will react to such advertising. However we should not sit idle by the fear of failure. We must do our part diligently and honestly and accept whatever results we get. The anxiety about the results will drain our energy and we will not be able to apply all our energy in our work. If we cannot apply appropriate amount of energy in our work, how can we expect success?

Bhagavan warns us against inactivity and advises us to choose inspiring goal and engage in activity to achieve our goal in the spirit of dedication. He says, “Equanimity within is the highest spiritual Yoga. One must act diligently in all fields, renouncing attachment (to the desired results) and keeping balance in both success and failure.”

In choosing appropriate goal he tells us that desire less and selfless actions are nobler than desire prompted actions. Therefore seek your fulfillment in the mental peace you get in performing actions, which help others and improve the quality of life of all around you. Those who seek reward for them are more likely to get disappointed and feel wretched about their actions.

We must have a faith in the nature’s law of conservation of energy that nothing will ever be lost. We also must have faith in nature’s law of action and reaction that all actions will have equal and appropriate reactions and we must have faith in all pervading ever compassionate Lord who will guide us to be on the right path of actions, if we seek refuge in him.



Saakshii Swaruupam

Dr. K. Sadananda

Disciple of Swami Chinmayanandaji

Saakshii is normally translated as the witness and witness implies something witnessed; or being a witness, which is called saakshyam. Therefore, Saakshii implies the existence of a saakshyam. In addition, saakshyam must be different from saakshii, for saakshii to be a saakshii.

Conversely, without saakshyam the role of saakshii also ceases. In principle, saakshii and saakshyam are mutually exclusive. Therefore they fall in the realm of dvaita (duality), or vyaavahaarika satyam (transactional reality). The reason this is transactional or vyaavahaarika satyam is that both saakshii and saakshyam are ontologically in par with each other.

But when we apply this to witnessing consciousness, one has to be very careful. The reason is very simple. Saakshii is the witnessing consciousness, which is in the realm of paaramaarthika satyam and saakshyam or that which is witnessed is in the vyaavahaarika satyam. Hence ontologically they have different degrees of reality.

Shree Sureswara in Naiskarmya Siddhi provides a beautiful example to illustrate the sakhyatvam of Saakshii. He says let us take a brilliant Gem which is shining all by itself (if you want you can take it as radium Gem, self-shining – which is what consciousness is) Now when we bring in its close proximity a colorful object, the object gets illuminated in the brilliance of the Gem. We can say for discussion purposes that Gem is illumining the object just as a saakshii is illumining the saakshyam. The analogy is that like consciousness 'I am' illumining the inert mind, which is an object for illumination. Now if you look carefully, Gem has nothing to do with illumination of the object per se. Illumination being its swaruupa lakshaNam or its intrinsic nature, the Gem cannot but be brilliant all the time whether there is an object near by or not. Similarly the consciousness has nothing to do of being a witnessing consciousness, even though we can say for our understanding the truth that the mind is being a saakshyam (illuminated) or being witnessed by the witnessing consciousness that 'I am'. Therefore we assign a role of saakshii to the consciousness when the mind gets illumined in its presence and not that a witnessing consciousness is really doing the job of witnessing, even when we recognize that witnessing is actionless action by itself. – This is to be considered as upaaya or means to shift our attention of objective mind to the very subject that illumines the objective mind.

Now when there is no object that is illumined – the Gem is still self shining as usual and there are no objects around that gets illumined. The sushupti or deep sleep is like that where the witnessing consciousness is there but its role as witness depends on how we look at that deep sleep state. The mind

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is folded in deep sleep state. Now when we treat the absence of the mind as pramaa or knowledge (just as we say – yes there is no pot on the table where the absence of the pot on the table is knowledge or pramaa), then saakshii can thought of as illuming the absence of the mind. Essentially, as Mandukya says, there is no desire for any objects in the deep sleep states only because I do not see any objects there. The reason that I say there are no objects there is that I am familiar all the time with the presence of objects when the mind is there. Hence when I say there is no pot on the table, I could say that because I am familiar with the pot before and I do not see that pot that I am familiar in terms of how it looks like. But could I say there is no gaagaabuubu on the table? That makes no sense, even though it may be knowledge but it is a useless knowledge since there is no object like gaagaabuubu anytime before also and I have no knowledge of what that is to make some sense of the statement that there is no gaagaabuubu on the table. Similarly since in the deep sleep state, from the point of vyaavahaarika satyam, I can say I do (did) not see any objects in the deep sleep state, that piece of information is knowledge alright since I am looking from the point of mind that is always familiar with the objects all the time. But from the truth point, just as the Gem is there self shining all the time whether there are objects in its vicinity or not, consciousness is self-illuminating even in deep sleep state. Saakshii ceases to be saakshii since there is no satyam in the deep sleep state. Hence Ch. Up says – I ‘reach’ my swaruupa state where I am there as usual as self-shining consciousness. Hence in principle I am not saakshii also not only in the deep sleep state but even in the waking and dream states, but for the purpose of saadhana, the saakshii notion is brought in to shift my attention during meditation from pramAta to saakshii. Ultimately I am not even saakshii since there is no saakshyam separate from me.



Spirit of Sacrifice – A Cosmic Law

Acharya Anantji

{ Editor's Note: This is from a series of talks on the Gita at the Pentagon based on Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda's "The Art of Man Making" }

Everywhere around us, from the twinkling stars to the flowing rivers, nature serves the world in the spirit of sacrifice. The sun shines, but demands no appreciation from anyone. Rains fall, rivers flow, plants flower, tree bear fruits, oceans heave, towering mountains stand ... all serve the world to make it what it is, and none of them seem to demand even a passing recognition from the people benefited by it. They all do their duties discovering a joyous fulfillment in the very performance.

Lord *Krishna* says (verse 3.10), **The Creator after having created mankind, together with *Yajna* (sacrifice), said "By this you prosper; this shall be the fulfiller of all your desires."** The idea of Spirit of Sacrifice is the universal law of nature and is given out against an awe-inspiring and dignified background. The Creator conceived the Spirit of Sacrifice along with the creatures, and presented it as a parting gift to the best of His creatures, the highest evolved, the intelligent man. Said the mighty Creator, "Now I give you the *Yajna*" – the power to co-operatively work together for a desirable goal. With this – functioning in this co-operative spirit of selfless dedicated endeavor – may you all prosper!

Indeed the story of the scientific world and its growth during the last 1000 years is testimony to the success of the Spirit of Sacrifice. The world has undergone economic and political revolutions from time to time during this period. Alas! Men co-operate and act as a team more often for destructive wars than for constructive work of creating peace and harmony among themselves! It is due to weakness inherent in man that he fails in his attempts at co-operative endeavor. We know that if we all decide and work for a cause, good or bad, we can succeed. We can create a heaven on earth or a hell of life around us.

In order to work co-operatively, each will have to sacrifice his ego and his personal desire-gratifications. If anyone in a team asserts his ego or grows anxious for his own desire-gratifications, the cadence in the work is lost, and the co-operative scheme breaks down. For success the entire team must have one single inspiring ideal at the altar of which everyone must readily surrender his personal vanity and greed. The ritual of *Yajna* is a large number of people acting in unison at the same altar of grace for the total glory of all.

This "blessing" pronounced by the Creator may not necessarily work out in life. We can only strive, but our efforts often do not bear fruits when the environments and circumstances are not conducive. A farmer may work hard but the rains may fail or inclement weather may spoil his harvest. Nature must also co-operate in order to make man's efforts a grand success. Will the Cosmic forces obey us? Do we have any command over them?

Acharya Uvacha

To clear this doubt, the *Gita* continues (verse 3.11), **Cherish the gods with the Spirit of Sacrifice and those gods shall in turn cherish you; thus cherishing each other, you shall gain the highest good.** When men in a community strive co-operatively, without ego and egocentric desires, the cosmic forces that constitute the environment, shall cherish them in turn. In short, when man works in the Spirit of Sacrifice, the outer circumstances must miraculously change their pattern to be conducive to the common will of the selfless community striving for the good of all.

When we cherish the outer cosmic forces (gods), they shall in return cherish us with the fulfillment of our welfare, or whatever is in common demand of the total community striving together. This is a divine law – a Universal Truth – a scientific fact. Thus mutually cherishing each other, let man achieve the greatest prosperity with the grace of the gods.



Analysis of the Mind – The Essence of Ego

Dr. K. Sadananda

[Editor's Note: This is 5thth in the series – Analysis of the Mind. The first four appeared in the earlier 2008 issues of Chinmaya Smriti]

The essence of our lives seems to be centered on our ego. Ego is the driving factor for success according western way of thinking. Without ego we cannot survive, is the understanding of the many. Unless we understand what ego stands for, we can neither understand how our mind functions nor we can understand how we function in this life. Most of the western psychoanalysts identify the conscious mind as the ego. According to Vedanta, ego is only a notion of individuality in the mind, wherein 'I am' is identified with 'this is' resulting in 'I am this'. There is a fundamental human error involved in the equation 'I am = This'. The error arises in mixing two diagonally opposite entities; a conscious entity, 'I am', with an inert entity, 'this is', in generating a notional entity called 'ego' or individual 'I'. This is called error of superimposition (adhyaasa), wherein qualities of something other than 'I am' are superimposed on 'I am'. 'I am' is the basis or substantive, changeless or independent variable, while 'this is' is a superimposition, which continuously changes as 'this' that I identify with changes. Normally, when I refer to myself as 'this is I', 'this is myself', the 'self' that 'I am' is identified with the 'ego'. Hence ego, for all practical purposes is the 'self' that I am, and it is neither pure consciousness nor totally inert entity. We have mentioned before that mind is made up of subtle matter different from physical gross matter. Subtle matter is still a matter and therefore mind is essentially inert. Hence mind can be objectified as 'this'. Any object is, in principle, an inert entity. Mind being inert is an object of study by psychoanalysts as well as psychologists. While we stated that ego is one of the components of the mind, it has a peculiarity of its own that differs from the rest of the mind. Although mind is inert, ego partly rests on the conscious entity, 'I am'. When I claim that I am an individual, egotistically I am separating or diverging myself as a separate entity in relation to other individuals and the rest of the universe. I am 'so and so' when I introduce myself as a separate individual, the 'so and so' is the inert part that I am identifying with. I am an individual separate from other things and beings. That exclusivity of myself from the rest of the universe happens in the mind with the mind as 'I am this' and 'this is mine'. This exclusivity is the basis of the survival of the ego involving separation of 'I am not that' and 'that is not mine'. Thus, ego tries to find its identification, by inclusion and exclusion of 'this' from 'that' or 'mine' from 'yours'. Ego, therefore, involves the notion of an individual identifying with myself, a conscious entity, that takes the role of a doer, knower, enjoyer, sufferer, etc., on which the inert entity, 'this is', is superimposed. Only a conscious entity can be a doer, knower, enjoyer, sufferer, etc. An unconscious entity cannot claim the doer-ship or enjoyer-ship. It is the ego that claims the doer-ship, knower-ship, enjoyer-ship, etc. Is this 'true or false' has to be established? From our point, ego seems to be at the gateway with one side being a conscious entity, the individual 'I', the self that I am, and on the other side the inert entity, where 'this' stands for are all my mental cognitions or mental states. Any 'this' stands for objects perceived by the mind or objects known by cognitive process by the mind. It includes the tangible as well intangible objects. We have not understood the process how cognition or knowledge of external objects takes place in the mind or with the mind. This will be discussed in detail later when we deal with epistemological issues involving the mind.

Acharya Uvacha

The most important point of interest from the analysis of the mind is that it appears to show a dualistic nature; one side a conscious entity and the other side an unconscious entity or subject-object duality. Interestingly, it is worth to note that the dualistic nature seems to be the fundamental to all manifestations in nature, wherein we connect two seemingly unrelatable entities into one. The 20th century scientists became familiar for the first time with dualistic nature of the matter; its wave form through de Broglie's wave length, and its particle form as atoms and molecules, etc, culminating in Einstein's famous equation $E = mc^2$, where 'c' the velocity of the electromagnetic wave, forming the connecting link between matter and energy. Through these equations we learn that energy is matter in motion or matter is energy localized. From Vedantic perspective, both energy and matter are inert and thus grouped under one as matter only, although energy is more subtle than gross matter. Vedanta goes even one step further in establishing the ultimate dualistic nature involving consciousness on one side and matter on the other. Ego represents a symbolic equation of the two denoting I am = this. Matter can be considered as consciousness in apparent motion or perturbation in consciousness. It is cognized as a 'thought' (vRitti) in the mind, which actually is 'an apparent' movement of consciousness or like 'thought wave', a perturbation in the ocean of consciousness. Mind is defined as a flow of thoughts (vRitti dhaara) as mentioned earlier. Movement of thought is analogous to motion of a wave in the ocean of consciousness. Wave is nothing but ocean itself with superficial surface perturbation; hence it is not different from ocean. Similarly the thought wave is superficial movement of consciousness; hence not different from consciousness. We can deduce figuratively from this that mind, which is a basis for the flow of thoughts, can be thought of as crystallization of consciousness in motion. We will arrive at this independently by looking at the creation at macro scale and at micro scale (as in dream world). Thus apparent or experiential dualities are inherent natural expressions of all manifestations, as Vedanta declares. This is the secret of creation too, says Vedanta. Individual ego represents the essence of creation, but at a micro scale. Ego manifests with the equation of consciousness with matter. Consciousness cannot be equated with matter, yet this appears to be happening in the apparent duality of the world. When a subtle wave form of 'energy' is equated to gross 'matter', we brought in a fundamental constant 'c', velocity of light, as the connecting link. This equation is simpler, since ontologically both energy and matter are inert. However, in equating the consciousness with matter, we have an impossible situation, since they are diagonally opposite entities; one is consciousness and the other is inert matter. We need a connecting entity that makes this impossible link possible. That connecting link is called 'maayaa', which can be considered as a type of force (shakti) that makes the equation possible. There is no exact translation for the word 'maayaa' although it is translated as 'illusion'. Any force is only recognized by its effects. Maayaa is that force because of which consciousness, which is one without a second, appears as many. It is like one gold appearing as many varieties of ornaments, since gold has that potential to become many. Force is a potential manifested as action. Therefore maaya is defined as that which makes impossible possible (aghaTita ghaTanaa paTiyasii maayaa). There is no separate proof for its existence than the very manifestation of one into many.

We utilize this force all the time without realizing it. For example, when I sleep, my mind projects a dream world of plurality consisting of many beings and objects. Thus waking mind has the potential to appear as many in the dream. If I am dreaming as a fireman putting out the fire of a huge building using a hose and water, while you are all watching as spectators in my dream commenting, criticizing,

complementing, etc, as a dreamer I experience all that dream world of plurality as real made up of objects and beings. In fact, I, as a dreamer while dreaming, do not even think that it is a dream. 'I am' there very much in the dream as one of the subjects in the dream, identifying with a body, mind and intellect that is separate from the other bodies, minds and intellects. In fact, I, with my tiny dream mind, see the dream world as if it is outside my tiny dream-mind. However, the whole dream world of plurality is inside the waker's mind. The power by which a waker's mind is able to project many things and beings in the world of dream is maayaa. Any change in movement is a force. The proof of the maayaa is the dream world itself arising from one entity, waker's mind, which in turn is supported by consciousness. Only a conscious entity can dream. Hence mind being inert entity cannot itself dream unless supported by a conscious entity that I am. In fact, mind cannot exist without 'I am'. For a dreamer, all the dream transactions are real, until he wakes up. The blazing fire of the building, the hose, the water, and the fireman, as well as the all spectators, each with their own individual minds, are all real, as long as the dream lasts. There are sentient beings as well insentient things in the dream world. Only when awoken from the dream, the whole dream world merges into the waker's mind. In fact, the dream world arises from the waker's mind, sustained by the mind and goes back into the mind. Was the matter that was created in the dream real or imaginary? It is real from the point of dreamer but appears to be unreal from the point of waker. The dream water cannot wet my bed in the waking world, although it can put out the fire in the dream. If the bed is wet, it is not from the dream water. Thus the reality of the dream depends on the reference; waker thinks it is unreal, while the dreamer thinks it is real.

Vedanta looks at the dream world, compares with the waking world and shows parallelism between the two. From the Vedantic perspective, both worlds are not real. They are not unreal either, since they are being experienced. Unreal like horns of a rabbit cannot be experienced. Real is defined as that which remains the same at all times. In both dream world and the waking world, what remains the same is myself, I am, only taking different roles in each world. Hence 'I am' alone is real. It is the waker's mind supported by the consciousness that 'I am' is projecting the world of plurality of beings and objects in the dream. 'I am' there in the dream world (in the above example playing the role of a fireman). Thus creation of the dream world became possible with the combination of consciousness entity 'I am' with inert entity 'this is', which is the essence of ego too. Maayaa, therefore, is that power that makes this equation possible. In the case of the dream world, I have the power to create that dream world, although the kind of dream that I dream is not known a priori. My dreaming as a fireman must be the result of some suppressed desires of wanting to become a fireman that could not have been fulfilled in my waking state. These desires are exhausted in my dream, so that my mind is now free from these suppressed desires, so that it can act fresh. Thus dreams are exhausting mechanisms provided by nature for cleansing the mind. Vedanta says the waking world is not much different, as we shall see later.

Coming back to our basics, when I equate myself as 'this', creation or separation of an individual 'I' essentially has occurred. We attributed this identification as result of dualistic nature of the mind where subject and object thoughts, both arise in the mind, where there is the possibility for an error involving identification of subject, I, with object, 'this'. This is an error, because I am not 'this'. Yet, I take my self as 'I am this', says Vedanta, only because I do not know that I am pure



conscious-being, without any 'this' attached. Being means existing. Thus Vedanta says I am pure existence-consciousness. I cannot add any more qualification to 'I am' since anything that is qualified is an object and not a subject. Only objects have qualifications. 'I am' always is a subject and not an object. I cannot objectify myself. Therefore conceptualized 'I am' is not I am, since I am not a concept. 'I am' is a fact. In the equation 'I am this', I am trying to objectify myself as 'this' with qualifications. This happens because, when I do not know who I am, I take myself to be other than who I am. Thus 'I am this' error arises in my mind because of my self-ignorance or ignorance of my true nature, says Vedanta.

This error of superimposition can occur only if there is some common ground between the conscious entity, 'I am' and the inert entity 'this is'. The common ground between 'I am' and 'this is' is the 'Existence' itself. 'Am' in the 'I am' denotes my existence, and 'is' in 'this is' denotes its existence. The divergent parts between the two are consciousness on one side and inertness on the other. 'I' denotes a conscious entity and 'this' denotes an inert entity, since 'this' is an object of my knowledge. Even though 'I am = this is' is an invalid equation and can never be true, it is taking place as evident in all our transactions in the world. In fact, no transaction can ever be possible without this identification. All transactions involve 'I am this' and 'this is mine' notion, which is ego. I cannot even introduce myself by just saying 'I am' without adding any 'so and so' to it. Without ego, no one can transact in the world. Then, where is the problem, if I can only transact with this notion that 'I am this', and no transaction can be possible otherwise.

The core of the human problem rests on this and solution to this problem also rests in correct understanding of the problem. If I know as a fact that I am a conscious-existent entity and not 'this' that I identify with, except for transactional purposes since I have no other choice, then there is no problem. It is like enjoying the sun rise and sun set, knowing the fact very well that sun neither rises or sets. Or a more appropriately, it is similar to actor playing a role in a drama. I am an actor playing the role of a beggar in a drama and getting paid millions for that action. I can play the role beautifully and enjoy the play, knowing well that I am not really a beggar and in fact I am going to accumulate more millions because of that action. If I really think that I am a beggar, forgetting that I am actor playing that role, then the drama becomes miserable. Firmly rooted in my understanding that I am an unqualified existence-consciousness, but playing the drama of life taking different roles in life, son, husband, father, friend, employee, citizen, etc understanding very well that I am none of the above- then the game of life becomes beautiful drama- comedy or tragedy – but fun to play with. There is only one ball, but both teams go for it, then only it is a sport. One will win and the other loses, yet that is fun. Why do we have to play – there is no cause for play other than fun. Play is natural; even a cat plays with a ball. There is no 'why' for a play. Win or lose, playing is fun. Losing to a strong team is more fun than winning over a mediocre team. Hence many philosophers call creation as play of the Lord (leela vibhuuti), since there cannot be a reason for play other than that it is fun. However, if you ask 'why should the Lord play at my expense?', then you are inquiring deeper into the truth or secret of creation.

It is 'I' that is playing the drama of life taking different roles. If I do not know how to play or do not know the rules of the game, then play becomes miserable. There is where the human problem and human suffering rest. When I transact with the world as 'I am this' not knowing my true nature and taking 'this' as my real self, then all problems will arise. It is similar to an actor behaving like a king outside the drama, not knowing that the role of the king that he is playing is only for that particular scene. We have to put him in asylum before he starts ordering everybody around as a king. Roles will have problems, since that is part of the drama. However, if I start taking the problems of the roles as my problems, then it will become a serious problem.

When I do not know 'Who I am?', and take myself to be really 'I am this' that I identify with will create problems. This is a fundamental human problem, since it is the basis for all human suffering. The basic reason is any 'this' is limited, since 'this' is not 'that' or does not include 'that'. All 'this that I have' becomes what I am due to this error of identification. Hence, when I take myself as 'I am this', the limitations of 'this' become my limitations. No one likes to be limited. Intrinsically everyone wants to be unlimited, since that seems to be my nature. Limitlessness is freedom from all limitations. Everybody wants to be free, free from any dependence on other than oneself. Therefore every effort is made to make 'this' that I have as big as possible, to make it limitless. Thus 'more I have' becomes a means to become 'more I am'. Ego wants to survive at any cost by becoming bigger and bigger. It is never happy or contented with what it has, since whatever it has is limited and not limitless. Hence wanting to have more becomes the fundamental survival mode for the ego. Ego also survives by excluding others. Exclusions become more evident by complaining, criticizing, fighting, etc. All the negative emotions that get crystallized in our transactions are means for survival of ego. All desires involving, I and I want, are expressions of the Ego. If I cannot get what I want, then I complain. I am angry if others get what I want. I complain and I criticize. When two people meet, they will be complaining about the third person. Fear comes from the second person and politics comes with the third person.

A mind that is contented and free from ego-centric desires is not the mind that is conducive for the survival of the ego. On the other hand, ego survives in having a mind that is always longing for something or the other. 'I want this and this and this.' becomes the song of the ego, from birth to death. It always wants to want and never satisfied with what it has, until it has everything. Everything means infinite. One cannot gain infinite by adding finite things. Yet, 'longing to become infinite' seems to be inherent in all beings, as the fundamental struggle for freedom. Ego can never become infinite, since 'this' part of the ego in 'I am this' is always finite. Yet longing to become infinite never ceases. Hence human life becomes a constant struggle to become 'something' which one cannot become. When I realize that 'I am not this', which Vedanta capitalizes its teaching as 'not this', 'not this', suggesting to drop all identifications with all 'this', what is left behind is pure 'I am' without any qualifications or identifications. That I am is pure existence-consciousness, which by nature is limitless too, since existence has to be infinite, and consciousness that I am is not different from existence. It is not that I become infinite, 'I am \equiv infinite', says Vedanta; and infinite cannot be pointed as 'this'. Note the identity equation symbolized by \equiv , instead of an equal sign, indicating infiniteness is my intrinsic nature, called in Sanskrit as swaruupa lakshanam. Hence the inherent struggle to become infinite by gaining this or that is only a reflection of gaining my own true nature. I cannot gain my own true nature, since it is already my true nature. Infinite need not have to become infinite, since it is already infinite. However, if

I 'think' that I am finite and try to become infinite, we have a peculiar problem – we are creating a problem where there is no problem. There cannot be any real solution to this problem. Only valid solution to this kind of problem is only to recognize that there is no problem to start with. Hence understanding my true nature, that is knowing 'who I am', is the only solution for problems generated by mistaking my self to be 'this' or 'that', something other than myself. Hence, recognition of the invalidity of the equation, I am=this, is the solution to the problem. The solution looks very simple, since I know I can never be 'this' – subject 'I' is different from object 'this'. Yet, it appears to be very difficult, like trying to win over by real fighting with an imaginary ghost.

The difficulty arises if we ask further in terms of who is trying to realize 'Who I am?' – Is it the ego or is it pure 'I am', since we have only two components. Pure 'I am' is already infinite existence-consciousness and there is nothing to realize – other than just BE what it is. (Actually we are using words which are finite by nature and do not even describe that 'what I am' stands for. Hence Vedanta says –finite words or mind cannot reach but return back– yatho vaacho nivartante apraapya manasaa saha). Infinite cannot be described – even the word infinite is only a negative description, that it is not finite. Hence from the point of I am, there is nothing to reach, nothing to describe, nothing to acquire, no where to go – other than saying 'I am that I am', which is not saying anything substantial. So 'I am' need not have to realize since it is already 'I am'. Does ego has to realize that I am not this? Ego cannot realize 'I am not this' since its essence is I am= this. For it, 'not this' becomes another 'this' only, meaning we tend to conceptualize 'not this' as another 'this'. Then, what is the solution? Solution therefore is in clear understanding that Ego cannot realize, and 'I am' need not realize, but only discarding my identity with ego and claiming my eternal nature that I am. That is just shifting my gears or my vision. This is the essence of meditation. That involves reducing the reality that I associate with the ego only to transactional reality, and claiming my eternal reality as existence-consciousness that I am. Then what happens to I am as I am? I remain as I am, that eternal ever existent consciousness that I am, but now realize that the only transaction utility of the ego is in playing the game of life, as it should be played. It is now like an actor, who knows who he is, but still playing the drama of life knowing very well that the drama is not real but only for fun or entertainment. The drama script has not changed, the roles have not changed, the problems of the roles still remain, but only thing that changes is my attitude towards the problem of the roles. I play the roles more effectively and beautifully to my satisfaction without any regrets and without any complaints, since it is fun to play. I can even change the script to the degree possible or select the roles that I can play better. Since I have already entered the stage of life to play different roles, I might as well play the roles that are given for the benefit of the others, who also have entered the scene to play their roles. Life is a drama involving many players and many scenes and one has to play the game as long as one is on the stage of life. Best way to play is not to forget that you are an actor and the play is only a drama and for fun or entertainment. Here playing itself is the entertainment. How good you play, how satisfyingly you play the given scenes is all that matters.

Hari Om!