

Chinmaya Smrithi



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

Volume 19, Number 4 -- July 11, 2009

On Being Alone, versus Loneliness

– Swami Chinmayananda

Aloneness is different from loneliness. By remaining lonely, at a place where there is nobody else, realization is not guaranteed. Even in the midst of a crowd you can be alone – all alone is Brahman, the one without a second. Aloneness is not in the surroundings, but it is in one's attitude within the bosom – to remain with one end or goal – to remain with all attention fixed upon that one goal. The habit of constantly remaining alone, even in a busy market-place, is to be cultivated.

Therefore, in order to reach samadhi, learn to sit down at least ten minutes every day without any activity, physical and mental. Let us sit down, without any expectation of possible enjoyments, with the firm understanding that the objects around us can never give us the happiness. Constantly, keep up the habit of remaining alone, remembering him. With nothing else in the mind, the mind is alone. The alone-mind alone can move to the truth which is always alone.

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Next Issue

- September 2009, Articles due by August 20th 2009
- 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

- July 20 – August 14 – Summer Camp at Chinmayam
- July 29 – August 3 - Mahasamadhi Camp, Toronto, Canada (see flyer in this issue)
- August 03 – Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanada Mahsaamadhi observation at Chinmayam
- September 12/13 – Bala Vihar Classes resume for 2009/2010

Study Groups

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

Bookstore/Library

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

Useful Links:

CMWRC – Washington Regional Center
Chinmaya Mission Trust
Chinmaya Mission West
Chinmaya International Foundation, E-Vedanta Course
Washington Region – Dulles VA Chapter website
Washington Region – Frederick MD Chapter website
Washington Region – Springfield VA Chapter website

www.chinmayadc.org
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www.chinfo.org
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Please Note

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

Editorial Staff:

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

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

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

News in Brief

CMWRC Events Held

- Dr. K. Sadananda ji held Yajna during Memorial Day weekend on Sri Ramana Maharishi's Sat Darshana (see article in this issue by Shashikala Duraiswami)
- Bala Vihar Annual Days were held across all chapters of CMWRC during June 6th/7th weekend.
- Jnana Yajna by Swami Ishwarananda were held in Virginia, Chinmayam and Frederick

Announcements

A Plea from CMWRC

- Have you participated in our Congregation loan program to support our Virginia Property?
 - If you did, please spread the word around.
 - If not, please contact your Treasurers. CMWRC needs your help, now more than ever.


16TH CHINMAYA MAHASAMADHI FAMILY CAMP 2009
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Niagara Falls



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San Diego

Camp Programs

Adult Programs

Free yourself from the ordinary by immersing yourself in the extraordinary! Our diverse schedule is designed to encourage learning and not compromise on enjoying. From morning to evening, being in the company of our Acharyas will make a lasting impression.

General Program from 6am to 10pm including:

- Meditation
- Satsang w/ Acharyas
- Srimad Bhagavatam: Discourses by Guruji
- Sports & Recreation
- Rest
- Discussions & Workshops
- Bhajans & Chanting
- Aarti
- Social Time
- Cultural Programs

Young Adults Programs (18-30 years)

Unleash your true potential by interacting with like minded teachers and friends. The many different activities planned will intrigue you and keep you coming back for more. For a young adult to have the opportunity to learn from an ardent Spiritual Master such as Swami Tejomayananda is indeed rare.

General program from 6am to 10pm similar to the adult program shown above.

Children and Youth Programs (4-17 years)

Friends, fiction and field trips what better way to uncover the glories of Srimad Bhagavatam. From meditation to movies every moment of every day will be filled with fun! Acharyas from all over the world have been invited to teach and inspire children and parents alike.

General Program from 7am to 10pm including:

- Meditation
- Yoga
- Workshops
- Family Time
- Field Trip
- Sports & Recreation
- Arts and Crafts
- Drama
- Games and Movies
- Cultural Programs

AUGUST 3RD

Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Day Program

Would you like to sponsor any part of this event?

Please contact Mukesh Tanna at 416-520-7031 or visit chinmayatoronto.org for details.
To Give is Love. To Give is Life.

For complete info, pricing and to register, please visit:

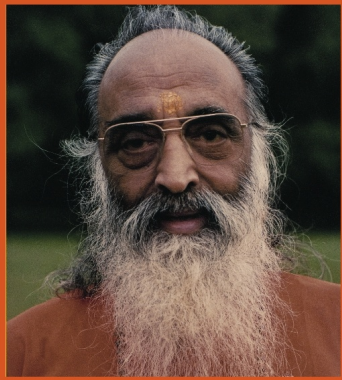
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CHINMAYA MISSION TWIN CITIES PRESENTS

SPIRITUAL DISCOURSES

BY

H.H. SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA
HEAD OF CHINMAYA MISSION WORLD WIDE



"UNDERSTAND YOUR MIND & TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE"

IN THIS WORLD OF CONSTANT CHANGE AND PAIN,
DISCOVER HOW CAN THERE BE JOY AND PERFECT HAPPINESS.
COME FIND YOUR ANSWERS IN THIS DISCOURSE ON
SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA - CHAPTER 14.

JULY 13TH -17TH, 2009

6:45 – 8:30 P.M.

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ON JULY 13TH AT 6:45 P.M.



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WWW.CHINMAYA-TWINCITIES.ORG



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Chinmaya Mission Twin Cities
A Center for Spiritual Studies

Hari Om!

Pujya Gurudev's blessings have enabled us to have our own Chinmaya Mission Center in Twin Cities. We are very excited to announce the inauguration of our new Center in Chaska, MN on July 13th by H.H. Swami Tejomayanandaji, the Worldwide Head of Chinmaya Mission. He has named it as "**Chinmaya Ganapati**".

Guruji will also be conducting a week long spiritual discourse on "**UNDERSTAND YOUR MIND AND TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE**", based on Chapter 14 of *Srimad Bhagvad Gita*. The dates for the discourse are July 13th to 17th 2009, and on behalf of Chinmaya Mission Twin Cities, we would personally like to invite you for this auspicious event. Please keep these dates open in July 2009.

Please see the attached flyer for more details. We have some families who will be able to host out of town Chinmaya Mission members. We look forward to your visit to Twin Cities. Please feel free to contact us for any additional information.

Sincerely,

CMTC Board
Chinmaya Mission Twin Cities
12575 County Road 43,
Chaska, MN 55318

Bhu-Matha (Mother Earth)

Submitted by Devi Ramaseshan

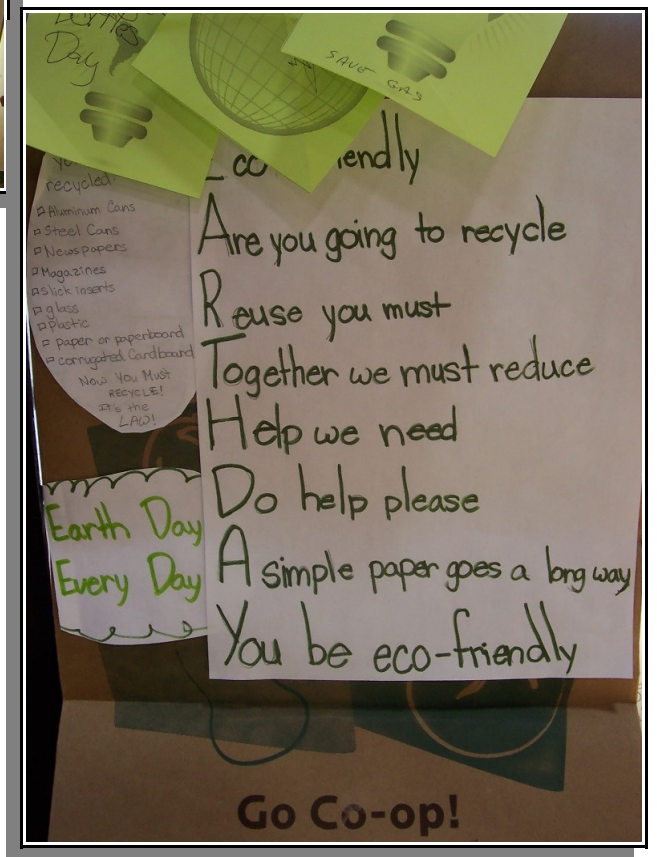
Frederick Chapter

Samudra vasane Devi !
Parvatstanamandale !
Vishnupatnim namastubhyam.
Padsparsa kshmaswame.

O Mother Earth! O Great Goddess shining in the apparel of the Ocean and conveying maternal, love through the beautiful hills which are your limbs! O beloved Consort of Lord Vishnu who sustains the whole creation! I bow unto Thee, forgive me as I walk and touch Thee with my feet. O Mother!

During the earth month, the Balavihar students of Chinmaya Mission, Frederick chapter participated in an awareness program. The theme for this program was " Save Bhu Matha ". The students decorated brown grocery bags with eco-friendly messages .The decorated bags were returned to the Common Market store, Frederick, and displayed. Also the pictures were posted at the website [Flickr: cricicons' Photostream](http://www.cricicons.com/PhotoStream). Enjoy the pictures.





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Journey to the West - 2

A Spring Break Adventure

By: Vamsi Manne (Sundaram, VA Dulles Chapter)

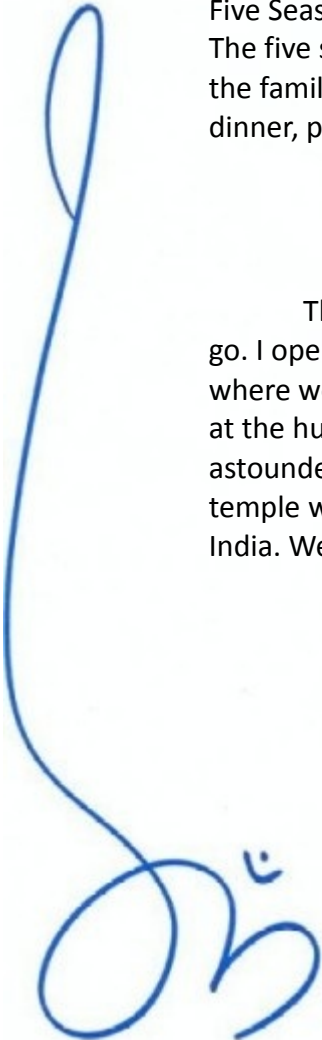
This article is the sequel to the first article published in Chinmaya Smrithi - May 2009 issue. I sincerely invite you to explore the 2nd part of my journey to the west, an adventure I took during my spring break.

Rolling Through the Corn Fields

I glanced over at the clock. The time was 2:30 in the afternoon. Our family packed all our belongings into our mid-sized car. About 10 minutes ago, my dad decided to visit the Upper West (consisting of the states Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington). There, we have a friend who lives in the City of Five Seasons. So, we started the car and rolled into the cornfields. After two droning hours, we took a pit stop at Dairy Queen and had ice cream. Another tedious hour passed by when we reached Iowa City. I knew we were close to our destination. I saw ears of corn sprouting from the fertile ground everywhere and saw tall and thick grass as we drew nearer to the city. Perhaps I should tell you about what the City of Five Seasons is, if you are wondering. The City of Five Seasons is the nickname of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The five seasons are winter, spring, summer, autumn, and time to enjoy all the four seasons. I met the family who are friends with my dad at Cedar Rapids. We enjoyed the long night with delicious dinner, playing games, exploring the whole house, and then finally slept in peace.

The Palace of Art

The next morning, I evasively woke up. I heard people talking. My dad told me it was time to go. I opened my eyes widely. I was finally happy that the long night was over, because I knew exactly where we were going: The Windy City! I was surprised when we stopped at a huge abode. As I gazed at the huge palace, it was a temple called BAPS Shri Swami Narayan Mandir in Barlett, IL. I was astounded when I saw the gorgeous carvings and marvelous sculptures when I went inside. The temple was built with 40,000 marble and limestone pieces, hand carved by skilled craftsmen from India. We visited an exhibit on “understanding Hinduism”



and India's significant contributions to the world. Some of the contributions by the great sages were, Sage Bharadwaj, who developed the aviation technology around 800 BCE, Sage Kanad, founder of atomic theory around 600 BCE, and Sage Aryabhata, who derived the concept of zero, theory of astronomy and believed that Earth was round even a thousand years before Copernicus. As we entered the main sculpture room, I saw the most beautiful and complex columns in the whole world. Some of them were placed in glass cases because they were too fragile to be braced by human hands. When we exited the mandir, I was in a daze. If you can picture the most beautiful and complex carvings and sculptures in the world, it is 100 times better if you see these in real life. Then, I heard my mom say 'Navy Pier'. I knew it! We were going to the Windy City!



Sri Swami Narayan temple at Bartlett, IL - a masterpiece of architecture by skilled craftsmen from India



Lofty structures in the Windy City

The Windy City

Wshhhhhhhh! As I opened the car window, the harsh winds blew into my face. The Windy City is the nickname of the famous metropolis of Chicago, since it is so windy there. I frantically looked for the Sears Tower, considering the location of Chicago. Finally, I spotted the tower hovering above the other small buildings. Against the forceful winds, our family finally entered the hectic streets of Chicago. We roamed around the bustling city just to see lofty structures, Art Institute of Chicago (where Swami Vivekananda addressed Parliament of World Religions in 1893), large hordes of people, and the Navy Pier. I will always remember Swamiji's quote, "As the different streams having their sources in different paths which men take, through different tendencies, various through they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee". My experience at Chicago was awesome and I look forward to visiting there again in the years ahead.

Return to the Eternal East

The next day, our family packed up our possessions and placed them in the car. Believe it or not, this family trip was an adventure of my lifetime. This was one of the coolest trips I've ever been on. Finally, we started our car and departed St. Louis for a breathtaking journey back to home. 14 hours later.... we arrived at our house in the evening. After 3 stops and many hours sitting in the car, I hopped out of the car and went inside our house to relax. From this spectacular adventure, I learned about the saints of India in the West such as Swami Vivekananda and Swami Chinmayananda their spiritual teachings for making me learn the opportunities to succeed in life by visiting places and gathering up imagination. I am eager to hear from my fellow Bala Vihar children about what your journey will be like in this summer.



4th in the Series
Hindu Rituals and Routines -
Why Do We Follow Them?

Submitted by Sowmya Sundararaman



11. Why do we do pradakshina (circumambulate)?

We cannot draw a circle without a center point. The Lord is the center, source and essence of our lives. Recognizing Him as the focal point in our lives, we go about doing our daily chores. This is the significance of pradakshina.

Also every point on the circumference of a circle is equidistant from the center. This means that wherever or whoever we may be, we are equally close to the Lord. His grace flows towards us without partiality.

12. Why is pradakshina done only in a clockwise manner?

The reason is not, as a person said, to avoid a traffic jam! As we do pradakshina, the Lord is always on our right. In India the right side symbolizes auspiciousness. So as we circumambulate the sanctum sanctorum we remind ourselves to lead an auspicious life of righteousness, with the Lord who is the indispensable source of help and strength, as our guide - the "right hand".

Bala Vihar

Indian scriptures enjoin - matrudevo bhava, pitrudevo bhava, acharyadevo bhava. May you consider your parents and teachers as you would the Lord. With this in mind we also do pradakshina around our parents and divine personages.

After the completion of traditional worship (pooja), we customarily do pradakshina around ourselves. In this way we recognize and remember the supreme divinity within us, which alone is idolized in the form of the Lord that we worship outside.

13. Why do we regard trees and plants as sacred?

The Lord, the life in us, pervades all living beings, be they plants or animals. Hence, they are all regarded as sacred. Human life on earth depends on plants and trees. They give us the vital factors that make life possible on earth: food, oxygen, clothing, shelter, medicines etc.

Hence, in India, we are taught to regard trees and plants as sacred. Indians scriptures tell us to plant ten trees if, for any reason, we have to cut one. We are advised to use parts of trees and plants only as much as is needed for food, fuel, shelter etc. we are also urged to apologies to a plant or tree before cutting it to avoid incurring a specific sin named soona.

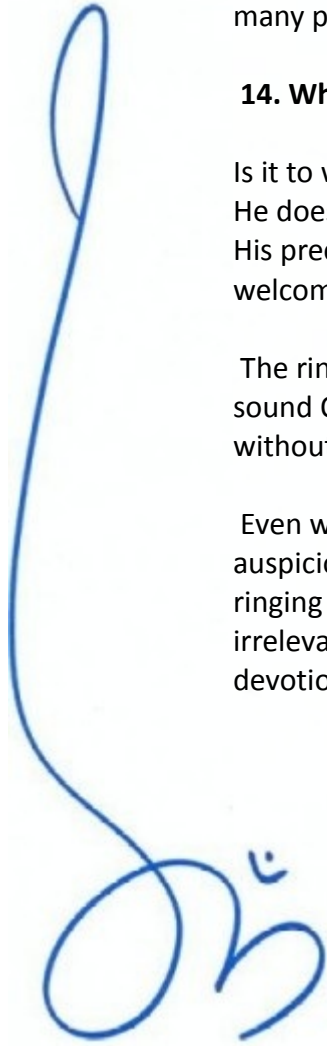
Certain trees and plants like tulasi, peepal etc., which have tremendous beneficial qualities, are worshipped till today. It is believed that divine beings manifest as trees and plants, and many people worship them to fulfill their desires or to please the Lord.

14. Why do we ring the bell in a temple?

Is it to wake up the Lord? But the Lord never sleeps. Is it to let the Lord know we have come? He does not need to be told, as He is all knowing. Is it a form of seeking permission to enter His precinct? It is a homecoming and therefore entry needs no permission. The Lord welcomes us at all times. Then why do we ring the bell?

The ringing of the bell produces what is regarded as an auspicious sound. It produces the sound Om, the universal name of the Lord. There should be auspiciousness within and without, to gain the vision of the Lord who is all-auspiciousness.

Even while doing the ritualistic aarati, we ring the bell. It is sometimes accompanied by the auspicious sounds of the conch and other musical instruments. An added significance of ringing the bell, conch and other instruments is that they help drown any inauspicious or irrelevant noises and comments that might disturb or distract the worshippers in their devotional ardour, concentration and inner peace.



As we start the daily ritualistic worship (pooja) we ring the bell, chanting:

Aagamaarthamtu devaanaam
gamanaarthamtu rakshasaam
Kurve ghantaaravam tatra
devataahvaahna lakshanam

I ring this bell indicating the invocation of divinity, So that virtuous and noble forces enter (my home and heart); and the demonic and evil forces from within and without, depart.

15. Why do we worship the kalasha?

First of all what is a kalasha? A brass, mud or copper pot is filled with water. Mango leaves are placed in the mouth of the pot and a coconut is placed over it. A red or white thread is tied around its neck or sometimes all around it in a intricate diamond-shaped pattern. The pot may be decorated with designs. Such a pot is known as a kalasha.

When the pot is filled with water or rice, it is known as purnakumbha representing the inert body which when filled with the divine life force gains the power to do all the wonderful things that makes life what it is.

A kalasha is placed with due rituals on all-important occasions like the traditional house warming (grihapravesa), wedding, daily worship etc. It is placed near the entrance as a sign of welcome. It is also used in a traditional manner while receiving holy personages. Why do we worship the kalasha? Before the creation came into being, Lord Vishnu was reclining on His snake-bed in the milky ocean. From His navel emerged a lotus from which appeared Lord Brahma, the creator, who thereafter created this world.

The water in the kalasha symbolizes the primordial water from which the entire creation emerged. It is the giver of life to all and has the potential of creating innumerable names and forms, the inert objects and the sentient beings and all that is auspicious in the world from the energy behind the universe. The leaves and coconut represent creation.

The thread represents the love that "binds" all in creation. The kalasha is therefore considered auspicious and worshipped. The waters from all the holy rivers, the knowledge of all the Vedas and the blessings of all the deities are invoked in the kalasha and its water is thereafter used for all the rituals, including the abhisheka.

The consecration (kumbhaabhisheka) of a temple is done in a grand manner with elaborate rituals including the pouring of one or more kalashas of holy water on the top of the temple. When the asuras and devas churned the milky ocean, the Lord appeared bearing the pot of nectar, which blessed one with everlasting life.

Thus the kalasha also symbolizes immortality. Men of wisdom are full and complete as they identify with the infinite Truth (poornatvam). They brim with joy and love and respect all that is auspicious. We greet them with a purnakumbha ("full pot") acknowledging their greatness and as a sign of respectful and reverential welcome, with a "full heart".

Performing Arts – Annual Day

Dr. Smitha Gollamudi Payne

Silver Spring Chapter

On June 7, 2009, Chinmaya Mission in Silver Spring, MD hosted the Arts Annual Day, thanks to the great coordination by Dr. Vandana Bapna and with the grace and presence of Swami Dheerananda and Acharya Vilasiniji.

The children and adults who spent a year teaching and learning the Arts of Hindu culture showed us the fruits of their talents and efforts beautifully.

Here is one audience impression by the visiting grandparents of the participants Devi and Chander Payne, Sri Ram Gollamudi and Smt Devasena Gollamudi:

“Having left India some 47 years ago, we have tried our best to teach our children the tenets of our belief system and our way of life. Now our grandchildren are growing up. Given that learning Indian languages is difficult for them, we constantly worry if our progeny would maintain that identity; so we make them recite our age-old prayers, and to the extent possible we set an example that they could hold on to. In this context, this past weekend was a delight to us! Your efforts at teaching our children Hinduism, despite your hectic lifestyles, are commendable. One could easily see how much time and patience, the parents have put in. And the children were adorable. Their enthusiasm and commitment were exemplary. The jokes were hilarious; the two young men timed them appropriately. The grace with which organizers like Ms. Bapna conducted the proceedings is heartening.

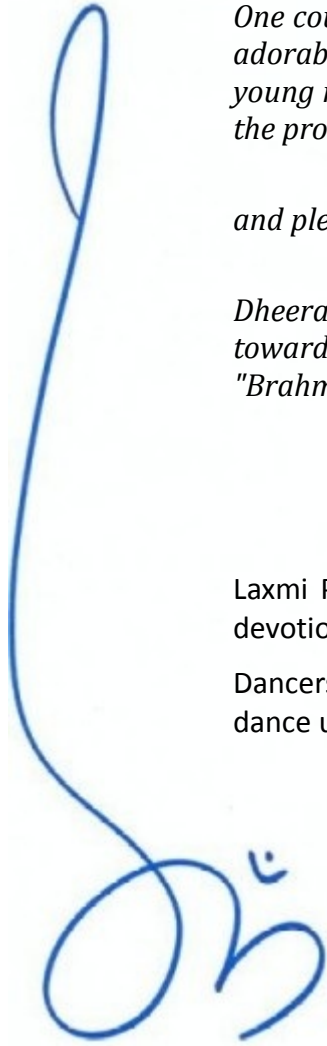
The topics and items chosen for presentation were relevant. Finally, the food was delicious and plenty.

One could not fail to notice the point from which all this energy emanates- Poojya Swami Dheeranandaji. It was satisfying to learn that a good dollar amount was pledged in two days, toward the development of a new center. He characteristically ended the proceedings with "BrahmArpaNam----".

The Program contained the following:

Carnatic Vocal music students under Smt Latha Kannan Ramaswamy, Vani Ravichandran, Smt Laxmi Prasad, and Smt Sandhya Sundaram sang "In Praise of Lord Ganesha" among many other devotional and inspiring songs.

Dancers kept the audience energized with a playful Fisherman's Koli Dance and later a Bhangra dance under the guidance of Smt Devyani Kavathekar, Divya Puri and Smt Meena Puri.



Smt Vasanti Athavale and Purvi Nanavaty must have been proud of their Keyboard students who played devotional songs and India's national Anthem, while all stood to attention. Smt Paulomi and Dr Uday Nanavaty lovingly supported them through the year.

Mrudangam students, while small in number, had a strong stage presence showing their focus and rhythm, under the tutelage of Sri TK Murali, Niranjan Murali, and Ajay Ravichandran (with guidance from Dr. PK Swaminathan).

The Violin group, at Swamiji's request, learned and performed the Chinmaya Aarati, and showed multiculturalism with the "Theme from Iron Man" thanks to the teachings of Vishnupriya Krishnan and Devtulya Kavathekar with Smt Deepa Krishnan guiding them.

Finally, the surprise ending was a fun and energetic performance by the Sevikaas and Sevaks! Smt Priti Mehta and Smt Paulomi Nanavaty did a great job of organizing them.

Swami Dheerananda kept his remarks short, letting the performances speak for themselves, but he led us with Acharya Vilasiniji in a beautiful concluding Aarati.

The performances were well attended and afterward there was a delicious meal and Fathers Day Celebration outdoors (The dinner coordination was done by Smt Lakshmi Linga and Smt Bhaggi Emani.). Smt. Bhaggi Emani coordinated making handmade cards with a poem written for the special Dads with M&Ms glued to the card! We concluded the beautiful evening with several singers coming up to the Chinmayam porch to sing some favorite melodies.

Of course, there were many more sevak friends, parent volunteers, grandparents and member families whose assistance, support and presence made it a memorable and enchanting evening. To them we extend our gratitude.

In all, as Acharya Vilasiniji noted in her kind remarks, the beauty of our culture seems to be passing along to our youth, some of whom are now teachers to the youngest. That is evidence of success.

Happy summer to all!



Reflections on Annual Performing Arts Day

Dr. Ram Gollamudi

brahmArpaNam brahma havir
brahmAgnau brahmaNA hutam
brahmai va tena gantavyam
brahmakarmasamAdhinA
(Gita IV, 24)

The act of offering is God. The oblation ghee is God, It is offered into the fire of God by God. He who realizes God in his works, goes to Brahman.

This constitutes the essence of advaita philosophy. Yajna was used as an example because yajnas were widely performed in ancient times. In fact, any work done, in the name of God, in the service of others or for self-realization is termed Yajna. The concept can be applied to any deed we perform. Hindu families recite this sloka before meals. Also implied is the principle of Karma yoga in that when man performs his duties in the name of the Lord, surrendering the results to Him, he will be free from the resultant coils of bondage. This underlying concept runs throughout our scriptural texts, like for example in Chandogya Upanishad III, 14.1 (sarvam khalv idam brahma--- this whole world is brahman), and the Gita (XV, 14) where the Lord states that He digests the food having become the fire of life. Further, He declares in VII, 7 that "there is nothing besides Me" (mattah para taram nAsti----). Two anecdotes exemplify this principle:

Swami Vivekananda was an agnostic college student at the age of 18. Quite by accident, he went to see Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who wrote something with his fingertip on Vivekananda's tongue. Immediately, the temple he was in, the Ganges, the streets and homes all vanished into a bright golden light. His home, mother, food- all became dissolved in this unbroken light for four days. When he could not stand it anymore, he sought the help of Sri Ramakrishna who then became his Master, and told him that he just experienced Nirvikalpa samadhi.

VEDa vyAsa was once passing through a forest with his son Suka. He approached a lake where some apsaras (celestial nymphs) were bathing, when they suddenly covered themselves with clothes. Then followed his son. The apsaras continued bathing naked in Suka's presence. Vyasa, who regarded himself spiritually superior to his son, asked them about this anomaly. The apsaras replied that though Vyasa was an advanced Rishi, there remained in him, a fraction of ego, whereas Suka was an accomplished Brahman-jnAni. He saw only Brahman everywhere.

* * *

From what I understand, Vilasiniji was referring to the heavenly nature of music. She attended a performance by Semmangudi Sreenivasa Iyengar. He belonged to an old elite class of Carnatic musicians. I used to enjoy his 3 hr recitals on All India Radio in the 50's. The accompaniments consist of mridangam, violin and/or flute. The vocalist spares a good portion of the concert to each of the instruments so that the artists could amply display their individual skills.

The South-Indian Carnatic tradition is purely devotional. Composers like the 19th century Thyagaraja were mainly devotees who applied their musical skills to the adoration of the Supreme. To hear a Thyagaraja kirtana sung by a master like Semmangudi is a treat that carries the listener to devotional highs; one has to experience the ecstasy in order to appreciate or even to understand it!

Values

Nirmala Limaye

The first thing you notice when you enter the arch at Sandeepani ashram in Mumbai is this banner which states “Give children the values not valuables.” That is such a profound message to all parents who have such a difficult task of raising children in modern times. As children (and some parents too) think everything is money without which there is no happiness and peace of mind. Money is an important part of our life otherwise our Rishi’s could not have deified wealth and prosperity as Lakshmi. The greed for excessive money is portrayed as Kubera who has pot belly and looks very ugly and mean.

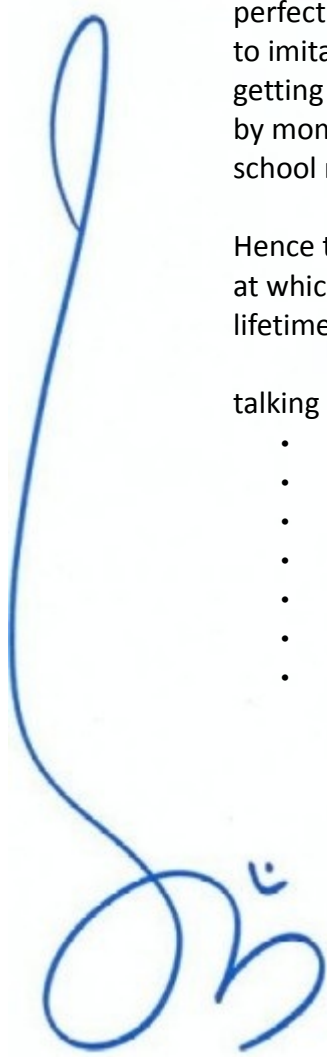
The values that parents give to children are of far more importance than pocket money or luxuries. For the children who grow up in countries other than India , the children are under great peer pressure and feel confused at times as to what choices to make. There is no doubt that children have to interact with the society and keep the good values that our forefathers recommended in scriptures. In India Children get exposed automatically to many cultural events and have close contacts with grandparents , relatives and community as well of the Indian culture. What are these values that parents teach or children learn, and how they learn.?

If we observe a toddler, the child is constantly observing parents and siblings . They are a perfect copycat. If they understand “no” they refrain from doing a particular action. They are trying to imitate people around them. Sometimes they learn by mistakes such as touching a hot plate and getting a little burn. They learn to obey a stern command. By associating the things pointed to them by mom or dad they slowly learn the language “mother tongue”. Later as they play with siblings, school mates, their knowledge starts increasing at a greater speed.

So, during childhood and adolescence their personality is almost developed completely. Hence this is the crucial time when values are to be instilled. Gurudev recognized this critical time at which the individual’s personality is deeply carved out and this education stays with them for lifetime.

This was the origin of Bala Vihar and Yuva Kendra programs. What kind of values we are talking about? These are universal values accepted by majority of the world.

- Take good care of your health.(exercise, sports, proper diet etc)
- Learn to take responsibility.
- Study hard
- Respect parents and elders
- Be kind and helpful
- Respect mother nature
- Respect higher power as the lord and be grateful for every gain



Many of these values child learns from parents first and from education. This is the aspect Chinmaya mission Bala Vihar comes to be of great help. As I have observed for the past 25 years, children graduating from Bala Vihar, they have done well in studies, in proper discipline and a solid base. They are not spoon-fed but instructed well in value system of Hindu culture. They know purpose of rituals, meaning of different deities, civic responsibility, respect to teachers, parents, etc. They definitely make good citizens.

Our mission is expanding in terms of new center (affiliated to Chinmayam) in the northern Virginia so, parents can get help in Virginia itself. This type of center is sorely needed in today's environment for children. As a Chinmaya family we should help raise funds for the center as it for us, our children, our community to be good citizens and it will help us to advance in the spiritual knowledge, behavior in the society etc.



Sat Darshana – Vision of Truth

Shashikala Duraiswami

Bala Vihar Teacher, Silver Spring

I had a wonderful opportunity to listen to Dr. K. Sadanandaji's talk on Ramana Maharishi's Sat Darshana during the Memorial Day weekend. As per his advice I wanted to summarize what I learnt from his talks before it is evaporated from my mind and I get entangled and carried away with my other worldly affairs.

Sat Darshana is the Sanskrit translation of Ramana Maharishi's Tamil version by Vasistha Ganapathy Muni. This is an assembly of 44 shlokas addressing various aspects of truth. "What is truth?" How do we see and live "truth"? Existence-Consciousness (Sat-Chit) is the Truth as there is nothing other than or beyond existence. Consciousness is all-pervading, ever-present and ever illumining awareness that pervades all objects (animate or inanimate). There is nothing that it does not exist in. Sat-Chit is the Supreme Brahman and the Self-Realization is to understand and assimilate the knowledge that "I am that Brahman".

This self-realization is not an experience; since every experience is temporary and is subject to modification. Our first experience can be different from subsequent ones and we may get bored of the same experience day after day. Self-Knowledge or the abidance in the Self, on the other hand, is not subject to any modification. The question is how do we achieve this state of non-duality?

In order for us to begin understanding this concept (I am that Brahman), we need to shift our attention from the object and focus it on the source which is illumining the object. Today, our minds are extroverted – looking outwards and seeing objects that are different and separate from us. In the early verses itself, it is said that – as soon as we identify with our body and see ourselves as individuals, we immediately see other objects as "you" and "he" and "that" etc. In order words, the thought of "I" (individual Jiva) immediately gives birth to the jagat (you, he, that) and the moment, I and you are present there has to be a creator – Ishvara that is responsible for the "I and you and that". Once we shift the focus from the objects (Jiva, Jagat & Ishvara) towards Brahman, there is no I, you or Isvara in other words, they are all the same.

Subsequently, our next question then is – "How do we shift our attention to the Brahman?" The simple answer is to make the mind introverted and make it subtle and pure enough to see and realize that it is the same awareness that pervades through each and every object/person in this universe and realize that I am that awareness! However, this is not an easy task to accomplish for a novice or an ignorant person. Bhajans, chanting shlokas and other ritualistic practices can help purify the mind and help it turns inwards. However, these are "actions" that are useful in cultivating devotion; such tools, in and by themselves will not help in achieving self-realization. Worship of the name and form of the Lord is only a tool to prepare our mind to take it to the next level of inquiry. Sanatana Dharma gives each of us the freedom to adapt and choose our own means/tools that are suitable to our temperament. Eventually, we need to transcend the tools by proper inquiry and contemplation.

The difference between an ignorant person and a Gyaani is that the Gyaani's actions and thoughts are used for the betterment of the community and humanity on the whole and not motivated by the fulfillment one's own desires and needs. As long as our actions and thoughts are guided and performed with the intention of making the mind subtle and pure, we will be walking the path towards Self Realization. Armed with correct knowledge in the seat of contemplation, controlling the mind and thoughts and using the intellect (discriminating wisdom) to remove the differences among objects and focusing on the source- the Supreme consciousness one should be able to see and become one with the "truth".

One of the questions raised was – "How to achieve mind tranquility". Most often, we find that we are either worrying about the future or are repenting our past actions. The only way for the mind to stay in the present is to be watchful of thoughts that arise and not follow them by focusing our attention on the breath. By continuous and repeated practice, the number of thoughts will subside and eventually the mind will become more comfortable and silent. Only a pure, subtle and steady mind can conduct a free inquiry leading to a vision of truth.

A Plea from CMWRC

- Have you participated in our Congregation loan program to support our Virginia Property?
 - If you did, please spread the word around.
 - If not, please contact your Treasurers. CMWRC needs your help, now more than ever.

VIOLENCE

D. C. Rao

MANIFESTATIONS:

- Physical violence: this is the worst kind of violence.
- Aggressive behaviour: pushing ahead, being rough with others.
- Abusive words: verbal equivalent of physical violence.
- Hurtful comments: can be subtle but is violence nonetheless.
- Malicious gossip: taking pleasure in others' misery is a form of violence.
- Unpleasant tone of voice: this is hurtful too.
- Sulking silence: creating an unpleasant atmosphere for everyone.
- Vicious thoughts: the source of all violent speech and action.

VISIBLE ROOTS

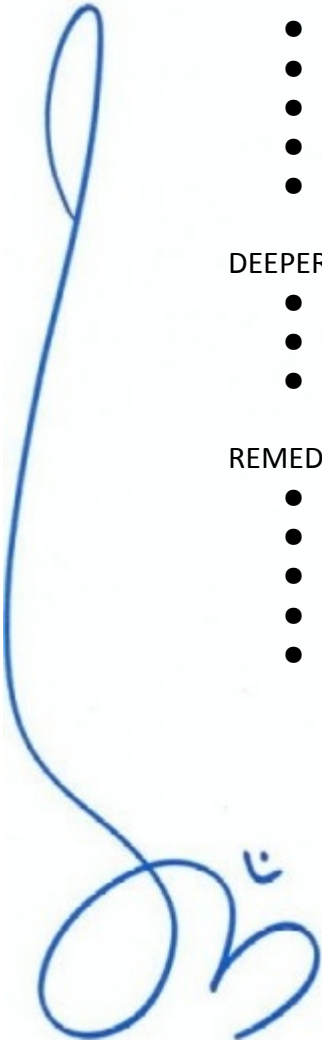
- ANGER: because we do not get what we want right away.
- GREED: we want more and more....and more.
- JEALOUSY: someone else has something we value.
- ENVY: resentment at others' qualities or possessions.
- HATRED: conviction that someone or something needs to be eliminated.
- INTOLERANCE: my way is the only way.
- FEAR: fear of losing what we have or not getting what we strive for.

DEEPER ROOTS

- LACK OF CONTENTMENT: I could be happy, if only
- DISTRUST OF OTHERS: the world is hostile; I need to look after #1...ME
- FRUSTRATION: don't know where my life is heading

REMEDIES

- Have PATIENCE: it is OK for some things to take a while
- RESPECT DIFFERENCES: God must have had a reason to create diversity
- LEARN CONTENTMENT: it is amazing how little one really needs in life
- Cultivate COMPASSION for those who suffer and LOVE for all
- Drop the sense of "I" and "MINE": see myself in all and all in me



Series – Summary of the Gita Ch. 5 (Karma-Sanyasa Yoga) - True Renunciation

Nilkanth Bhatt, Richmond Chapter

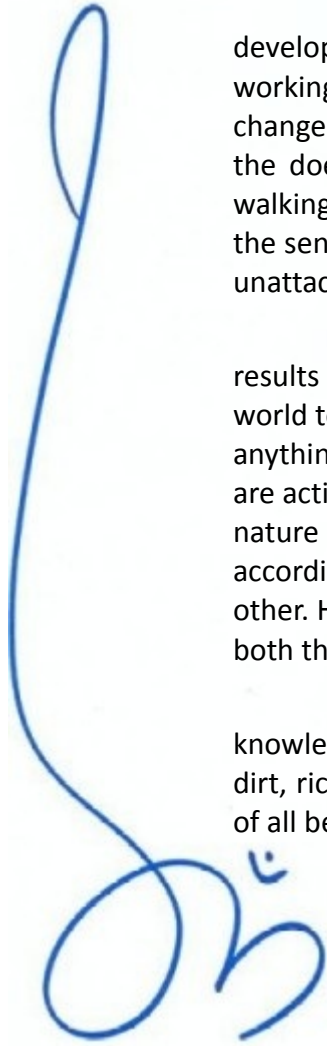
Most of us often wonder which path is right for a spiritual seeker, a path of working selflessly in the world or a path of renunciation. It seems that living life of a sanyasi is more appropriate for a seeker as there are no trappings of a householder's life and hence it seems superior. Arjuna had the similar doubt after listening to Krishna's arguments about Yoga of actions and also about the renunciation of actions. These two paths seem mutually exclusive and very different from each other. In that case one must be superior to the other; however, Krishna had praised both of them. So he asked Krishna to tell him decisively, which one is better for him.

Krishna realized that Arjuna did not have the right understanding of true renunciation, so he said that only the ignorant people think that the path of Karma Yoga and the path of Gnana Yoga through Sanyasa are two different paths. Wise people know that both the paths lead to the same final goal of achieving liberation from the bondage of attachments, fear and anger. For seekers who have not yet prepared themselves for Sanyasa, the path is very difficult and painful; but for those who have integrated their senses, mind and intellect through selfless actions and discipline, their renunciation leads to ultimate freedom in no time.

Those who understand the truth that the self in them is the same self residing in all beings develop control over their senses and purify their mind and intellect; such persons even though working in the world are not bound by their actions because their sense of "I and my" have changed from the limited ego to the world at large. Such a person constantly thinks that I am not the doer, even while doing the physical activities of seeing, hearing, touching, eating, sleeping, walking, etc. He knows that all these activities are nothing but the interactions of sense organs with the sense objects in the world, but the self in us remains unattached to these activities. He remains unattached; just as a lotus petal remains untainted by water falling on it.

A renunciate who has renounced the world of activity mentally remains unattached to the results of the actions and thus achieves complete freedom; however, the one who works in this world to fulfill desires remains bound by the results of his actions. The self in us does not desire anything and therefore does not have any need for actions but all things and beings in this world are acting according to their inherent nature. Fire's nature is to burn so it burns the forest. The nature of the wood is to burn so when the two come in contact with fire, it gets burned. Both acted according their nature. There are no good or evil intentions that prompt them to act one way or other. However, beings in this world are deluded by the ignorance of the fact that the existence of both the wood and fire is possible because of the all-pervading reality (energy).

Once this ignorance about one's self is destroyed by the discriminating intellect the knowledge shines through like a bright sun. Then he will not see any difference between gold and dirt, rich person and poor person, learned person and uneducated person. He knows that essence of all beings and things is the same all pervading self.



Residing in that ultimate, all pervading, almighty reality, he neither rejoices when circumstances are favorable nor does he repent when they are unfavorable. Having his identification detached from the limited body, mind and intellect entity, he remains mentally untouched by the external happenings and finds happiness in his self.

A wise person knows that pleasures in this world are created by contacts of senses with the sense objects, and they have inherent potential to give pain; therefore they do not indulge in them. While living in this world, those who can withstand the impulses created by desire and anger are truly the happy people.

Seekers of happiness, whose dualities are destroyed by knowledge, who have self-control and are working for the welfare of all beings, are the true sanyasis and achieve the absolute freedom. Absolute freedom exists only if there is no desire, fear or anger. Such a state is possible for those who have truly identified with the all pervading self the Brahman.

To attain such a state one has to train one's mind and intellect to know that the all-pervading Brahman is the only enjoyer of all actions. He is the great Lord of all beings and the friend of all beings.



The Secret of Success

*Dr. K. Sadananda
Disciple of Swami Chinmayananda*

[Editor's Note: This is 2nd in the series – On Karma Yoga]

Along with karma yoga, Krishna reveals the Secret of Success in this chapter (Chapter 3 of the Gita). It is embedded in the spirit of yagna. If an individual, a society, organization, or even a nation has to succeed, it has to follow this recipe. Krishna warns that if this is not followed, it will be doomed. You can see why Bhaarat was enslaved by the foreigners.

Krishna says in chapter 4 there are various types of yagnas that one can do. Thus, he provides a broader meaning for what yagna stands for. These include dravya yagna, tapo yagna, yoga yagna, svaadhyaaya yagna, jnaana yagna, etc. Krishna says of all yagnas the best is jnaana yagna – since the end goal of all yagna-s is jnaanam or knowledge only – sarvam karma akhilaam paarthaa jnaane parisamaapyate.

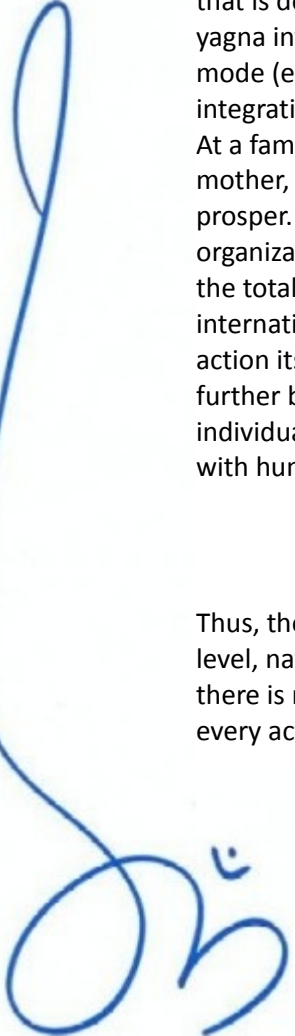
Yagna involves 'sacrifice'. It is sacrificing ones own ego. Ultimately, it is sacrificing the 'kartRitva bhaava' or notion that I am a 'doer'. Fulfillment of that sacrifice is the understanding, the knowledge or jnaana, that 'I am never a doer, while all the doings are being done in my presence'.

Yagna also involves a cooperative endeavor, where a collective action is involved for the completion of the action to its fulfillment. Combining all these aspects, we can define yagna as 'a cooperative endeavor that is done in complete self-sacrificing mode for the benefit of the totality'. At body level, the spirit of yagna involves a cooperative endeavor of all the components – body, mind and intellect – in self-sacrificing mode (each component sacrificing) for the benefit of the totality i.e. the individual. This involves a complete integration of the individual as one unit. Success is ensured only if there is such an integrated effort or yagna. At a family level, it involves cooperative endeavor involving all the components of the family – father, mother, all children – in individual self-sacrificing mode for the benefit of totality (family); then family will prosper. At an organizational level, it involves cooperative endeavor involving all the members of the organization, from president all the way to the servant, in complete self-sacrificing mode for the benefit of the totality (organization); then organization will prosper. This is true at the national level and true at the international level. In fact, Krishna declares all actions have to be done in the spirit of yagna. Otherwise, the action itself can become bondage – one cannot but act and action without the spirit of yagna can lead to further bondage. This, in fact, is the secret of a success or secret of correct action, whether it is at an individual level or at a national level. Krishna declares that the spirit of yagna is created by Brahma along with human beings for their prosperity with the blessing that it can be used to succeed in any endeavor.

saha yagnaaH prajaaH sRishhTvaa purovaaca prajaapatiH |

anena prasavishhyadhvam eshhavo2stvishhTakaamadhuK | |

Thus, the spirit of yagna is a God given gift for humanity for it to prosper in any field of action. At Individual level, nation level or at international level, failure is there contributing to the suffering of the humanity, since there is no self-sacrificing mode of operation in the yagna spirit, but instead where selfishness dominates in every action at every level.



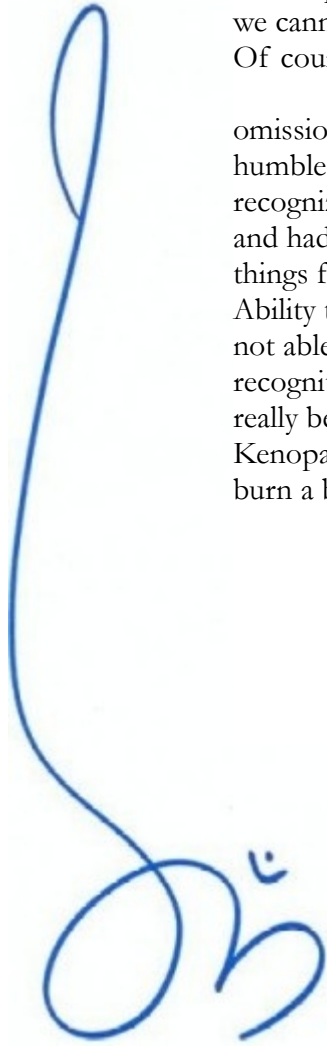
The purpose of doing these niyata karma-s is they expand the mind or purgates the selfishness in the saadhak and purifies him. According to Vedas there are 5 important vidita karma-s which are considered as yagna-s – and grouped as panca mahaa yagna-s.

1. deva yagna
2. pitRi yagna
3. Rishi yagna
4. manushya yagna
5. bhuuta yagna

1. Deva yagna – also called deva RiNa – is obligation to the Gods. Gods are the phenomenal forces that give results for the actions. Whatever is given to us is due to blessings of the Deva-s. Deva yagna involves a recognition of the fact that you are getting benefit from the Nature and it is your duty to return back (with interest) to the nature. Swami Chinmayanandaji puts in a beautiful form: What I have is His gift to me and what I do with what I have is my gift to Him.

Yagna means worship. Deva yagna involves worship of the Gods recognizing that you are the beneficiary of the natural forces. It starts with prayer as the first thing in the morning, and ends with a prayer as the last thing before one sleeps. One benefits from nature immensely - air to breath, water to drink, food to eat and so on. Krishna says in the 15th chapter – aham vishvaanaro bhuutvaa praaNinaam dehamaashritaH | praaNaapaana samaayuktaH pachaamyannam caturvidham || I am the one in all beings who is propelling all the essential physiological functions – praNa to apaana, vyaana, udaana, samaana – contributing to the digestion of the four types of food that one takes. So while we are sleeping, Krishna is awake working whole night digesting the food that we eat. Without his presence we cannot even breathe for a second. A recognition of this fact with a reverential attitude is deva yagna. Of course, it also includes other obligatory duties including sandhyaa vandana, puuja, etc.

For obligatory duties, it is said that by commission one does not gain any merits but by omission, one gains demerits or paapam. Fact of the matter is, it purifies the mind and makes one humble, since one recognizes that every thing is gift from Gods, and nothing is taken for granted. I recognized how lucky I am, when I visited a cousin of mine few months ago, who lost both his kidneys and had to undergo painful dialysis everyday. God has given us a double gift to be safe, but we take things for granted. Only when they do not function we recognize how lucky we were up to that point. Ability to breathe without a problem is a God-given gift, and we can recognize that only when we are not able to breathe and had to use a machine to force the air in. Deva RiNa or obligation to gods is the recognition that we cannot even lift a blade of a grass without their help, and that there is nothing that really belongs to us and everything that we have is only a gift from the Gods. In the last chapter of Kenopanishad there is a story of how Gods, vaayu, varuNa, agni learn that they cannot even lift, wet or burn a blade of grass without the help of that life-principle.



Shankara says in VivekachuuDaamani – manushyatvam, mumukshutvam, mahaapurushha samsrayam, daivaanugaha hetukam – being born as a human being, intensive desire for liberation and association with great souls are only due to the blessings of the God. Since God is the giver of the fruits of actions, karma yoga starts by recognizing this fact and performing all actions in the attitude of prayer to the Gods and accepting the results as prasaada. Iswaraarpana buddhi and prasaada budhhi are two essential ingredients of Karma yoga.

2. PitRi yagna: worship of our forefathers – It is recognition that how blessed I am for having parents who could take care of me when I was in pitiable condition and educate me with proper values. Particularly the Indian parents sacrifice everything they have for the benefit of their children. It is blessing to be born to such parents. It is the recognition that everything that I have is the result of their sacrifice. Vedic instructions maatRi devo bhava, pitRi devo bhava recognizes that these two are the first Gods that need to be worshiped. Formally, pitRi yagna includes all the vedic rituals that need to be performed, tarpanas, shraadhha-s, etc, where three generation of fore fathers are prayed. Incidentally, tarpana is also done not only for ones parents, but for those whose children are failing to do their duties.

3. Rishi yagna: Rishi stands for both the Veda-s and also guru parampara starting from Veda Vyaasa all the way to ones own teacher. This yagna is done by daily study of the scriptures and by passing on the knowledge to others what one has gained from his teacher. Thus, guru parampara is established and veda-s are handed down from generation to generation to come. We are blessed indeed by such unparalleled treasure of knowledge left behind by our forefathers and it becomes our duty study them and pass it on to the next generation. The daily study of the scriptures is Rishi yagna.

4. Manushya yagna: This is service to humanity. ‘Maanava sevaye maadhava seva’ is well know proverb. One ends all prayers with – sarve janaaH sukhino bhavantu. Samasta san mangalaani santu | kaale varshhatu parjanyaH, pRithiviH sasyashaalini, deshoyam shoba rahitaH, brahmanaas santu nirbhayaaH – go braahmanebhyam shubamastu nityam lokas samastaa sukhino bhavantu – are the prayers to be done with devoted mind. Here BrahmanaaH stands for wise people who are the backbone of the society preserving and passing on the knowledge and wisdom to the next generation. Self-less service to humanity at large is emphasized in all religions.

5. Bhuuta yagna: This is service to the other living beings with appropriate attitude. – ‘sarva bhuuta hite rataaH’ – one has to be well wishers to the whole jivas – without disturbing the ecology. Polluting the rivers and oceans destroy the ecology. Unnecessarily hurting any animal in the name of sport is very bad – This include fishing and hunting as sports. Bhuta yagna as daily prayer includes feeding the animals before one partakes his food and being kind to them. This makes one to become sensitive to the needs of other beings. Taking more than what one needs from the Nature is a sin. Animals take what they need. It is only humans that take more than what they need – that essentially is due to Greed.

These panca mahaa yagnaas are considered as obligatory duties and help in recognizing ones role and responsibilities in the whole creation. We are not the only travelers in this earth and have no right to destroy other co-travelers in our pursuit for happiness. Hence Krishna says niyatam kuru karma tvam|. Niyatam includes nitya and naimittika – the daily obligatory and occasional obligatory duties. Kuru means one has to do – it is vidhi vaakyam – therefore not doing or omission results in sin. Hence Krishna declares – karma jyaayo hyakarmaNaH – It is better to do the actions than omitting them. Hence, karma yoga is not a choice that one has.

