

Chinmaya Smrithi



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

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Guruji at the Mahasamdhi Family Camp, July 28 2008

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Next Issue

- November 2008, Articles due by October 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

- Bala Vihar Fall Classes Begin – September 6,7 by session
- Bala Vihar Language Classes Begin – September 13,14 by session
- Deepavali Celebration – To Be Announced
- Annual Banquet, Saturday, November 1st

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 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

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

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

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



SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA



12 August 2008

Note to CM Centres: Please acknowledge receipt of letter below and forward it to all local members.

To: All Members of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide

Blessed Self,

Hari OM!

I am pleased to inform you that the second phase of *Chinmaya Vibhooti* is nearing completion in January 2009. The third phase will commence soon after that. The main feature of this third phase will be the temple of Lord Ganesha—named Shri Pranava Ganesha—on the hilltop. To make this temple project a successful and memorable event, we have designed a new initiative in which all our Chinmaya Family can easily participate.

21 WEEKS WITH LORD GANESHA!

- Each participating devotee should write the mantra,

ॐ गं गणपतये नमः

OM GAṂ GAṆAPATAYE NAMAḤ

in any language—everyday, 21 times, continuously for 21 weeks (147 days) only.

- Each week, each devotee should make some offering as well, of Rs. 11 or \$11 (**it can be more or less**).
- Each devotee can start writing on any day, but once started, it must be done everyday for 21 weeks continuously.
- Upon completion, devotees should send their notebooks and offerings to their local centre or to Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (Saki Vihar Road, Powai, Mumbai 400 072 India).
- The notebooks received will be deposited directly under the shrine on the day of the temple's consecration. The funds received will be utilized for the temple.
- Please encourage your children also to write this mantra. They can make an offering of Re. 1 or \$1 each week.

It is said that prayers go up and blessings come down! Lord Ganesha's blessings will be with you forever. While writing this mantra, pray to Lord Ganesha for the peace, prosperity, and happiness of all.

May the Lord's grace and Pujya Gurudev's blessings be with you!

In the Service of the Lord,

CENTRAL CHINMAYA MISSION TRUST, SANDEEPANY SADHANALAYA, SAKI VIHAR ROAD, MUMBAI - 400 072. INDIA.
Tel.: 91-22-2857 2367, 2857 5806, 2857 2828 • Fax: 91-22-2857 3065 • E-mail: ccmt@vsnl.com • Website: www.chinmayamission.com

2008 Mahasamadhi Family Camp

Dear Dheerananda and All Members of Chinmaya Mission Washington DC Regional Center,

Hari OM! Greetings from *Krishnalaya!*

You did it! And you did it extremely well! The entire Camp was so beautiful that even now I am reminiscing about all the events that took place there. From start to finish, it was flawless! What pleased me most was that under the guidance of our senior members, the team of the new and young members performed their duties so beautifully and cheerfully. Thank you all very much!

I feel confident that with such a dedicated team of workers, we will be able to do much more in Virginia when we are able to acquire the proposed property. I invoke God's grace and Pujya Gurudev's blessings for your efforts to succeed.

With Prem and OM,

Tejanyam



Om

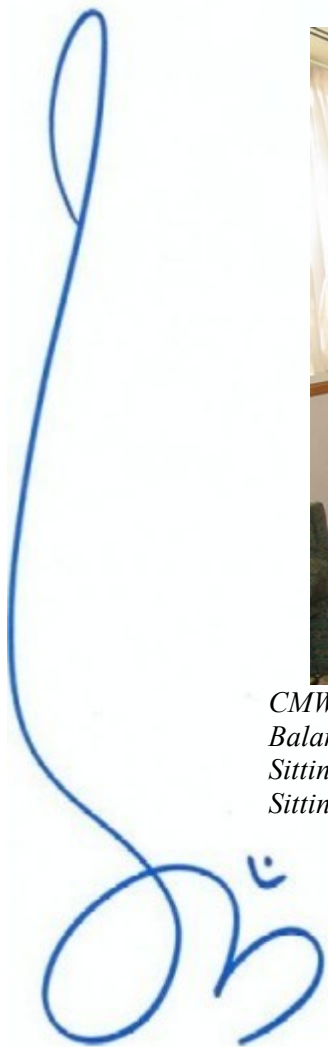


Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji, Swami Dheeranandaji, Acharya Vilasiniji, Acharya Ananta Sarma ji, Acharya Pramila ji



*CMWRC Trustees: Standing: Prakash G. Soman, Srikumar Gopalakrishna, Bina Patel, S. Balan, Raju Chidambaram, D.C. Rao, Anil K.Kishore
Sitting (chairs): Vilasini Balakrishnan, Swami Tejomayananda, Swami Dheerananda
Sitting (floor): Sumeet Bhargava, Nagesh Gadamsetty, Jay Sriram, B.K. Sathyanarayana*

2008 Mahasamadhi Family Camp



My Mahasamadhi Camp Experience

*By Asmi Panigrahi
Tapovanam, Silver Spring*

On Saturday July 26, I eagerly began packing for Mahasamadhi Camp to be held in Rocky Gap Resort. I was delighted that it would be held so close to my home. I went downstairs to the basement, selected the suitcase I would use, and carried it upstairs to my bedroom. My preparation, however, had started days before. I had printed out the online schedule for the Camp, taken the virtual tour of Rocky Gap Resort, and created my own table of what clothes I would need on what days. After a good amount of planning, I had finally started to pack that Saturday. There was a lake and swimming pool, so I would need my swimsuit. And if I was going to be outdoors in July, sunscreen and sunglasses would be an obvious necessity. Going hiking meant bug spray and sneakers. Oh, and I couldn't forget a water bottle. Plenty of T-shirts and athletic shorts for the summer weather, of course. By the time I finished packing, it was difficult to believe I would be leaving for a *spiritual retreat* on Monday. Nevertheless, I was thrilled, and couldn't wait to reach Rocky Gap.

We arrived at the resort around 5:30 on Monday the 28th. We had just enough time to settle in our room and head to our respective orientations. Going into 9th grade, I was in Group 4. I sat down with my familiar friends and we talked for a while until Aparnaji directed all of us to arrange ourselves in rows and columns. Then the orientation began. Yoga at 7 AM everyday? That meant waking up at 6 o'clock. Class from 9-12? That's 3 hours straight. How had I missed these on the schedule? However, I quickly learned that I needn't worry. There was plenty of time planned for us to enjoy several different activities. Still, did I really know what I was in for?

Looking back, I've made so many memories with friends, new and old, which I will truly cherish. From swimming in the lake as the breeze gently tickled our cheeks, to flying kites in the soft sun. From racing through the trail with our GPS systems, putting all our faith in that two-by-four inch plastic rectangle, to hiking and learning about our environment, realizing what a beautiful place Maryland is. From dancing at the Garba until our blisters were so numb it didn't even matter any more, to playing with the younger Bala Vihar groups, hearing "akka" and "tai" and "did" over and over again. From eating rice, dal, bhindi, paneer, mango custard, and *still* going to the campfire after dinner to roast marshmallows, to skipping rocks in the evening, and overhearing all the guys as they prank phone-called their friends. But I also gained something much greater from this Camp than just sweet memories. The spiritual knowledge I was exposed to is what I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Yes, the three-hour 9-12 class with Swami Sharanananda did seem intimidating at first, and yes, there were times when my legs hurt from sitting on the ground for so long. Still, I never once felt bored, and everything Swami Sharanananda taught us was so eye-opening. This was my first major exposure to Vedanta, and it really expanded my vision of what Hinduism truly is.



2008 Mahasamadhi Family Camp

Humans were all created as selfless beings. Therefore, we are selfless by nature, and it is this selflessness through which we shall flourish. At the same time, there is no such thing as a selfless-action, because actions themselves are neutral. The *attitude* behind the action, the understanding that I am the SELF (I) and not the ego (i), is what will determine if the action is *selfish* or *selfless*. The purpose of our life is this Self Realization. One must become conscious that I am not the Perceiver/Thinker/Feeler, the ego (i), but I am the SELF (I), the OM or Brahman, and that the Body, Mind and Intellect are merely instruments of experience for the ego (i). The Body is the physical form. The Mind is made of mutually opposing thoughts, and the Intellect is made of mutually supporting thoughts. But one must remember that *i* do nothing, for it is all because of the SELF (I).

The greatest enemy of man is desire (kama), which exists due to ignorance of our true SELF (I). Desire consumes our piece of mind, because a desire is that which can ultimately never be fulfilled. The three desires are: 1) to be immortal, 2) to be all- knowledgeable, and 3) to be happy. However, what we *do happily* is not a desire. What we *do to be happy* is a desire. True happiness can only be found within us, so searching for it in the outside world is futile.

Like Swami Chinmayananda says, "Don't keep the key to happiness in someone else's pocket!" From **desire** sprouts **anger** (krodha) or **greed** (lobha). These three are doors to a hell created around the individual, and therefore should be completely avoided. All actions are performed in the service of God, so one should selflessly perform his or her duties without being attached to the results. After all, even though it is *i* who is engaged in action, it is only because of the SELF (I). "Do your best, and leave the rest," to quote Gurudev.

All this knowledge is merely information. Intelligence, on the other hand, is the power to use one's knowledge at the proper time and proper place. At Mahasamadhi Camp 2008, I was not just given knowledge; I was taught how to apply those teachings in my own life. At this point, it is up to me to develop the power to put all I learned into action. Going into high school, I know I will have plenty of opportunities to do so. Mahasamadhi Camp really helped me understand who I am, on both a spiritual and cultural level. I feel truly blessed to have attended such an enriching camp, for getting the chance to live it with Swami Tejomayananda and many other revered Acharyas, and for being taught so much in such a loving environment. I gained an even greater sense of belonging to Chinmaya Mission. I have grown immensely from this once in a lifetime experience, and I am proud to be a member of the Chinmaya Mission family.



Efficiency

Keshav Kowtha

Shivanandam, Silver Spring

Efficiency means to do more in less time. In the Chinmaya Mahasamadhi camp in Rocky Gap, MD, a Swami named Swami Shantananda, gave an hour lecture about Efficiency to my Bala Vihar group of kids that are in middle school.

To get any work done in the whole universe, big or small, you must have a goal. To reach a goal you need energy. To get energy you need to eat well and sleep tight for approximately 8 hours. But for any task you should not use too much energy or not enough energy, only just enough to finish a task.

But if you just have energy the goal still won't be reached. You need to pour the energy into the Pot of Attitude. If you have a good attitude the pot is big and you will be able to reach the goal and vice versa.

In the pot there are four holes.

- Regrets of the past- "I failed my test last time, what if I fail?"
- Excitements of the future- "If I score the final shot, I will be a hero!"
- Anxiety of the present- "Oh no, I lost my pencil before the test, what will I do?"
- The hole that directs energy to the goal.

To not waste energy, one must live in the present and only think about the goal ahead.



2008 Mahasamadhi Family Camp

What is God?

Srikanth Kowtha

Chinmayam, Silver Spring

At the Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Camp, the teacher of my high school group Bala Vihar class, Swami Sharanananda of Chinmaya Mission Chicago, discussed a variety of topics, one of which was God and God-realization. According to Hindu texts, God is Sat-Chit-Ananda. Etymologically, Sat means pure existence, Chit means pure knowledge, and Ananda is pure happiness.

To help clarify the meaning of Sat, Swamiji told the story of Prahlada. In that story, Hiranyakashipu asks Prahlada if Vishnu is in the column. Prahlada answers yes, and Hiranyakashipu tries to destroy column and kill Vishnu. He destroys the column, but Vishnu comes and destroys him. The column itself was destroyed, but the rock remained. Swamiji used the pen he was holding to explain further. The pen can be crushed, the plastic powder melted, the molten plastic vaporized, but nothing is destroyed. In physics, this phenomenon is noted as the Law of Conservation of Mass, and in Hinduism, it is noted as Sat, or pure existence. Though the pen was mutilated, the matter still remained, and this act of being is Sat.

The next part of God is Chit, or pure knowledge. In order to have knowledge, some object is involved. In order to know about gold smithing, gold needs to be present. This knowledge is objective knowledge. Removing the object from the equation makes the objective knowledge pure knowledge. Pure knowledge is summarized by the understanding of the statement "I have a body, but I am not the body." Similarly, a goldsmith uses gold to make jewelry, but the goldsmith is not the gold. When one separates themselves from their body, mind, and intellect, then he or she has gained Chit, the pure knowledge.

Ananda, or pure happiness is achieved when someone reaches Sat and Chit. At that point, one has realized God, and has achieved true happiness and bliss. Swami Sharanananda explained that Satchitananda means that God is everywhere and in everything.



2008 Mahasamadhi Family Camp

Hari Om! Hari Om! Reverberated Everywhere

Sri Gopalakrishna and Sitaram Kowtha

The 2008 Mahasamadhi Family Spiritual Camp was held at the picturesque, award-winning Rocky Gap Resort in western Maryland from July 28th through August 3rd.

The Camp was special in many ways. There were eighteen CMW Acharyas along with Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, Sri Narain Bhatia, the CEO of CCMT, most of the CMW Board of Directors, and attendees from all over USA and Canada. Over 520 delegates attended the Camp. There were programs from 6.00 am to 9.30 pm, both for adults and children.

Guests began arriving around 3.00 pm on the first day at the beautifully decorated resort. The lobby showed two life size pictures of Sri Gurudev along with garlands, life size lamps and decorative items that transformed the place to a temple like atmosphere. The sevaks at the Registration Desk were busy, but efficient, as they verified registrations, handed out registration materials and guided the campers to the hotel desk and their rooms.

The opening ceremony started with a welcome and introduction of all the Acharyas, culminating in a resounding applause as Pujya Guruji entered the Conference Center. Guruji was welcomed with Poorna Kumbham and lit the lamp on the altar near Sri Gurudev's Padukas, inaugurating the Camp. It was followed by an inaugural dance by Srimathi Mrinalini Sadananda, a welcome message by our Acharya Vilasini and invocation from Mundaka Upanishad by Swami Tejomayananda. Pujya Guruji set the tone for the rest of camp by his enthusiastic and uplifting description of the meaning of the invocation. He briefly described what Mundaka is all about, and concluded the session with Aarathi to Gurudev. During this inauguration, the children had a parallel Bala Vihar orientation for each age group.

Promptly at 6AM Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty led the meditation. The hall was kept dimly lit, and there was pin-drop silence. The only sound one would hear was the guiding voice of the Acharya. We were given many tips on how to gain control of the mind through japa or chanting, doing thought massage of the body to maintain control of the mind, and to slowly shift focus of the mind to the silence, and keeping it there. As the camp progressed, more and more people rose early to join the guided meditation! It is remarkable how the Sathvik atmosphere at the camp slowly cleansed Tamas!



2008 Mahasamadhi Family Camp

Pujya Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda, expounded on the wisdom of Mundaka Upanishad, starting with the invocation on opening night, and completing it five days later. Mundaka Upanishad declares “*Sathyameva Jayathe*” or “Truth Always Wins”. Using humor and examples, Guruji impressed upon the audience that even in the present chaotic and seemingly corrupt world, only truth wins. (These words are very familiar to most of us as these words serve as the motto for independent India, which celebrated its 61st year of independence last month.)

The hall was fully packed during satsang sessions with Guruji. Guruji taught Mundaka in a series of 1 hour sessions, for a total of about 15 sessions. Each session started with Guruji bowing to Gurudev – Swami Chinmayananda, invoking Ganesha, and chanting Mundaka Invocation. The beauty and the depth of the words of the Upanishad flowed effortlessly, as Guruji used examples and humor to drive home the message. Each session ended with the prayer “Purnamada...”. The final session of each day would end with a bhajan and an Aarathi to Gurudev.

In a special message on Friday evening, Guruji asked us to (1) Love Thyself; (2) Love Thy Neighbor; and (3) Love Thy Mother. What he meant was that we should take care of the Chinmaya Mission center of which we are members (that is thyself). We should extend help to a neighboring center that is forming, growing or otherwise trying to sustain itself. We should not forget the mother country or the mission activities in the mother country that will continue to provide firm foundation for Chinmaya Mission worldwide. He talked about several ongoing projects. (1) Chinmaya Vibhoothi; (2) Brahmachari Course; (3) Adi Sankara Nilayam and E-Vedanta Course; (4) Purohit Course; (5) Upanishad Ganga video serial; and (6) Many schools, hospitals and temples run by the Mission. He also talked about an upcoming Yatra in India for which he has 25 slots for people from North America. The yatra includes visits to all of the key activity areas of Chinmaya Mission in India.

Guruji took time from his busy schedule to spend some time with the CMWRC Camp sevaks. Citing Saint Tulsidas, Guruji said that work should bring joy to the doer, and joy to those who will benefit from that work. He also said that there should be a nobler purpose for the work. For example, if we work towards hosting a party, we should enjoy the work leading to the party, and then the guests should enjoy the party. However, in the case of the party, one does not necessarily see a nobler cause. Whereas, working to get ready for the Mahasamadhi Camp is different. This is a noble cause. Thus, he asked if we enjoyed the work. He said that he could tell that everyone was thoroughly enjoying the camp. (Separately, Swami Ishwarananda talked about “work” in one of the Acharya Satsang sessions. He said - Work when done with joy is service. Work when dedicated to God is devotion. Work when done with enjoyment of the Self is Spirituality).



Hari Om! Hari Om! Everywhere! From the Bhajans – “Hari Om! Hari Om! Hari Om! Mama Swami Sharana Hari Om!”, to the corridors, lobby, ball room, restaurant, swimming pool and parking lot, the words “Hari Om!” reverberated across the resort. When we went boating in the alpine lake, other boaters called out “Hari Om!” When we went hiking on a trail that went 5 miles around the lake - the hikers and boaters greeted us with “Hari Om!” When we went strolling along the golf course after dinner, other walkers called out “Hari Om!” We could feel the presence of Sri Gurudev everywhere.

There was an Acharya Satsang each day from 7-8 am in the main conference hall . Swami Shantananda, Ishwarananda, Siddhananda and Swami Dheerananda presented one hour satsangs on different topics during the week. On Saturday morning, there was a special DVD satsang on Sri Gurudev, lead by Acharyas Gaurangbhai and Darshana Nanavaty.

During the afternoon, there were parallel breakout sessions from 4-5 pm on a variety of topics. There were many wonderful sessions each day that were topic based; Devi Group, Bala Vihar presentations, Q&A on Mundaka Upanishad, special topics such as Love and Devotion, and many more. There were bhajans, leading to the evening session of Guruji’s Mundaka discourse.

Guruji’s and Acharya’s Bhiksha was planned in great detail. The food for Guruji and Acharyas was specially prepared by sevaks. The campers were invited to sponsor Bhiksha, so they could serve him food and spend some time with him. It was humbling to see up close, a learned person, Gurudev’s choice as His successor and the leader of world-wide spiritual organization. He was down to earth, smiling, very energetic and compassionate.

Rocky Gap Resort along with the Indian chef did culinary wonders. No complaints from adults or children about breakfast, lunch or dinner. There was always plenty of food, it was very tasty, and there was always western style food along with Indian to satisfy every appetite and taste.

The entire resort exuded warmth and comfort. The rooms were very comfortable and clean. The resort management and staff were warm and friendly. They went out of their way to make sure all the needs of the camper and camp organizers were met. The resort provided hot water for the shower rush ahead of morning sessions, elevators were constantly running up and down, the dining areas were always ready for the next meal, the premises bright and clean. There were sufficient facilities for all the adult and Bala Vihar programs. Many took advantage of the splendid views of mountain and lake the resort provided. Some sat for meditation by the lake side at the break of the dawn watching the sun rise behind the hills. Others gathered on the balcony outside the dining hall after each morning tea to watch in silence the tiny ripples on the lake caused by a soft breeze. Yet others made sure they had a seat by the window overlooking the lake while dining in the large cafeteria. The lobby handled the large number of guests, be it at the camp registration, hotel registration, outdoor activities or the bookstore.

The Chinmaya Book Store with hundreds of selections adorned the lobby of the resort. As one might imagine, it was always busy. People were browsing and buying books, CDs, DVDs, pictures of Gurudev and other souvenirs. In one of the Acharya Satsangs, Swami Siddhananda urged everyone to buy at least \$100 worth of material, and give it as gifts to friends and family. He also talked about upcoming titles, including books for Bala Vihar teachers. Guruji encouraged the bookstore patrons by autographing some of the books. Arpita ji introduced a new DVD to the bhajan audience. It was an inspiring tribute to Guruji.

With Yoga/Meditation at 7 am, Acharya led classes and park ranger led outdoor activities, the children and youth were kept fully occupied. During the afternoon free time, many took advantage of resort facilities (swimming, mountain biking, boating) and park facilities (hiking, beach/swimming) for their recreation. The children were also given kite kits for more outdoor fun.

Every evening from 8:30 – 9:30 pm, was the time for cultural programs. One night was called ‘get to know one another’, the second night was Garba dance, the third night was a Dance Drama on Bhaja Govindam and the fourth night was a Bhajan Sandhya with bhajans rendered by Swami Siddhananda, Acharya Arpitaji, Sheela Kripalani and finally by Guruji.

The last night of camp was reserved for Banquet Dinner. There were recollections of the sankalpa, wisdom, grace and compassion of Sri Gurudev by Dr. Apparao Mukkamala, Dr. Sadananda and Vijay Kumar. It was followed by brief remarks from Guruji and a wonderful dinner. Guruji was presented with a donation for Chinmaya Vibhooti project from CMWRC. This was followed by announcement of winners of auctions and vote of thanks by Sri Gopalakrishna. Swami Dheerananda felicitated Sri Gopalakrishna for his hard work, leadership and successful orchestration of the Camp.

The Mahasamadhi Day Puja was the highlight of the camp. The halls were prepared overnight so that puja can begin on time at 7:45 AM. Two conference halls were fully seated, and the puja began as planned. Every family performed individual Paduka Puja to a personal altar. Puja kits included a picture of Gurudev and flowers, so that it was both a group event and a personal prayer. Led by Sri Gopalakrishna, everyone chanted the Guru Stotram, the 108 names of Gurudev and Guru Paduka Stotram. There was a bhajan, followed by a message by Guruji on Gurudev’s grace – a poem in Sanskrit that came to him while he was on a flight to India. All the delegates made their way to the altar to offer their prostrations to the padukas of Sri Gurudev.

Before we knew it, it was time to bid goodbye. We had an early lunch, packed the bags, checked out from hotel and said good-bye to all the people. During this week, some strangers became friends. Some friends became even closer friends. In all, everyone left on a spiritual high. It was a great week of learning, spending quality time with our Guruji, and above all re-living the wonderful experiences of the entire week, and reveling in the grace of Sri Gurudev.

Many were already planning for the next major camps – the International Camp on Vibhooti Yoga by Guruji in Chinmaya Vibhooti, India, and the 2009 Mahasamadhi Camp to be held at Niagara Falls, Canada next year.



Summary of Mundaka Upanishad

Ram Chandran

[Editor's Note: The book on Mundaka is available at the book-store. Guruji's discourse at the Mahasambhi Camp will be available soon on DVD]

The ***Mundaka Upanishad*** is one of the key Upanishads commented upon by Shankara. It is associated with the Atharvaveda. It is considered as a Mantra-Upanishad (in the sense that the verses are often used for prayers). But as many commentators observe, that unlike other Vedic Mantras that are used for sacrificial purposes, the primary object of Mundaka Upanishad is to teach the highest knowledge, the knowledge of Brahman. Pujya Guruji (Swami Tejomayanandaji) had the following profound interpretation for the meaning of the name of Mundaka Upanishad – Munda means head and Ka means Bliss. If all Upanishads are considered representing different parts of the human body then Mundakaupanishad will represent the head. In other words Mundakaupanishad represents the foremost of all Upanishads that leads to liberation.

Most of the books with commentaries on this Upanishad take the literary meaning of Mundaka and interpret it to be like the “Shaven Head” with an additional explanation. For those who understood the insights from this Upanishad, their ignorance gets cleared just like the “Shaven Head” after removal of hairs. According to these commentators, Hairs represent the material world of illusions and “Shaven Head” portrays the enlightened person free from all illusions of the material world. (In several Hindu Samskaras, head shaving is done symbolically and probably could be for the same reason!) Mundaka Upanishad explains about the JnAna Marga (path of knowledge) to reach the Brahman. It is believed that Mundaka Upanishad is intended for the sannyasis who generally have their head shaven. The root 'mund', meaning 'to shave,' also suggests that one who comprehends the teaching of the Upanishad will be liberated from errors and ignorance. Mundaka Upanishad contains 3 Sections each called a Mundakam or Khanda.

It begins with an invocation in praise of Brahma, the first of the gods, the creator and protector of the Universe. Shaunaka, a householder, respectfully approached the sage Angiras. The sage Angiras told him that there are two forms of knowledge – the higher and the lower. The lower knowledge is the knowledge of ritual, grammar and astrology; but the higher knowledge is the knowledge by which the eternal spirit is known. The Brahman is the source of all that exists... Even if they are elaborately performed, sacrifices and rituals are useless if they are devoid of knowledge. To praise these empty rituals as the highest good is a sign of ignorance. Those who are deluded will perform these rituals merely to gain some rewards there from. The Brahman cannot be attained through man-made objects. Various beings are born from the Brahman, and return to it. But the Brahman itself is without form, though it is to be found both within and outside the body.

2008 Mahasambhi Family Camp

To attain the Brahman, knowledge is the bow and devotion is the arrow. To attain the Brahman, the mind must be still and must not be troubled. When the Brahman is perceived, all doubts dissolve, and one is freed from the bondage of cause and effect (of actions and their consequences). The Brahman is the bridge by means of which one may cross the chasm of death. When one's nature has become pure, one perceives the Brahman. Human life is full of sorrows but when the human perceives the Brahman, grief disappears and he/she is freed from passions. The wise (those who are free of worldly desires) transcend the world of growth, decay and death. The Brahman is not perceived by means of the senses. Knowledge of the Vedas is not an end in itself, but it is only a means to attain the Brahman. Most importantly, this knowledge is to be imparted only to those who are qualified and ready to receive it.

Two Profound Analogies

In the first analogy the syllable AUM is identified with the bow, the atman or the self to the arrow and the Brahman to the target. Through repeated practice the true seeker with help of a bow and arrow aims the arrow into the target, the Brahmanic Consciousness. Through single-pointed concentration, meditation, and contemplation, the seeker penetrates into the Absolute Consciousness of Brahman.

In the analogy of the two birds, one bird is seated on the top of the life-tree, the other on a branch below. The bird seated on the low branch eats both sweet and bitter fruits. Sweet fruits give the bird the feeling that life is pleasure; bitter fruits give the bird the feeling that life is misery. The other bird, seated on the top of the tree, eats neither the sweet fruit nor the bitter fruit. It just sits calmly and serenely. Its life is flooded with peace, light and delight. The bird that eats the sweet and bitter fruit on the tree of life is disappointed. It finds the life's experiences impermanent, ephemeral, fleeting and destructive. Therefore this bird flies up and loses itself in the freedom-light and perfection-delight of the bird at the top of the life-tree. The bird on the top of the tree is the Cosmic and Transcendental Self, and the bird below is the individual self. The bird on the top represents the Paramartha Sathya and bird on the below signifies the Vyavaharika Sathya.

Three Prime Truths

There are three points being made here that are the bedrock of Upanishadic philosophy. First, all beings that exist both past, present and future are of the same nature, same substance, as the Brahman. Second, all forms (modes of existence), though ever-changing, proceed from the Unchanging, Unchangeable. This seeming contradiction is made possible by the illusory power of Maya. That is, the changing forms are illusory while the essential being, the Self/Atman is unchanging. Third, having come from Brahman they shall all, without exception return to the Brahman? When life is viewed this way we can understand the nature and purpose of our life and live accordingly. Don't regret on the past, avoid getting excited in the present and don't dream on the future! Life is a bridge, enjoy while crossing and avoid building any castle!!

Some Traits of the Source and Key Verses

“Self-luminous is that Being, and formless. He dwells within all and without all. He is unborn, pure, greater than the greatest, subtler than the subtlest without breath, without mind.” (2.1.2)

Again, Brahman is the Source: “From him are born breath, mind, the organs of sense, ether, air, fire, water, and the earth, and he binds all these together.” (2.1.3)

“Heaven is His head, the sun and moon His eyes, the four quarters His ears, the revealed scriptures his voice, the air His breath, the universe His heart. From His feet came the earth. He is the innermost Self of all.” (2.1.4)

“From Him arises the sun-illuminated sky, from the sky the rain, from the rain food, and from food the seed in man which He gives to woman. Thus do all creatures descend from Him.” (2.1.5)

“From Him are born hymns, devotional chants, scriptures, rites, sacrifices, oblations, divisions of time, the doer and the deed, and all the worlds lighted by the sun and purified by the moon.” (2.1.6)

“From Him are born gods of diverse descent. From Him are born angels, men, beasts, birds; from him vitality, and food to sustain it; from Him austerity and meditation, faith, truth, continence, and law.” (2.1.7)

“In Him the seas and the mountains have their source; from him spring the rivers, and from Him the herbs and other life-sustaining elements, by the aid of which the subtle body of man subsists in the physical body. (2.1.9)

“Thus Brahman is all in all. He is action, knowledge, goodness supreme. To know him, hidden in the lotus of the heart, is to untie the knot of ignorance.” (2.1.10)

“The Self is not to be known through study of the scriptures, or through subtlety of the intellect, nor through much learning. But by him who longs for the Self knows the Self. Verily unto him does the Self reveal His True being.” (3.2.3)

“He who knows the Brahman becomes the Brahman. No one ignorant of Brahman is ever born in his family. He passes beyond all sorrow. He overcomes evil. Freed from the fetters of ignorance he becomes immortal.” (3.2.9)



My Last Year Shivratri
Anmol Tewari
5th Grade, Frederick Chapter



Om Namah Shivaya!

Last year on the day Shivratri fell, fortunately school was off, so my little sister and I were able to join in with my mom in worshipping lord Shiva. On that day my mom had fasted like she does every year. We all helped each other to collect materials for the pooja like flowers, rice (akshat), fruits, etc.

We put the Shivalinga on a clean spot, which we call the Asana. While chanting “Om Namah Shivaya” 108 times, we gave him a bath with a mixture of clean water, Ganga jal, yogurt, butter, honey, and milk. Lord Shiva likes all kinds of flowers and leaves. On the leaves we wrote Om with the Sandal Paste and offered it to Lord Shiva. Then we offered him flowers, akshata, and incense. Later we offered him Prasad of fruits and dry fruits.

My sister and I kept our eyes closed and thought of Lord Shiva with our hands joined, while my mom was chanting 1000 names of Lord Shiva (Shiva Sahastra Naam).

Last of all we sang the Shiva Aarti all together and I asked Lord Shiva to bless my family, friends, and all in this world, keep us happy and healthy.

This year Shivratri is falling on the date of March 6th and we all are waiting to celebrate in again.

“What does Bhakthi truly mean and how do you practice it in daily life?”

*Jitesh Nadimpalli
Silver Spring*

[Editor's Note: Jitesh earned an award for this speech at Youth Competition of Balavikas of Fairfax]

Hari Om. Sri Gurubhyonamah.

When translated from Sanskrit to English, Bhakti literally means to ‘share’ or ‘participate.’ Bhakti signifies a blissful, selfless and overwhelming love of God as the beloved Father, Mother, Child, Friend or whichever relationship or personal aspect of God that finds appeal in the devotee's heart. Bhakti is the slender thread of love that binds the heart of a devotee with the Lord. A discussion about bhakti necessarily includes the mention of bhakti yoga, jñana yoga, and karma yoga from Bhagvad Gita.

Jñana yoga is the yoga of knowledge. Jñana yoga uses the intellect as a tool to understand that our true Self is behind and beyond our mind. Jñana yoga may be called the Quest for the Self or the Inquiry into "who we are." Karma yoga is the yoga of action which purifies the intellect and prepares it for the reception of Divine Light or attainment of Knowledge of the Self. The important point is that you will have to serve without any attachment or egoism. The practice of Karma yoga does not demand that you should possess enormous wealth or strength to serve. You can serve with your mind and body. If you find a poor sick man lying on the road side, give him some water or milk to drink. Cheer him up with encouraging words. Put him in a car and take him to the nearest hospital. If you don't have a car, call 911 or seek help and see that he is admitted into the hospital. If you do service like this, your heart will be purified. God is more pleased with such sort of service for the poor and helpless people.

Conversely, love of God and surrender to God's will is stressed in the Bhakti Yoga. There are no set ways to perform Bhakti yoga. Jñana yoga and karma yoga require strict discipline of the body and mind. The idea presented in the Gita is that bhakti yoga is easy because it's easy to love. The Gita teaches that out of all forms of discipline, the highest form is the discipline of devotion. Bhakti yoga adds an element of humanity to honoring the gods because it personalizes discipline through emotion. Bhakti is a universal way to understand the lord, and to participate in the path to liberation. So how does one love god or practice bhakti in daily life? The answer to this question was given in our puranas and by god himself in Bhagvat Gita.

According to Bhagavatam and the Vishnu Puranam there are nine forms of Bhakti, called Nava Vidhi Bhakti:

1. Sravana - hearing of God's Lilas and stories. King Parikshit attained liberation through Sravana. He heard the glories of God from Suka Maharishi. His heart was purified. He became liberated and enjoyed the Supreme Bliss. Most us who are attending programs in

Chinmaya mission's Bala Vihar are performing this bhakti. The problem is we are not purifying our thoughts and actions.

2. Kirtana-singing of god's glories. Sri Ramdass, Sri Annamachrya and many others attained maoksha by singing the glories of the lord. It seems, Lord Vishnu himself told Narada maharshi that he doesn't live in Vaikunta or in the hearts of sages or bhakts, but will be present where his devotees are singing in praise of him.

3. Smarana-remembrance of god's name and presence, like Prahlada and Dhruva.

4. Padaseva-service of god's feet. No mortal being has got the fortune to practice this method of Bhakti. But it is possible to serve your guru, parents or elders. Padaseva is service of the sick. Padaseva is service of the whole humanity at large. Many people served Shri Shirdi Saibaba and many more are serving Puttaparthi Saibaba. So choose your guru and service him with devotion.

5. Archana-worship of God. Worship can be done either through an image or a picture or even a mental form. The purpose of worship is to please the Lord, to purify the heart through surrender of the ego and love of God.

6. Vandana-prostration to god. The ego is effaced out completely through devout prayer and prostration to God.

7. Dasya-is the love of God through servant-sentiment. Serving and worshipping the Murtis in temples, sweeping the temple premises, meditating on God and mentally serving Him like a slave, serving the saints and the sages, serving the devotees of God, serving poor and sick people who are forms of God, is also included in Dasya-Bhakti.

8. Sakhya-cultivation of the friend-Bhava. Arjuna cultivated this kind of Bhakti towards Lord Krishna. To be always with the Lord, to treat Him as one's own dear relative or a friend belonging to one's own family, to be in His company at all times, to love Him as one's own self, is Sakhya-Bhava of Bhakti-Marga. In recent times, Taty Patil has cultivated this kind of Bhakti with Sri Shirdi Saibaba. He always used to call him as Sai Mama.

9. Atma nivedana-complete surrender of the self. The devotee offers everything to God, including his body, mind and soul. He keeps nothing for himself. He loses even his own self. He has no personal and independent existence. He has given up his self for God like Shri Rama Krishna Paramahansa.

A devotee can take up any of these paths and reach the highest state. The Bhagavan himself told us in Chapter 12 of Bhagavad Gita how a person or bhakta should be. A person who renounces the results of the actions, free from false ego, forgiving, self-controlled, never disturbed, free from mundane pleasures, anger, anxiety, desire less, pure, free from agitation and worry, who is equal to enemy and friend, impartial in honor and dishonor, heat and cold, happiness and distress, not attached to domestic life, engaged in devotional service, endowed with resolute faith in devotion, who worships the path of righteousness is very dear to the god and he is true devotee or bhakta.

In a way I am practicing Bhakti by going to the temple once a while and prostrating to the god, singing his prayers in my daily life in the morning, at meals and at night before going to bed and by attending bala vihar and listening to his glories. I feel this is not enough as I have not left my ego or false values or false actions. I want to be a true bhakta by being a person described by the Lord.

Frederick Chapter Summer Activities

Devi Ramaseshan

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

The Religious Coalition for Emergency Human Needs provides emergency assistance to Frederick County families and individuals. The Coalition coordinates assistance for those in need through a central office in Frederick, where client requests are received and assistance is provided with other county agencies. This Coalition made an appeal to other faith based communities in Frederick to donate food cans and baby hygiene products. Chinmaya members responded by organizing a food and baby hygiene products drive. The enthusiastic students and adults supported the drive very generously. The items were neatly packed, labelled, and delivered to the central office in Frederick. The ladies at the office were very impressed with the quality and quantity of products that were contributed very magnanimously by the families.



Shraddha Anjali for Mr. Soundararajan

M.R. Soundararajan, a famous Carnatic vocalist was a pious, humble and punctual person. Mr. Soundararajan was part and parcel of our Thygaraja and Purandaradasa Music Festival at Frederick. During the program, he and his students rendered the Pancharatha Krithis, followed by his solo wonderful concert. His absence has left a big void in the music world and he will be dearly missed by the Chinmaya Mission members of Frederick.

Members observed Shraddha Anjali for our beloved Mr. Soundararajan. People shared their experiences they had with him and his family members. A fundraising was held to help his eldest daughter, who has the responsibility of taking care of her two challenged brothers. The Shraddha Anjali was concluded by singing of bhajans.

Members and Friends

In Peace, In Him?

Aziza Meer

It is overwhelming. I met my best friend Suresh last week, when I was in India. He is from my college days. I was 18 and he was 17. When we parted many years ago, I was 19 and he was 18. Now our kids are that age. Last week, I sat across a room and we tried to make conversation, my husband, Suresh, his wife Madhu and I, while our 18-year-old Veena watched and participated when talked to. I was the least graceful of the group, because I couldn't think of what to say. I felt sick.

I met my best friend Geetha when I was nineteen, and by then had lost touch with Suresh because I finished my MA and left that college. When I look back I realize that when I met Geetha, I forgot Suresh. I actually forgot that he was my best friend just a few months back and I just parted with him. Geetha and I kept up until she died two years back from cancer.

Now when I saw Suresh, I wanted to be in touch with him like I was with Geetha. He is a man and there are constraints that Geetha and I did not have. Even more so that I lost Geetha, I want to speak with Suresh and connect. I can see he connects with me just as Geetha did no matter how much time may have elapsed between our talking. When Suresh and I talk, we talk at the simplest level, like we are still 18 and 17. We like listening to each other. Otherwise, Suresh is one impatient male, a business magnate with a lot of ego. Geetha was the opposite of him, but both Geetha and Suresh meet me as simple souls. I want to meet Geetha/Suresh and am anxious to do so. I missed talking to Geetha for two long years. She died and I was at her funeral. I dressed her in a saree, braided her hair, put bangles on her hands and her fingers closed on mine. She ridiculed the way I braided her hair—afterall she was stubbornly lying down dead and her braid went half way up her head. I want to talk to Suresh and if he wants to ridicule me, he is welcome to. Ridicule was Geetha's style, but Suresh is a gentleman with me. Geetha loved me to death and till her death. There was love in each of her words to me and in how she greeted me to how she ended our calls. She was in Ohio and we talked on the phone for hours till the day of her death. Suresh is not impatient when I talk to him. He listens carefully and he is not a bully, he is very gentle and true to himself. He does not put on airs.

Gurudev said we connect with people based on our needs. Geetha is Suresh and Suresh is Geetha to me. My need is for that total connection with my childhood friend who knows me inwards more than counts me outwards. My distinction between the two friends is very blurred. I called Suresh last night to check this out. Again he was very simple and our conversation was very childlike. There is Geetha for me and Suresh, all in one. It fits in for me because I believe that we are all one body, a part of the cosmic body. Years back, I had a vision of myself as a baby in Gurudev's lap, trusting and fully secure in his protection. When I shared this vision with someone, they questioned me with, "How dare you talk like that. You, a baby in His lap?" Babies are babies and they can be in God's lap at any time. Geetha, Suresh, and I as one unit. Just as God and I make a unit, me being a little part of that big self. That little part in Suresh, that little part in Geetha and that little part in me are one with God. Where the connection is not as obvious is where the rest of us stand, connected and yet not connected consciously.



Members and Friends

And on the flight back-there was an African lady sitting in the seat next to me. She is from Kenya and dressed in the traditional African attire. This was my second leg of the journey from India, and I was really tired after a 7 hour lay over at Amsterdam. She was sitting, extending her elbow into my seat and I had that much lesser room in that already claustrophobic little seat, sandwiched between two others. I was a bit whiny within myself and was thinking of how to get those few centimeters of space. Then I saw that she was sitting there and did not turn on her little TV. For a few minutes she read an article that spoke of faith in God. Now she sat and I saw her looking into my monitor off and on. I then turned on the TV in front of her and checked where her ear phones are. I didn't find them. I asked a flight attendant and got her ear phones. Then, I adjusted her volume and helped her wear her ear phones. She sat down and watched TV. I felt cozy. She had her blanket and she had her TV, her ear phones on and she was watching and looking comfortable. I felt really cozy. She was elderly and I saw my mom in her. She felt relaxed and comfortable with me and extended her elbow and sat down really settled. I fell asleep feeling very well.

We are one and in her comfort was my comfort. In my connection with my friends is my core existence. In Him a large palm is my soul, secure and happy.

A large, stylized blue signature or scribble, possibly representing the author's name, located at the bottom left of the page. It consists of a long, vertical, slightly curved line that ends in a small loop, with a few additional strokes at the bottom.

Guru's Grace

Shobha Chidambaram, MD

People may see the following story as full of mere coincidences; in my family, which is much indebted to Gurudev, Guruji, and Swami Dheeranandaji, we see Guru's Grace all through it.

The incident happened just days before Mother's Day 2008. I came home around 4 PM on a Saturday afternoon after attending a MS conference. Then I and my husband went to Old Town, Alexandria for a walk in the waterfront. But while there we decided to go as well to a nearby Barnes & Nobles bookstore to use a \$100 gift certificate we had from one of our friends in Houston. As soon as we entered the store, the first thing my eyes fell on was a book titled "Remarkable Mother" by President Carter. The book had just been released in time for the Mother's day. Having great regard for this President, I picked up and opened the book to browse. In the very first page I opened, there was a photograph of Lillian Carter, mother of the President, standing under a banner or sign reading "AIR INDIA". Obviously she had been to India on a Peace Corps mission in 1967. With increased curiosity I flipped to another page and what do I see? It was another photograph of Lillian Carter, this time sitting down on the floor along with several others for an Indian style meal. She was actually seated next to a bearded Swami. I showed the book and the picture to Raju who at once recognized the Swamiji as none other than our beloved Gurudev! Indeed on the next page was President Carter describing how grateful his mother was for the opportunity to meet Swami Chinmayananda!

You can imagine our excitement at the very "accidental" manner in which we learnt something new about Gurudev's life. The chance elements surrounding our "discovery" intrigued me: Going to the book store on a whim, seeing President Carter's book first as soon as entering the store, opening the book right at the page where the photograph of Mrs. Carter with AIR INDIA was, then flipping open to a page with a picture of Mrs. Carter with Gurudev!

We did not waste time in buying a copy of the book. My next wishful thought was: "Won't it be nice if we can meet President Carter sometime and have him autograph the books?" Now, not all desires are bad. There are good desires and mine sure is a good one, I told myself. And who but Guru is there to fulfill good desires of his devotees?

Next day, after I finished seeing my office patients and was going to hospital for making rounds, I tuned to NPR and what do I hear? President Carter was going to be in a McLean book store signing the book! I sought and got help from a physician friend who "googled" the cyberspace to get me the information about the location of the bookstore and when the President was going to be at hand for autographing the books. I called Raju and conveyed the information.

So far so good, but there was a problem. The book signing event will take place, we found, on Tuesday at 7 PM. How are we going to be at the bookstore at the same time we were supposed to be home to host Swami Dheeranandaji's class? Fortunately, our friend Benjamin Root came to our rescue to come home and keep it open for Swamiji and others.



Members and Friends

At 6 PM Tuesday we were at the Book-A-Million store and joined the line which was just beginning grow long. We expected President Carter to arrive at 7PM as advertised, but to our surprise learnt that he was already there. The line moved quickly. We got a second copy thinking we would surprise Swami Dheeranandaji with one copy. Before long we were in the presence of the President surrounded by several security officials and signing stacks of books at a furious pace without ever looking up. As he was signing our books, I managed to say in a low whispering voice that we were from Chinmaya Mission. For a second or two, he looked up at us with a faint smile as though he recognized the relevance of my remark, but too constrained at that time to talk to us. With the long line behind us, no one could shake hands or talk to him, but I nevertheless managed to pass on to him a copy of a recent Mananam issue on "Living in the Present". With mission accomplished sooner than expected, we could return in time for Swamiji's class!

Well, to tell you another story, this turned out to be the third opportunity for me to present a book from the Mananam series to a living President of the United States. Previously, we had met President Clinton in 2007 at another book signing event and given him a copy of "Compassion". Five years prior to that in Sep 2002, on the first anniversary of the 9/11 tragedy, I received a totally unexpected call from the White House asking me to meet President Bush next day in the Roosevelt Room for observing the National Days of Prayer and Remembrance. There I was next afternoon, seated among Rabbis and Cardinals and other religious leaders, across the table from the current President of the United States and wondering how I came to be there. I nevertheless had prepared myself for the occasion, armed as I was with a copy of another Mananam book which I had to clear earlier with the White House security. At the end the meeting, where Mr. Bush talked freely to us about himself, the challenges following 9/11 and the need for prayer and faith, I presented him with a copy of "The Power of Faith". Again, looking back at this event, I still wonder who indeed was behind this mystery call from the White House. I see Gurudev smiling at me!

Later, on May 4th of this year, on Gurudev's birthday at Chinmayam, I related my story about President Carter to the audience to show that "where there is a will, there is a way", especially with Guru's Grace behind. If two minds put together can achieve this much, what cannot happen if all of us in CMWRC put our minds together? I am suggesting that we should put our minds together to get President Carter to come visit our Chinmayam and give a talk about his mother and all the good work he does these days. We can do this, if we send a letter signed by one or two hundreds of our members.

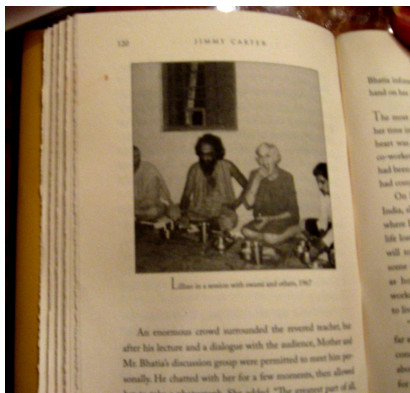
Are you willing to do that? After all, Gurudev is standing with us to make this wish come true!

Jai Gurudev

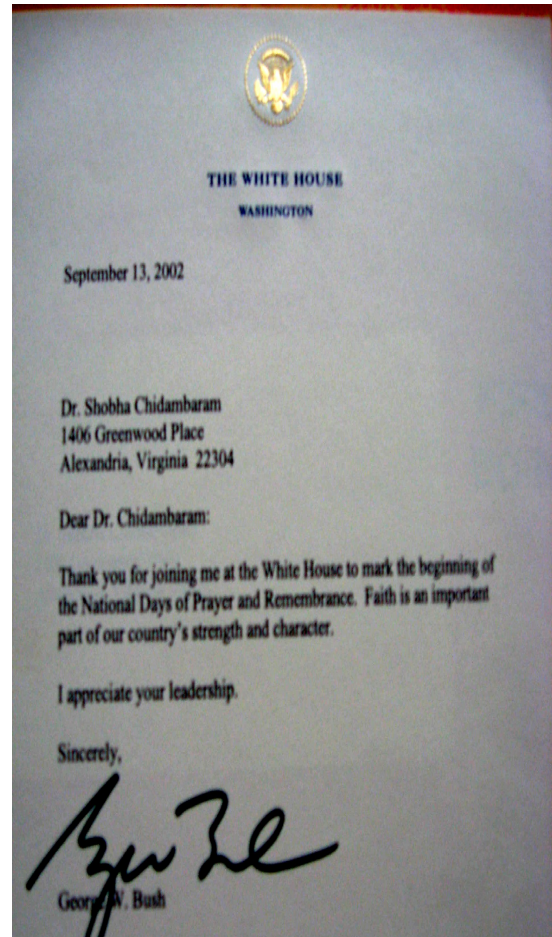
P.S.: *Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji reviewed this article during the just concluded Mahasamadhi Camp. Later, as he was walking out of the Cumberland Room after a class, Guruji told me and Raju that we should indeed invite President Carter to the Mission and that, if that happens, he will be happy to attend the event in person.*



President Clinton looking appreciatively at the copy of Mananam issue on "Compassion"



From President Carter's book "A Remarkable Mother" showing a photograph of Ms. Lillian Carter with Gurudev in 1967. Mr. Carter later autographed this book for the author. He received the Mananam issue on "Living in the Present".



President George W. Bush after a meeting at which he was presented a copy of the Mananam issue "The Power of Faith"

Handwritten blue scribble or signature on the left side of the page.

My Thoughts on Gita Chapter 7, Verse 24

Uma Roy

Each verse of the Bhagawad-Geeta is like a perfect pearl that might be treasured as part of a beautiful string complementing the beauty and meaning of the adjacent nuggets, or viewed just in itself as a complete and pithy expression of supreme wisdom. Some time back our teacher, Sri Swami Dheeraananda, asked a few of us to pick a verse from chapter VII of the Geeta and speak on it for at least 15 minutes. I chose verse 24, which, by the way, delighted him. Though I cannot fathom the depth of his understanding of this verse, I was happy to find that my presentation of the verse did not totally disappoint him. Most likely for the reason that writing improves one's understanding and to encourage me, Swamiji has asked me to write down my thoughts on this great verse. The verse is:

Avyaktam vyaktimaapannam manyante maamabuddhayah I
Param bhaavamajaananto mamaavyayamanuttamam II
(Verse 24, Chapter VII, the Bagawad-Geeta)

'The foolish think of Me, the Unmanifest, as having come to manifestation, not knowing my higher, immutable and peerless nature.'

In previous verses in the same chapter Shri Bhagawaan has indicated to Arjuna that His all encompassing nature might be seen as having two levels – aparaa (lower) and para (higher). Lower nature or aparaa Prakriti is eight fold – the five great elements – earth, water, fire, air, and ether – and the mind, intellect and ego. The Higher or the Para Prakriti is the Life Principle itself by which the world or the aparaa prakriti is sustained.

In this verse the Lord further declares that He or His Higher Nature is Absolute, One without a second and beyond the matrix of time and space in which all names and forms appear and disappear. All that can be sensed or perceived or conceptualized come under the 'manifest' category and are subject to the limitations and mutations of time and space. Every sense object, be it large or small, has a beginning and an end. Every thought, no matter how subtle or gross, too is bound this way. It inevitably goes through changes. The extroverted thoughts quite rapidly change and generally keep the mind in a state of flux. Such is its nature that it lacks the ability to focus on just one type of thought for long. Even a short story or drama must have a variety of emotional expressions to keep the mind engaged. No wonder then that our extroverted mind has been compared by the ancients to a monkey, always jumping from one branch or object to another. The intellect's playground too is time and space. The finest of theories and ideologies be it scientific or socio-ethical are dependent upon set conditions and thus have a limited scope of validity. For example in Physics the theory of relativity is not consistent with the quantum theory and vice versa. In this age of abundant information we have often witnessed the lapses of every type of socio-political system in given circumstances. Even the subtlest aspect of our inner instrument or antahkarana, the ego, which is like a reflection of Consciousness on

Members and Friends

the ever swirling pool of thoughts, goes on shifting its identity as the thoughts change and is thus shackled by a deep sense of limitation. 'I use to be foolish but now am wise', 'I was quite well off sometime back but am almost broke now', 'I have always enjoyed good health but now am sick' – these types of notions are commonly entertained and expressed.

The Lord declares that He or His Self-evident, Effulgent, Eternal intrinsic nature is beyond and untouched by the confines of time and space. Not only that, never does His essential nature get lost and become some other nature that is conditioned and finite. At our mental imaginative level it can at best be indicated by some examples that ironically are very much within the parameters of time and space! The way the room-space and the car-space exist in and are not separate from space, similarly the manifest outer world made of the five great elements and the inner world made of mind, intellect and ego have no existence if not rooted in the Unmanifest Sat-Cit-Aananda. The way the ocean does not become the waves but rather waves are nothing but the ocean, so too the manifest is nothing but the Unmanifest misconstrued as something apart.

The positive definitions given by the Masters for indicating the intrinsic qualities (Svaroopā Lakshana) of the Lord are worth mentioning here. Though they are, in fact, just indicators of the Real, the Self-Evident, the Unbounded Bliss, which can never be defined, they are still most potent as, for ages, the realized Masters have used them to guide the mumukshu, the seeker of Liberation, to grasp the Indicated.

The first indicator is Sat: - Commonly translated as 'Existence', Sat is defined as 'kaalatrāye'pi tishthati iti sat' – that which remains unchanged in all the three periods of time is Existence or Sat. It is not made of parts that are perishable. It is not subject to modifications. A bud dies to become the flower, the flower dies to become a fruit and so on. But the Self is always of the same nature – 'sadaa-eka-roopa'. Thus the body dies, the thoughts of the mind change and everything else in the outer world also changes, but the Lord the Paramaatman is beyond the pale of change.

The second indicator is Cit:- Translated as 'Consciousness', the term 'Cit' is defined as 'jnaana-svaroopah' – that which is of the nature of Knowledge. Every object invariably is known or is capable of becoming known at some time or the other. Even the ignorance of an object is an object of our knowledge. That is why if I am asked "Is your son here today?" or "Do you know Bengali language?" or "Are you familiar with the theories of quantum mechanics?" I say "Yes" if my son is there or if I know the language or the theory, and say "No" if he is not there or if I don't know the language or the theory. I not only know what I know but also know what I don't know. The body is known, the mind is known, the intellect is known and also the ignorance of everything that exists in deep sleep state is known. The subject 'I' which knows all these objects – both known and unknown – has to be of the very nature of Knowledge. The senses, mind and intellect are all inert as they are created from the five subtle but inert great elements (tanmaatras). The capacity of the senses, mind and intellect to reveal their respective objects – sense objects, feelings and thoughts – cannot be inherent in themselves. Their object revealing capacity is derived from the Lord, the Paramaatman. Thus the Self which lends the function of knowledge to these inert faculties, must be of the very nature of Knowledge. All objects of the world are known through the medium of thoughts.

The thought of computer or a book reveals it to us. But how do we know the Self or the 'I'? The Self is known without the instrumentation of thoughts. It is known as such without any mediate instrument, 'im-mediately', for its very nature is that of Knowledge. Only to know an object apart from oneself do we need instruments like eyes, ears, mind, etc. But to know oneself there is no need of instrument. The Self is known by the Self through the Self's own effulgence in a non-objectified fashion. This ever-shining, self-shining Principle of absolute Knowledge is called Cit.

The third indicator is Aananda:- This is defined as 'sukha-svaroopah' – of the nature of happiness. This can be understood from the fact that one is dear to oneself at all times. Even if suffering from afflictions the Self is loved by the afflicted and he or she desires to live in health and happiness. Even the thought of suicide originates from the erroneous understanding that death would render freedom from sufferings to the self and restore it to happiness. Also, one loves oneself the most. One gives up even cherished objects like wife and children if they become a source of pain for oneself. This love for the self is the proof that It is of the nature of Bliss, otherwise who would love something that is ridden with pain and sorrow? The strange tragedy is that despite being of the very nature of Bliss one forgets one's blissful nature and runs after the world of objects to squeeze out a little bit of happiness.

Finally let us take the three terms that the Lord uses in this verse to point to his Unmanifest Nature – 'Higher', 'Peerless' and 'Immutable'. The term 'Higher' here denotes that which is Independent, opposed to the lower that is rooted in or superimposed upon the Higher. This as well as the other two terms may come under the 'atad-vyaavritti-lakshana' 'not that or negation definition' of the Lord. This is description of an object by the negation of all that it is not. Peerless is that which is one without the other. Only the Self or Paramaatman is. All manifest names or forms are superimposed on It. We cannot say that the notion of a snake on the rope has an existence that is comparable to or of the same veracity as that of the rope. The term 'Immutable' denotes that the Lord is not subject to any change. The outer and inner objects change but the substratum upon which this quicksilver-like saga goes on shifting is ever the same. The changes are only apparent. The Truth remains changeless.

Hari OM!



Ch. 2 (Sankhya Yoga) Yoga of Knowledge Part 1 of 4

Nilkanth Bhatt, Richmond Chapter

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

Krishna had known Arjuna from his childhood and had always admired his strength, valor and heroism. So this apparent show of weakness and unwillingness to perform his duty by Arjuna was somewhat shocking to him. He asked Arjuna “When did this un-Aryan like and disgraceful dejection come upon you? Shrug off this weakness of heart and stand up. This type of impotent behavior is not appropriate for you, the scorcher of foes.”

Arjuna was in no condition to heed Krishna’s advice, so he continued pleading his case for running away from the war. He said “Oh Arisudan, (slayer of the foes) tell me how can I send arrows to my teacher Drona and Grand father Bhishma, who are worthy of my worship? How can I be the cause of their deaths and also of my cousins Kauravas? If I kill my teachers, all the wealth and enjoyments I gain in this world will be tainted by their blood. I do not know what would be good for all, us conquering them or them conquering us? My heart is overwhelmed with pity and my mind is confused as to what is my duty. I ask you to advise me decisively, what is good for me. I am your disciple. Please guide me, I take refuge in you.”

Arjuna realized that he was too involved in the situation, and he must seek advice from someone he trusted and respected. And how could he expect true help, if he did not completely surrender? He did not know whether Krishna was anything more than a great statesman but he knew there is no one more worthy to surrender to than Krishna.

Krishna found in Arjuna a sincere student who was seeking life of perfection, devoid of sensual urges, as was evident from his words; so what followed was the song divine, containing the profound truth of Upanishads.

Krishna said, “(Arjuna) you are grieving for those that should not be grieved for, yet you speak words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead because there was never a time when all these kings, you or I did not exist (in the past) nor there will ever be a time (in future) when they, you and I will not exist.

Just as in the same body a person passes from childhood to youth and to old age, in the same way he passes from one body to another. Those who know this truth do not give over (such transitions).”

Experiences in life are caused by senses coming in contact with the sense objects, which creates feelings of pain and pleasures, heat and cold. These experiences last only as long as the contacts last, they have beginnings and ends therefore they are impermanent. Krishna advises that one must endure them bravely irrespective of their nature.

Members and Friends

We do not experience the immortality of the self because we identify with these impermanent experiences and feel that we are impermanent. That which is impermanent never truly has its own existence. Its existence depends on circumstances. When the circumstances change it becomes something else. Just as the existence of snow in our streets depends on the below-freezing temperature, and when the temperature rises snow melts and disappears.

That which is pervading all the impermanent things and beings is the permanent self. It is indestructible and imperishable. Just as by demolishing a house, the space in the house cannot be demolished, similarly by the destruction of the impermanent things (or beings) the permanent self cannot be destroyed.

Bhagavan says: "Oh Arjuna these bodies of the beings have an end, but the self within them is eternal, indestructible and incomprehensible. Therefore fight (perform your duty). Neither of the two who considers him to be the slayer and that who considers him to be the slain knows the self."

The nature of the self (as in myself, yourself, himself, herself etc.) is such that it is neither born nor does it die. It does not come into being and then ceases to be. It is unborn, eternal, changeless and ancient. It is not killed when the body is killed.

Then what is birth and death? Bhagavan says, just as a person gives up the worn out clothes and puts on new clothes, the self gives up the worn out bodies and enters into new bodies.

Old age, disease, weapons or fire can destroy bodies but the self cannot be affected by any of those. Air in a room may become clean or dirty, the air may even be sucked out of the room but the space in the room will always remain unaffected by all the changes. The space in the room is the real self of the room, which makes the room what it is.

The air in the room may be felt, may even be seen if it becomes too dusty, but the space in the room is unmanifest, untouched, indestructible and ever-present. The space was there before the room was built, it remains as room space as long as the room remains, and it also remains there after the room is destroyed.

The self in us was always here; it is here and will always remain here.



Historicity of Mahabharat

Dr. K Sadanandaji

[*Editor's Note: This article by Sadaji was picked up by many Internet Sites*]

This article is based on the information that I found in March 1995 issue of "Saptagiri" published in Telugu by Tirumala Tirupati Devastanam, authored by Shrii Janamaddi Hanumanta Rao. The article itself was based on the research effort by Professor K. Srinivasa Raghavan. The research was acclaimed by several famous pundits of Panchanga Shaastra including the Secretary of the All India Panchanga Samskarana Sangha, Pandit Radhashyaam Shaastri from Hariyana, and Vice chancellor of Sourashtra University, Shrii D.R. Mankad, etc.

Based on the astrological information provided by Veda Vyaasa (Position of the stars etc), Mahabharat war was estimated to have started on 3067B.C. on 22nd November. On the day of the war, the astrological positions of the Sun, Moon, Rahu, Saturn, Guru, Mangala and Sukra planets have been described by Vyaasa. By looking at the position based on Panchangam, Indian Calendar, and matching with the position of the stars described by Vyaas and comparing with the Julian Calendar, one can arrive at the precise dates for the war. Furthermore all other related incidents that took place before and after the war were described in Mahabhaarat, and the dates for these can be precisely matched with the Julian calendar, as discussed bellow.

Shrii Krishna made a last minute effort to make peace but failed. He left the Upaplaavya city on Kaartiika Shuddha Dvaadasi day in Revati Nakshatra (star) between 7:36 - 8:24AM. He reached Hastinaapura in Bharani Nakshatra, and had discussions with the Kouravaas till Pushyami Nakshatra. The day Duryodhana rejected the peace proposal was Krishna Pancami. Krishna left Hastinaapura, and had consultations with KarNa before he departed. (He revealed to KarNa that he was the eldest son of Kunti) on Uttara Palghuni day. Krishna informed KarNa that Duryodhana must get ready to fight, seventh day from that day, which will be Amaavaasya day (New-moon day) with JyeshTa Nakshatra. Krishna returned to Upaplaavya city on Chitta Nakshatra. Three days after that on Anuradha Nakshatra Balarama came to Upaplaavya. Next Pushya Nakshtra day Pandavaas left with Krishna to Kurukshetra.

Fifteen days after return from Upaplaavya city, Balarama left on Punarvasu Nakshatra on the tour of sacred places. (Balarama did not want to participate in the war that involved cousins on both sides). He returned to Kurukshetra after forty-two days in the ShravaNa Nakshatra. The war already started eighteen days back. On the nineteenth day, BahuLa Caturdashi day on ShravaNa Nakshatra, Duryodhana died. It was the fifty-ninth day after Amaavaasya with JyeshTaa Nakshatra.

Krishana returned from Hastinaapura after his unsuccessful peace mission on Uttara Palghuna day. Starting from that day, the seventh day is New-moon day (amaavaasya) with Saturn on Rohini Nakshatra as discussed by Vyaasa. Rahu was approaching the Sun, and the Moon was turning towards Amaavaasya (New-Moon day).

Acharya Uvacha

36 years after the Mahabharat war, Yaadava kula was destroyed. This was predicted by Krishana by astrological happening - "Rahu has compressed Purnima on Chaturdasi day. This happened once before the Mahabharata war and again will be happening soon and this will lead to our destruction". He remembered Gandhari's curse on the Yadava kula.

Astrologically a strange phenomenon occurred during the Mahabharata war. The lunar cycle (paksha - normally is 15 days) sometimes happens in fourteen days. But during the Mahabharata war-time a rare thing happened - the paksha got compressed to 13 days. (May be 13 is a bad number). This aspect has been discussed in the Bhiishma parva - 3rd Adhyaaya. Guru and Shani are in Vaishaaka, Moon and the Sun entered in the same house one after the other making amaavaasya on the Trayodasi day it self . This peculiar condensation of the thithiis into thirteen from fifteen is a rare phenomenon as discussed by Vyaasa in Mahabharat and has inevitably followed by mass destruction due to war. This incident provided a direct means to establish the precise date of Mahabharat war.

According to Julian calendar this type of planetary collusion occurred definitely in 3076 BC in November. Vyaasa writes:

Caturdashiiim panchadashiim
 Bhuuta puurvamca shoodhashiiim
 Imaantu naabhi jaaneham
 Amaavaasyaam trayodashiiim
 Chandra suurya bhougrastou
 Ekamevam trayodashiiim
 AparvaNi grahaNe tou
 Prajaa sakshapaishyataH | |

" I have seen fourteen days a paksha, fifteen day completion or extension to sixteenth day also. This amaavaasya falling on the thirteenth day itself I have never seen before" - says Vyasa. That, on the same month Sun and Moon eclipses falling during the missing thithiis is a rare phenomenon, resulting in large-scale disaster to people.

One month before, in Margashira, during Purvaashhaada Nakshatra, armies of Pandavaas and Kouravaas have assembled on the West and the East sides of the Hiranya river , respectively. The next day was Navaraatri and Durga Puja day. Duryodhana was itching for the war. That evening Duryodhana sends a word with Sekuni's son Ulaka, " We have finished the prayer to the arms and everybody is ready - why there is further delay in starting the war?" The next day, Margashira Shudda Ekadashi day, in KRittika Nakshatra, the war started. Hence, the famous Bhagavad Geeta teaching also started on that day. The war began at 6:30 am. The date according to Julian calendar was 22nd November, 3067B.C.

Other notable incidences that occurred: Bhiishma's death:

Maagha Shuddha AshTami day in Rohini Nakshtra in the afternoon that 58th day after the war started, Bhiishma died. (This is the actual death He actually fell in the war on the 10th day after the war started).

Sri Krishna's Birth - He was born on 3112B.C. on Friday at 11:40 PM. Pandavaas Birth - YudhishTara was born on August 31, 3114BC, Tuesday (Mangala Vaaram) Shudda Panchami JyeshhTaa Nakshatra - He was 696 days elder to Krishna.

Bhiima was 347 days younger to YudhishTara. - Krishna Trayodashi, Makha Nakshatra, and Arjuana was 303 days younger to Bhiima. Shukla Chaturdashi Soma Vaaram (Monday) Uttara PhalguNi Nakshtra.

When Pandavaas came to Hastinaapura after the death of their father Pandu, it was 3091BC and YudhishTara was 14 years, 9 months and 11 days old. When he was coronated by Bhiishma as a prince, YudhishTara was 20 years, 1 month and 26 days old. (November, 3094BC).

They reached Varanasi in PalguNa Shuddha AshTami RohiNi Nakshtra.

Droupadi's Swayamvaram -in 3091BC, April - to reach the Wax-house it took 10 days for Pandavaas. They stayed there for an year. After the burning of the wax-house, they spent six months in the Shaalihottra's ashram and seven months in Ekachatra city.

The second coronation and building of Indraprasta was in November 3091BC, seven months after the marriage.

Rajasuuya yagna was performed after Arjuna's dig vijaya tour - It took five years and six months for Arjuna.

Subhadra's marriage was in April 3084BC. Three months after that was Khadava vana dahanam.

Abhimanyu was born in 3083BC, February.

Kaliyugam started in 3105BC, October 13th, Amaavaasya Mangala (Tuesday)

JyeshTa Nakshatra - Kali was born. This was the most inauspicious day. The next Pournima day (Full-moon day) was full eclipse of the Moon, October 1, 3104BC. That was the day, when the five grahaas along with moon were in DhanishTaa Nakshatra.

Dharmajaa's Rajasuuya - Fifteen years before the Mahabharata war was the Rajasuuya yagna of Dharmaja. That day was amaavaasya (new-moon day). JyeshTa Muula nakshtra . YudhishTara shakam started in 3082BC, October 26th . The gambling and the banishment of Pandavaas to forest was in November 3081BC, Margashira shukla-Trayodashi.

Vanavaasam was 12 years and living incognito was for one year (13 lunar years + 5 lunar months + 12 days or 13 solar years plus 18 days) - Bhiimshma calculates and declares that Dhurodhana's calculations were wrong. AJNaata vaasam (living incognito) began in Margashira 3069BC. Arjuna was noticed on Margashira Krishna Navami, 3068BC.

The Great war began on 3067BC, Friday 22nd November, Margashira shudda ekadashi Nakshatra.

The war lasted for 18 days.

Dharmaraju ruled for only 36 years.

25 years later YudhishTara shaka started. (Thursday October 26th).

Fifteen years after Dharmaja rule started, Dhutaraashtra, Gandhaari, Vidura, Kunti and Sanjaya left for Vaanaprasta (forest living). That year itself Vidura performed praayopavesham.

Two years after that Dhutaraashtra, Gandhaari and Kunti got caught in the Forest fire and died. Sanjaya was only left.

Shrii Krishna passed away on 3031BC, April 13th Friday.

Pandavaas Maahaa Prastanam was in 3031BC, in November.

These are the dates that matched the Indian astrological description of the stars and the moon, and Julian Calendar predictions. There is so much self-consistency in all the events and the descriptions that it makes one wonder. Based on these exact information Mahabhaarat must be Five thousand years Old (from today) as per the historical accounting. The analysis is extremely precise and scientific, matching the astrological position of the Indian and the Julian Calendars.

The beauty and the scientific psychoanalysis of Bhagavad Geeta stand out as monumental contribution by the Mahabharat period to the mankind. Based on the above facts the historicity of Mahabharat cannot be questioned.

WORK WE ALLMUST

Acharya Anantji

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

As human beings in our present state of evolution, we have no choice at all between a life of action and a life of inaction. Work we must. The only choice available to us is in determining "how" to act. We can either act to the detriment of ourselves and for the disaster for all around us – or we can act to bless ourselves, and to bring at least a ray of smile on the faces of others around us in the world.

Work we must. There is no choice. Whether we are on the lowest rung of the social ladder or on the highest, the governors or the governed, the higher or the lower class – we all must work. Nature will assert and make you work. Action is the insignia of life in an organism. So long as we live and breathe in our bodies, we have to act and work, which is the final expression of life in its grossest form. So then we must now try to understand how best we may work.

In order to drive home the ideal way of life the Lord describes in the *Bhagavad Gita* the true worker and the despicable type of hypocrites (verse 3.6): **He who refuses to work with his limbs but sits brooding over the sense-objects of pleasure in his mind, he the deluded fool is called a hypocrite.** Mental immorality and indulgence bring about more dissipation of our vital energies than intelligent physical immorality and sensuousness. One may claim to be morally good, honest, truthful, etc. But if one is mentally entertaining immoral thoughts, dishonest motives, false pretences, etc., the personality dynamism in such an individual sinks low. And soon, he who might have been a person marked for success slowly and steadily sinks into incompetence and failures, all results of his inner dissipation.

As a contrast to this hypocrite, the Lord paints the picture of the intelligent man who lives the ideal life of higher values (verse 3.7): **But who controlling the senses by the mind, unattached, employs his organs of action in Karma Yoga "service of all", he indeed excels.** The sense organs can be controlled only with the mind. The mind running out through the sense organs becomes our powers of perception and our inner ideas. *Vasana*-s in us determine whether we get involved with the perceptions or not. The world of objects has no power over us unless we allow our mind to do so. Temptation for an object stems from our mental reaction to the objects.

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A man who has thus re-educated his values orders his sense activities by his re-adjusted mind and comes to live a calm life, a master of the outer world, no more tossed about by the fluctuating environments. Such a man must thereafter employ his organs of actions to work with dedication for the service of the world around him.

He must work in the world with a mind "unattached". This word is often is in the Bhagavad Gita, and unless we understand its full import, we are apt to misunderstand the entire philosophy of the Gita. What is attachment? Certainly it is not merely physical – we are not attached to people like the "Siamese twins". When we say we are attached to our pets, we mean it is the mental attachment. Whenever we have a strong feeling of "want" for any being or thing, there is attachment. The two factors "I", the ego and "want", the desire to possess and enjoy. Thus ego and egocentric desires together constitute "attachment".

Therefore, when *Krishna* says that a man of self-control who has tamed his sense organs through his mind, serves the world "unattached" – it means serving the world "without ego and egocentric desires and lusts". Such an individual excels because for him the field of work serves as a theater for exhaustion of his existing *Vasana*-s, without creating any new ones. The purgation of *Vasana*-s brings peace and calmness into the bosom. A peaceful mind is not only more creative and irresistible in the material world of success, but it is again the vehicle to reach us into an ampler world of fuller awareness – of a larger state of Consciousness.



Analysis of the Mind - Anger

Dr. K. Sadananda

[Editor's Note: This is 4th in the series – Analysis of the Mind. The first three appeared in the earlier 2008 issues of Chinmaya Smriti]

Anger is an emotion which is experienced by all, to various degrees at various occasions. Even the gods are not free from this emotion, as our pauraanic stories indicate. Some of the Gods are personified by this emotion itself – In the rudram, it starts in the praise of Lord Shiva – namaste rudra manjare..- manja means krodha or anger. Mother kaali is depicted as incarnation of angry Durga. Not that the gods are angry, but anger in gods is invoked to stabilize the human mind by destroying the demonic forces within and without, or to keep the human mind under control. Everybody has some opinion about the emotion called 'anger', starting from psychologists, philosophers to lay men. One fellow said to his friend that he left anger in Kaashi (It is beautiful tradition that a person who makes a pilgrimage to Kaashi has to leave something that one is attached to). His friend just smiled and asked, 'What did you leave in Kaashi? The friend responded, 'I left anger in Kaashi'. His friend kept bugging him, asking him the same question again and again. The fellow got frustrated and become wild after answering many times the same question; he shouted with angry tone- 'I told you I left anger in Kaashi'. Well, that is how we leave our anger! At the same time we do see lot of LakshmaNas around who get angry with very little irritation, while also people like Rama, even though very rarely, who are well balanced and ready to forgive other's mistakes, out of compassion not out of weakness.

During the sandhyavandanam or daily prayer, meditation is done as a part of praayaschitta (cleansing action)– kaamorkarshiit manjura kaarshiit namo namaH – to keep the mind under control from desires and anger – the two great twin enemies of the mind. Vedas and puraaNas uniformly look upon anger as serious problem of the mind that affects its health. Anger is considered as an obstacle for the growth of the mind. Many do not recognize the seriousness of the problem. We cannot fight with any enemy unless we are aware of it along with his strengths and weaknesses. Awareness of the problem that what anger can cause to the mind could motivate us to overcome it. The problems that arise because of anger have been spelled out by Krishna in Gita.

For example, in B.G. 16-4 Krishna divides human beings into two groups – those that have demonic qualities and those that have divine qualities. Anger is listed as one of the demonic qualities. In third ch. Krishna says:

kaama esha krodha esha rajo guna samudbhavaH |
mahaashino mahaapaapmaa viddhyenamiha vairiNam | |

Arjuna, know that desire and anger, born of rajo guNa, are the two unsatiated greatest enemies of a person contributing to the highest sins.

Sin is that which disintegrates the person and takes him away from his natural state of peace and tranquility. Anger makes the one to commit actions that are not worthy of a human being, since in the rage of anger one loses the discrimination of right from wrong-

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kroddhaat bhavati sammohaH, sammohaat smRiti vibhamaH |
smRiti bhramshaa buddhiH naaShaH, buddhinaaShaata praNasyati | | B.G.2-63

Thus anger causes jnaana-vijnaana naaShanam, essentially destroys one's spiritual knowledge, which is a divine wealth (daivii sampatti). It takes one away from moksha, the essential human goal, keeping a person locked up in samsaara. Anger in fact dehumanizes a human being, when he is overpowered by it and acts with that emotion. Shankara says anger can destroy the very humanness in a person and makes him unsuitable even for material pursuits, or purusharthas; dharma, artha and kaama, besides moksha stated above. Hence scriptures warn again and again that anger need to be curtailed, if one wants to evolve. Awareness of the problems that anger can cause should help to motivate a person to discipline himself to get rid of this greatest enemy.

Many do not agree with this spiritual teaching. They argue that there are two types of anger-good temper and bad temper. Good anger is that which is proper, righteous and just, that is required to maintain the good around. Bad anger is that which is unrighteous, unjust, and improper. Therefore proper anger in a measured dosage is not bad. Now, question is, what is the proper anger? Everybody has an opinion about it, but in general, anger that one gets is proper and is always justified, while the anger that others get is improper and unjust. My anger is obviously caused by genuine reason and sometimes has noble purpose, to get the job done properly. Good anger is required for success, and for life functioning properly. Everyone feels he is justified to get angry. Otherwise people will use him as a doormat, stamping all over him to get their things done. When people are stampeding on others, we have to get angry, right?

Scriptures do not agree with this assessment. They do not look at the anger from its cause, whether it is justifiable or not. They look at it from what it causes or its effects on the mind. Anger deprives cardinal positive values that are extremely important for a well being – at the individual level, at the family level, at the corporate level, at the national level and ultimately at the international level. Anger being a very powerful emotion, it destroys three fundamental virtues that are essential for one's spiritual growth. They are 1) samatvam 2) suukshmatvam 3) viveka, which are essential constituents or results of four fold qualifications required for a spiritual seeker, and these are discussed below.

1. Equanimity (Samatvam): Equanimity of the mind is required for well-being, both at micro level and macro level- that is at an individual level and at the collective level. Krishna says, during the discussion of karma yoga- samatvam yoga yuchyate – the yoga is defined as equanimity, samatvam – yoga means that which integrates emotional and intellectual segments of the mind. Karma yoga is that which prepares the mind for jnaana yoga. Anger destroys the samatvam, all the preparations of the mind get derailed and one has to reestablish them all over again. In puraaNas we hear stories that whenever somebody curses out of anger, the one who curses has to spend many many years in austerities to regain that equanimity that was lost due to anger. In jnana yoga anger disturbs the mind, making it unavailable for contemplation. An angry mind cannot meditate on anything, much less on spiritual things. Mental composure is a virtue and anger destroys that.

2. Sensitivity (suukshmatvam): Anger destroys the sensitivity of the mind. Sensitivity means sensitivity to the feelings of the others around. In the rage of anger, mind becomes extremely gross and sees violence as the only solution to the problem. Scripture says 'ahimsaa paramodharmaH' – non-violence is the supreme virtue of a human being. Violence need not be at the physical level. It could be at mental level and at speech level. Some times, effects of physical violence can be corrected.

It could be at mental level and at speech level. Some times, effects of physical violence can be corrected. But mental hurt or words spoken to hurt people can be more damaging to the integrity at the individual, family and at the community level. Lack of sensitivity of the mind expresses at facial level with facial distortions and, at speech level in terms of indecent, hurtful words and negative language. Mind justifies it as the only remedy to the problem at hand. One regrets later about one's actions or about his spoken words that he cannot take back. Whenever there is a regret, it is a sure sign that the action done out of anger was not appropriate. Sensitive person will understand that violence is an expensive remedy. The spiritual path is derailed by violence. A mind has to be sensitive to discriminate the substantive from the superficial, the reality from the falsehood of superimpositions. That sensitivity is last due to anger.

3. Viveka (Discriminative faculty): When one is angry, the worst thing that can happen, as Krishna emphasizes, is loss of discrimination of right from wrong, dharma and adharma. In anger, one acts impulsively. Any impulsive action lacks discrimination and it is an instantaneous response. In anger, words, speech and actions come out without quality control. During impulsive action, the intellect has become dull and gets over powered by emotions. Actions that come out will be baser and the behavior will be worse than that of an animal. Essentially the intellect or buddhi which makes a human being distinct from animal, is lost temporarily.

ahaara nidraa bhaya maitunanca saamanyam etat paShubhiH naraaNam |
buddhirhiteshaa adhiko visheShaH, budhya vihiinaaH paShubhiH smaanaaH | | - says BartRihari.

Eating, sleeping, fearing, producing, all are common for a human being and an animal. What makes a man different is only his intellect (buddhi) and if that is lost, he is no different from animal. In fact he may behave worse than an animal, since animals do not have vengeance while man can act with vengeance.

Scriptures are concerned about the effects of anger on the human mind. Therefore there is no good anger and bad anger, if the anger affects the above three virtues. One has to look back and examine oneself if his anger affected the above three. Any nagging feeling about the past action done in anger is a sure sign that it caused damage in the mind. By conscious effort one can control oneself from being angry or act in anger. One can become insensitive to that feeling, by habitual suppression. Insensitivity only means the mind has become very gross. I remember that whenever I return from States and see many child-beggars on the street with no decent meals or education, or see some mothers carrying babies and begging, I feel very bad. Slowly I loose that sensitivity as I encounter many of them every day. Habitual anger also makes the mind insensitive.

Now what are the remedies to overcome anger. Swami Chinmayanda used to say – ‘you should get hold of anger, before it gets hold of you’. Several remedies are suggested, one can follow all of them until one has established in oneself. Forbearance (titiksha) is emphasized as part of Shadsampatti (the wealth of six values) for spiritual journey. Krishna advises Arjuna – contact with the world through the senses causes all these dual emotions at physical, mental and intellectual level; cold and heat, pleasant and unpleasant and praise and insult – they come and go (what comes must go). Hence, one has to forbear these rather than act impulsively.



Hence scriptures are not much concerned about the cause for anger to differentiate it as good or bad, just or unjust, but about what it causes on the quietitude of the mind. In anger, we compromise our equanimity, sensitivity and sensibility, which are essential for one's evolution. Since everybody is prone to get angry, from cradle to the grave, what are the remedies available to control anger? The following provides a brief list.

1. Prayer. Prayer involves surrenderance to the supreme. Mind that is ready to pray is the mind already free from anger since attitude of prayer is counter to the attitude in anger. In anger, the 'ego' is maximized or gets blotted up. In prayer the 'ego' is surrendered or becomes small. Prayer to the Lord increases one's tolerance level. Anger is a sign of lack of tolerance. Unfavorable situations that go beyond the level of tolerance-threshold contribute to anger. Repeated situations, uncompromising situations, situations that are beyond one's control causes frustrations and takes one to go beyond his tolerance level. Pray to the Lord to give titikshaa or forbearance to face whatever the situations that are beyond one's control. Here the prayer of serenity comes to my mind.

2. Pratijnaa – self-commitment. When I get angry, it means a being or a situation is causing me to loose control on my own mind – That is I surrendered my mind to somebody or some situation for it to control. Essentially I lost my freedom to act. Getting angry implies that I let my mind to be conquered by a situation or person other than I. Normally we think by getting angry we are trying to control the situation. But it is actually the other way around. There is saying -'shesham kopena puurayit.' – the strength of the remaining arguments is provided by being angry or shouting at the opponent. What it means is whenever the arguments get heated up, it implies that logic has become weak, and one is resorting to anger to enforce his logic. It only implies the argument is already lost. In addition, in anger, the intellect gets weekend and any further arguments become weaker, since intellect is not strong enough to present them effectively. By prayer, the intellect gains the strength to operate effectively; one can say, it is a blessing from the Lord.

Also one can make an auto suggestion, to enforce the mind that 'I should not get angry, even if I feel I am justified'. I will make better impact by being firm, but polite. Pratijnaa is a promise to oneself or auto suggestion, that I behave properly or request the lord to make sure I behave properly. It is like New Year commitment, of course, to be followed, not to put under the pillow. The pratijnaa has to be renewed daily to make sure that the mind gets slowly locked in as an assimilated value. Introspection would help to reinforce the mind to be vigilant next time, so that it will remember not to repeat the same reaction.

Effectively one raises one's threshold for tolerance or titiksha a bit more than yesterday's. Lord is called 'shaantaakaaram, bhujaga shayanam ...' Shanti or peace comes once the threshold for tolerance becomes unlimited! Bhugaja shayaanam –Lord is sleeping on the snake-bed. Snake symbolizes anger (LakshmaNa or Balaraama gets angry with least provocation since they are avatara of adhishesha). The anger itself is coiled down and formed a water bed for the Lord to sleep on. Lord Shiva made the snakes into his ornaments. That is what happens when one prays to the Lord and invokes his blessings. Our anger also becomes a bhuushaNam, ornament. We getting angry is different from we use anger as in instrument. We can use it only if we have a control on the emotion. With prayer anger turns into a firm abidance in one's dharma.

3. Prasaada bhaavana – The surrenderance to the Lord, involves an acceptance of what it is. ‘What I have is His gift and what I do with what I have is my offering to Him- says Swami Chinmayanandaji. Also he says – ‘what I have is praarabda and what I do with what I have is purushaartha’. The given situation demands an action. When I offer my action itself to the Lord as an offering (kainkaryam or naivedyam), the result that comes out of that action is prasaadam. That is there is an attitude of acceptance of the result without any reaction. Anger is a reaction to a situation at hand. If the current situation is the result of previous action, I have to accept ‘what is’ in facing the situation and act with a goal in mind. If it is going to be offering to the Lord, then I am automatically constraining the goals to be proper and the means to achieve the goals should also be proper. Here proper implies it should be dhaarmic. Dharma is rather complex and one can follow a simple rule and he would not go wrong. Whatever I expect others to do in a given situation, I should do the same; and whatever I expect others not do in that situation, I should not do. In the process, I would not have any internal conflicts. I expect others to be faithful, sincere and do their best efforts. I should do the same. I do not expect the others to do short cut or compromise or undermine my efforts and take advantage of me or my position. I should not do that to others. That kind action is a dhaarmic action and is acceptable for an offering to the Lord. The results are shaped by the laws and factors beyond my control. He is the author of these laws. Hence results come from Him. Whatever that comes from Him is His prasaada or blessings and are accepted with reverential attitude or with non-reactive mind. Thus if I recognize that all that comes to me in the form of objects, people, and situations is His prasaad, I develop an attitude of acceptance and act accordingly as the situation demands. The next result is also Prasad and my next action will also be an offering to the Lord – This is what Krishna calls as cycle of action and results. He says when you perform all actions in the spirit of yagna or offering, then the gods (production potential of the field) will bless the results and you please the gods again and maintain the wheel of action. The result is my mind is freed from all agitations and is ready to appreciate the truth expounded in the Vedas.

4. pratipakshaa bhaavana – Substitution by the opposite. In spite of all this understanding, anger still comes, particularly during contemplative stage. There are always situations that will be frustrating due to inefficiency around or others not doing their dharma or not fulfilling your expectations. One can sit down and brood about these, but nothing will happen, other than we miss the boat of proper action that is demanded of us. Many things are suggested to take the mind away from the situation for it to stand apart and reexamine the situation correctly. Counting 1 to 10 or 1 to 100 helps the mind to divert from the situation. If action can be put off for the time being for the mind to cool off and to rethink the situation, that helps. Recognition of the presence of the Lord even in the person with whom I am angry, helps to change my attitude towards that person. If the Lord is able to stay in him all the time tolerating him without any complaints, I do not have much of a reason not to tolerate him for few hours, days or years. Substitution therefore involves positive attitude towards others, towards situations. This helps to cool the mind and helps to look at the problem in better perspective. It helps to diffuse the anger and channels the mind to more productive direction. There is a saying – every frustration is a seed for new invention.

Finally the best way to follow how the mind is able to follow these suggested remedies is ruthlessly keep track of the mental attitudes and introspection. Swami Chinmayandaji used to suggest us to maintain a spiritual diary. Since the new year is beginning, we can commit ourselves and follow these guide line to help our mind to overcome these baser emotions so that it becomes healthier and more productive not only in the material world but more importantly in the spiritual world.