

Chinmaya Smrithi



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

Volume 19, Number 5 -- September 12, 2009

On Character – Swami Chinmayananda

Character is formed from the repeated choice of thoughts and action.
Make the right choice, and you shall have a firm and noble character



Bala Vihar Summer Camp (picture by Latha Ramesh)

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Next Issue

- November 2009, Articles due by October 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

- September 12/13 – Bala Vihar Classes resume for 2009/2010
- September 19 – Our own Swami Dheerananda ji will be honored as a 'Great Teacher' by Ekal Vidyalaya at Chinmayam
- September 28 – Vijaya Dasami
- October 17 - Deepavali
- October: Deepavali Celebration, Lakshmi Puja – date, time, venue - to be announced
- November 7th – Annual Banquet, Marriott, Fairfax, VA

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

www.chinmayamission.com

www.chinmayamission.org

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www.chinmayadulles.org

www.chinmayafrederick.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 Panigrahi, Harsha Neerchal and Srikanth Kowtha

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

First Workshop for Married Couples by Guruji

A Report from Ann Arbor

For the very first time in the history of Chinmaya Mission, Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda conducted a Young Married Couples' weekend seminar entitled "Marriage - A Melody" on July 25-26, 2009 at Chinmaya Mission Ann Arbor. This seminar mainly focused on young couples between 25 to 38 years of age. The 45 couples in attendance came from various states in the U.S., including a few from Washington DC and even a couple from the U.K. The couples ranged from recently married to having been married for over 10 years. Interestingly, the ratio of 'arranged' versus 'love' marriages happened to be close to 50:50.

On the first day, Guruji set the vision about a 'successful' married life and parenting. He was followed by Acharya Vilasiniji's practical everyday tips to a happy married life. Guruji had requested Vilasiniji to be a speaker for the weekend because of her professional training in marriage counseling. Vilasiniji's afternoon sessions on 'Managing Negative Emotions', followed by the structured 'Couples Dialogue' sessions were very effective. There were also small group discussions wherein the participants could share questions and thoughts about the material. The couples were convinced about the long term advantage of practicing the communication skills they learned. The day concluded with a captivating Q&A session with Pujya Guruji followed by dinner and a cultural entertainment program. On the second day, Pujya Guruji gave an engaging talk on 'Harmony in Marriage' followed by Q&A sessions with him and Vilasiniji.

This being the first of its kind, the overwhelming positive feedback illustrates that there is a need for repeating such seminars in the future. With love, humor, and wisdom, Pujya Guruji conveyed to the participants that Vedantic principles can be translated into practical life skills for young married couples facing a variety of modern day demands. He beautifully addressed the topic through the songs and shlokas he had composed specifically for the occasion, giving advice and inspiration for improving marital happiness and using the householder life as a platform to gain moksha.

Some of the comments from the participants include: "The seminar went beyond expectations. Swamiji's talks on parenting and marriage were enlightening and powerful reminders of my role and goals in marriage. Vilasiniji's talks about sharing emotions were practical and enlightening. The entire seminar has affected my perspective and I am hopeful for the positive effect it will have on our marriage." And "The seminar was much more than I expected. All lectures and topics had very practical points that could be used. Swamiji very clearly explained how doing the duties of a householder can be used for spiritual upliftment. We got very good pointers from Vilasiniji about conversation skills and conflict resolution. We thought we had a pretty good relationship, but we learned a lot more on improving it."

The young married couples were extremely blessed to have this seminar!

News in Brief

CMWRC Events Held

- (1) Jnana Yajna by Swami Ishwarananda were held in Virgina, Chinmayam and Frederick, respectively. Among the topics covered were 'Hamsa Gita' and 'Mukunda Mala', in June. MP3 Audio is available (see below; also see related articles by Shashikala Duraiswami, in this issue)
- (2) Bala Vihar Summer Camps were held in Virginia and Maryland – June through August.
- (3) Swami Chinmayananda Mahasamadhi was observed on Aug 3 at Chinmayam.

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.

Chinmaya West Newsletter



Read the latest newsletter from Chinmaya Mission West
Browse and download at www.chinmayamission.org/newsletter

Announcements

Acharya Dr. K. Sadananda

CMWRC is pleased to announce that Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, head of Chinmaya Mission world-wide, has conferred the title of Acharya to Dr. K. Sadananda. A retired scientist from Naval Research Labs, many of us are familiar with Sada ji, as he conducts regular discourses in Virginia, conducts memorial day Jnana Yajnas at Chinmayam, and occasionally gives discourses during regular Bala Vihar sessions at the Washington DC area chapters.

We will refer to him from now on as Acharya Dr. K. Sadananda ji.

New MP3 Audio CDs

If you like this to be mailed to you, kindly write to Vijay Singh (vk Singh85@yahoo.com) with your mailing address.

1) Discourses on Ramana Maharshi's Saddarshanam by Dr. K Sadananda, (MP3 CD, 12 hrs, \$10.00)

Saddarshanam deals with the science of seeing the truth: the eternal and unchanging, deals with the analysis of three entities; 1. Jeeva (the individual), 2. Jagat (the world) and 3. Iswara (the creator of these two entities). Sri Ramana Maharshi provides the ultimate vision of that and the truth by his saddarshanam.

2) Discourses on Hamsa Gita by Swami Ishwarananda, (MP3 CD, 7 hrs, \$6.00)

Hamsa Gita is an exquisite episode with deep Vedantic meaning, found in the Srimad Bhagavatam. The Supreme Lord appeared as a 'Hamsa' (Swan) and gave the knowledge of Truth, hence the name 'Hamsa Gita'.

3) Discourses on Mukunda Mala by Swami Ishwarananda, (MP3 CD, 6 hrs, \$6.00)

Mukunda Mala is a well known and beautiful composition, by Raja Kulasekhara Alwar, expressing the purest devotion to the Lord Krishna. The discourse on this devotional text yields a number of spiritual valuable pointers for our daily life.

4) Discourses on Shiksha Valli, Taittiriya Upanishad 1st Prasna by Dr. K Sadananda, (MP3 CD, \$5.00)

In these discourses, Dr. Sadananda has covered in exhaustive detail, the introduction to Vedanta and the importance of upasana covered in Shiksha Valli as a preparation to the Knowledge that follows in the following Prasnas.

5) Swami Ishwarananda spoke on the topic Bhakti Yoga for Liberation during his visit to the Frederick Chapter. In this enthralling talk, Swamiji discussed the meaning of liberation and the importance of Bhakthi (Devotion) to achieve liberation. Swamiji used the Nava-vidha Bhakthi description in Adyatma Ramayana to elaborate on this topic. The MP3 file of this talk is available for download at www.chinmayadc.org → under the AUDIO section.

Announcements

Swami Dheeranandaji's Discourses

Swami Dheeranandaji will be starting a new Text 'Purusha Sooktam' from September 2009 as a continuation of the Tuesday evening (VA) and Thursday evening (MD) pravachans. These talks are free and open to all Spiritual seekers.

Purusha Sooktam or the "Vision of the Universal Person", is described thus by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji.

"How does then Eswara, the Lord, the God, having become the Creator, project out the Jagat? What are the processes and stages through which the Universe emerged out in this act of Divine Yagna, the great sacrifice? These are most poetically visualised and sung in the Vedas. This sublime song is the Purusha Sooktam-a Hymn of Praise adoring the Mighty Spirit Divine. This is the most famous among all other similar Hymns in the Rig-Veda".

Understanding the philosophical import of this Sooktam, which is steeped in deep mystic symbolism, is not possible without the help of an experienced teacher like Swami Dheeranandaji. Here is your opportunity to broaden your vision and be awed by this most inspiring ancient sacred Hymn. Shravana, Swadhyaya, Manana and Nididhyasana guide the seekers to divine discovery! Identical talks will be held weekly both in Maryland and Virginia.

MARYLAND Every Thursday (starting September 17, 2009)

Place: Kailash Niwas, Chinmaya Mission

46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring MD 20905

Time: 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm.

POC: Meera Ravichandran, ravi5211@yahoo.. com

VIRGINIA Every Tuesday (starting September 22, 2009)

Place: Residence of Dr. Chidambaram

1406 Greenwood Place, Alexandria, VA 22304

Time: 7:45 pm - 9:15 pm

POC: Raju Chidambaram, aiyers@comcast. net, Ph: 703-461-3785

The Virginia pravachan (Tuesday) is available via a teleconference bridge to those serious sadhaks who cannot make it in person. Swamiji is particular that those who join the bridge should be regular and follow guidelines provided. Please contact Meena Baluja mabaluja@yahoo. com for details.

Announcements

108 OBLATIONS TO DEVI

A Navaratri Celebration Event for Women

Saturday, Sept 26th, 3 to 5 pm

Avail this wonderful opportunity to participate in an uplifting experience of offering **108 prayers** to Devi during this auspicious occasion of Navaratri in unison with a group of **108 women!**

Sign up early for this invigorating experience! RSVP required. Only **108** slots open!

Event Details

Lakshmi Japa Durga Namaskar 108 Devi Archana Aarti

Puja and chanting led by Priest Harish Baipadithaya

All participants will individually perform 108 Namavali Archana to Goddess Durga

Inspiring Discourse

"POWER OF POSITIVITY" by Acharya Vilasiniji, Chinmaya Mission

Listen to an Enlightening discourse on ways to purify the mind and rise above negative tendencies.

Participant Donation: \$51

All funds from the event offered to Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center for its dedicated efforts in spreading the Knowledge of Vedanta, towards funding its Virginia spiritual center

VENUE:

Compton Village Community Center

14401 Compton Village Dr. Centreville VA 20121

I-66 W to Exit 53A. Merge onto Rte 28 South. Left at Bradenton Dr. Left at Compton Village Dr. Right to Center.

Contact: **Sheela Rao** sheelarao_va@yahoo.com (703) 309-2863

Sumati Kaushik sumikaushik@yahoo.com (703) 222-6786

Event starts sharp at 3 pm.

Light snack & prasadam provided after Puja. Girls may attend free.



CHINMAYA
MISSION®
WEST

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

ONE-YEAR,
RESIDENTIAL,
FULL-TIME, INTENSIVE
VEDANTA COURSE

AUGUST 2010-2011

AT CMW'S
KRISHNALAYA ASHRAM
IN NORTHERN
CALIFORNIA, AMIDST
SERENE REDWOODS

CONDUCTED
IN ENGLISH

ENHANCES ONE'S
UNDERSTANDING AND
CLARITY OF BASIC
AND ADVANCED
VEDANTIC CONCEPTS

HARI OM



With the blessings of His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda, Head of Chinmaya Mission worldwide, Chinmaya Mission West (CMW) is pleased to announce its one-year, residential Vedanta Course at CMW's headquarters, the ashram of *Krishnalaya* in Northern California, amidst the serene Redwoods.

This residential, full-time course, without any holidays, will be conducted in English.

ELIGIBILITY

This Course is open to sincere seekers between the ages of 20 and 70 years.

REGISTRATION

\$12,000 (covers registration, lodging, boarding, and books; payable in installments)

DATES / ACHARYAS

The course will commence on August 7, 2010 and conclude in August 2011.

Full-time Resident Acharya

Acharya Smt. Sharada Kumar

August 2010

Puja Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

August-October 2010

Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya

November-December 2010

Swami Ishwarananda

January 2011

Swami Shantananda

February-March 2011

Swami Ishwarananda

April-May 2011

Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya

June-July 2011

Acharya Smt. Sharada Kumar

August 2011

Puja Guruji Swami Tejomayananda



TO REGISTER

Complete the online form at
www.chinmayamission.org/plyrcy

All applications received will be reviewed. Eligible candidates will be asked to schedule a personal interview, the details of which will be provided at a later date.

For more information:

prabodh@chinmayamission.org
(707) 207-5011

TEXTS

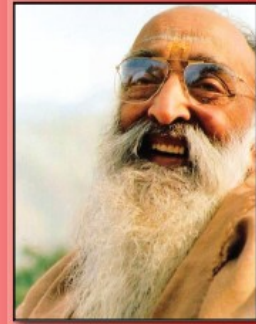
His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda: Mandukya Upanishad, Tattva Bodha, Essence of Shrimad Bhagavatam and Ramayana

Swami Shantananda: Dakshinamurti Stotram, Sat Darshanam

Swami Ishwarananda: Shrimad Bhagavad Gita

Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya: Upadesha Sara, Ama Bodha, Drg Drshya Viveka, Panchadashi Ch. I, and Upanishads (Ishavasya, Kena, Katha, Mundaka)

Acharya Sharada Kumar: Taittiriya Upanishad, Vivekachudamani, Vedic Chanting, Sanskrit, Sahasranamavalis, Bhajans



THE JOURNEY FROM CHANGE TO CHANGELESS



HH Swami Tejomayanandaji
Spiritual Head of
Chinmaya Mission World Wide



CHINMAYA FAMILY CAMP 2009

HOSTED BY CHINMAYA MISSION D/FW

December 24 - 30, 2009

PUJYA GURUJI SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDAJI

Discourses on
Kaivalya Upanishad

Bhagavad Gita - Chapter XVII
(Yoga of the Three-fold Faith)
Free event open to all

Hilton DFW Lakes Executive
Conference Center
1800 Highway 26 East,
Grapevine, Texas,
United States 76051-9641

Category	Full Camp	Partial Camp
Family of 4	\$1,500	\$800
Family of 3	\$1,400	\$750
Family of 2	\$1,300	\$700
Single - non-sharing	\$1,000	\$600
Single - sharing	\$800	\$450

Ashok Dandekar
972-491-0018

Sandhya Gawra
972-491-0606

U.K.Gupta
972-307-0102

Sunil Maini
972-527-6272

www.cmdfw.org

Photos from 2009 CMWRC Bala Vihar Summer Camps



Photographs provided by Arun Ananth and Latha Ramesh

Om

5th in the Series**Hindu Rituals and Routines -
Why Do We Follow Them?**

Submitted by Sowmya Sundararaman

**11. Why Do We Consider Lotus as Special?**

The lotus is the symbol of truth, auspiciousness and beauty (satyam, shivam, sundaram). The Lord is also that nature and therefore, His various aspects are compared to a lotus (i.e. lotus-eyes, lotus feet, lotus hands, the lotus of the heart etc.).

The lotus blooms with the rising sun and close at night. Similarly, our minds open up and expand with the light of knowledge. The lotus grows even in slushy areas. It remains beautiful and untainted despite its surroundings, reminding us that we too can and should strive to remain pure and beautiful within, under all circumstances.

The lotus leaf never gets wet even though it is always in water. It symbolizes the man of wisdom (gyaani) who remains ever joyous, unaffected by the world of sorrow and change. This is revealed in a shloka from the Bhagwad-Geeta:

Brahmanyaadhaaya karmaani
Sangam tyaktvaa karoti yaha
Lipyate na sa paapena
Padma patram ivaambhasaa

He who does actions, offering them to Brahman (the Supreme), abandoning attachment, is not tainted by sin, just as a lotus leaf remains unaffected by the water on it.

Bala Vihar

From this, we learn that what is natural to the man of wisdom becomes a discipline to be practiced by all saadhakas or spiritual seekers and devotees. Our bodies have certain energy centers described in the Yoga Shaastras as chakras.

Each one is associated with lotus that has a certain number of petals. For example, a lotus with a thousand petals represents the Sahasra chakra at the top of the head, which opens when the yogi attains Godhood or Realization. Also, the lotus posture (padmaasana) is recommended when one sits for meditation. A lotus emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu. Lord Brahma originated from it to create the world. Hence, the lotus symbolizes the link between the creator and the supreme Cause.

It also symbolizes Brahmaloka, the abode of Lord Brahma. The auspicious sign of the swastika is said to have evolved from the lotus.

17. Why do we worship Tulasi?

In Sanskrit, tulanaa naasti athaiva tulasi - that which is incomparable (in its qualities) is the tulasi. For Indians it is one of the most sacred plants. In fact it is known to be the only thing used in worship, which, once used, can be washed and reused in pooja - as it is regarded so self-purifying.

As one story goes, Tulasi was the devoted wife of Shankhachuda, a celestial being. She believed that Lord Krishna tricked her into sinning. So she cursed Him to become a stone (shaaligraama). Seeing her devotion and adhered to righteousness, the Lord blessed her saying that she would become the worshipped plant, tulasi that would adorn His head. Also that all offerings would be incomplete without the tulasi leaf - hence the worship of tulasi.

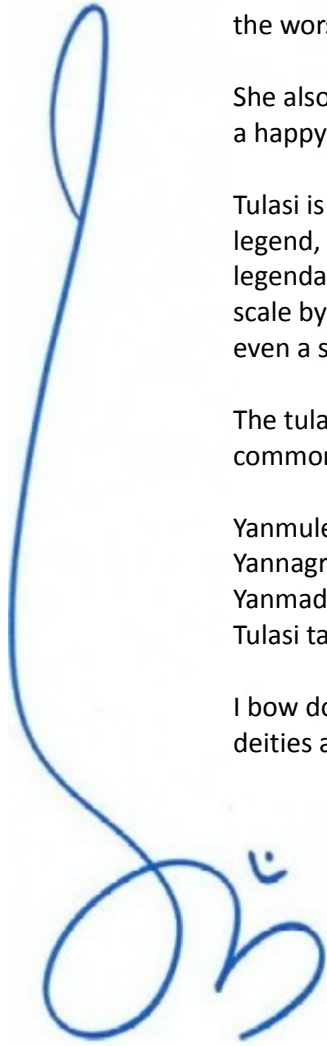
She also symbolises Goddess Lakshmi, the consort of Lord Vishnu. Those who wish to be righteous and have a happy family life worship the tulasi.

Tulasi is married to the Lord with all pomp and show as in any wedding. This is because according to another legend, the Lord blessed her to be His consort. Satyabhama once weighed Lord Krishna against all her legendary wealth. The scales did not balance till a single tulasi leaf was placed along with the wealth on the scale by Rukmini with devotion. Thus the tulasi played the vital role of demonstrating to the world that even a small object offered with devotion means more to the Lord than all the wealth in the world.

The tulasi leaf has great medicinal value and is used to cure various ailments, including the common cold.

Yanmule sarvatirhaani
Yannagre sarvadevataa
Yanmadhye sarvavedaascha
Tulasi taam namaamyaham

I bow down to the tulasi, At whose base are all the holy places, At whose top reside all the deities and In whose middle are all the Vedas.



18. Why do we blow the conch?

When the conch is blown, the primordial sound of Om emanates. Om is an auspicious sound that was chanted by the Lord before creating the world. It represents the world and the Truth behind it.

As the story goes, the demon Shankhaasura defeated devas, the Vedas and went to the bottom of the ocean. The devas appealed to Lord Vishnu for help. He incarnated as Matsya Avataara - the "fish incarnation" and killed Shankhaasura. The Lord blew the conch-shaped bone of his ear and head. The Om sound emanated, from which emerged the Vedas.

All knowledge enshrined in the Vedas is an elaboration of Om. The conch therefore is known as shankha after Shankhaasura. The conch blown by the Lord is called Paanchajanya. He carries it at all times in one of His four hands.

It represents dharma or righteousness that is one of the four goals (purusharthas) of life. The sound of the conch is thus also the victory call of good over evil.

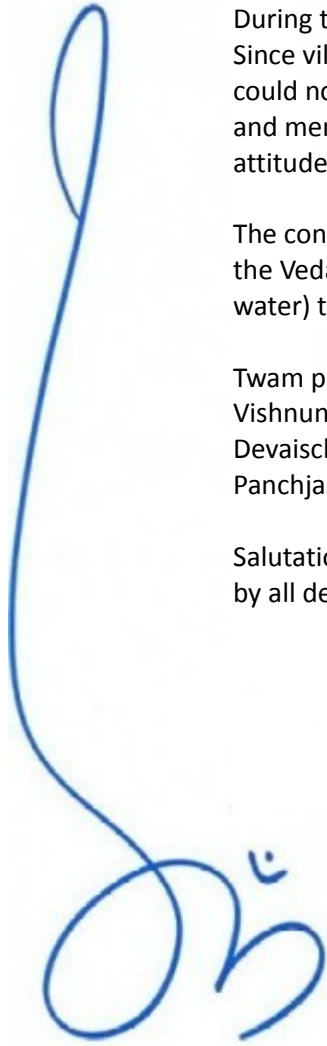
Another well-known purpose of blowing the conch and the instruments, known traditionally to produce auspicious sounds is to drown or mask negative comments or noises that may disturb or upset the atmosphere or the minds of worshippers.

Ancient India lived in her villages. Each village was presided over by a primary temple and several small ones. During the aarati performed after all-important poojas and on sacred occasions, the conch used to be blown. Since villages were generally small, the sound of the conch would be heard all over the village. People who could not make it to the temple were reminded to stop whatever they were doing, at least for a few seconds, and mentally bow to the Lord. The conch sound served to briefly elevate people's minds to a prayerful attitude even in the middle of their busy daily routine.

The conch is placed at the altar in temples and homes next to the Lord as a symbol of Naada Brahma (Truth), the Vedas, Om, dharma, victory and auspiciousness. It is often used to offer devotees thirtha (sanctified water) to raise their minds to the highest Truth. It is worshipped with the following verse.

Twam puraa saagarot pannaha
Vishnunaa vidhrutahakare
Devaischa poojitha sarvahi
Panchjanya namostu te

Salutations to Panchajanya, the conch born of the ocean, held in the hand of Lord Vishnu, and worshipped by all devaas.



On Vegetarian Diet

Submitted by Nirmala Limaye

[Editor's Note: The following is a position paper by American Dietetic Association. Ms. Jennifer Starkey of ADA has kindly approved the use of this article in our newsletter. Please also see an accompanying article on vegetarian diet by Sarojini Gore.]

American Dietetic Association Endorses Vegetarian Diets

Laurie Barclay, MD

July 6, 2009 — Vegetarian diets, if well-planned, are healthful and nutritious for all age groups and can help prevent and treat chronic diseases, according to an updated position paper released by the American Dietetic Association. The revised recommendations are published in the July issue of the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. The position was adopted by the House of Delegates Leadership Team in 1987 and was reaffirmed in 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2006; the updated position paper is to remain in effect until December 31, 2013.

"Common reasons for choosing a vegetarian diet include health considerations, concern for the environment, and animal welfare factors," write Winston J. Craig, PhD, MPH, RD, from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, and Ann Reed Mangels, PhD, RD, LDN, FADA, from the Vegetarian Resource Group in Baltimore, Maryland. "Vegetarians also cite economic reasons, ethical considerations, world hunger issues, and religious beliefs as their reasons for following their chosen eating pattern.... Individual assessment is required to accurately evaluate the nutritional quality of the diet of a vegetarian or a self-described vegetarian."

Defining and Planning a Vegetarian Diet

The American Dietetic Association defines a vegetarian diet, or lacto-ovo vegetarian diet, as one that does not include meat, fowl, seafood, or products containing those foods. The lacto-vegetarian diet also excludes eggs and primarily consists of grains, vegetables, fruits, legumes, seeds, nuts, and dairy products. The vegan, or total vegetarian, eating pattern excludes eggs, dairy, and other animal products. Within these broad definitions, there is still variation in the degree to which animal products are excluded.

A well-planned vegetarian diet can meet current recommendations for all vital nutrients, including protein, omega-3 fatty acids, iron, zinc, iodine, calcium, and vitamins D and B-12. However, use of supplements or fortified foods may be helpful to boost intake of important nutrients in certain cases.

The American Dietetic Association contends that carefully planned vegetarian diets, including vegan diets, are healthful and nutritionally sufficient for individuals of all ages, including pregnant or lactating women, infants, children, adolescents, and athletes. During pregnancy, adherence to a nutritionally adequate vegetarian diet can lead to positive health outcomes for both the mother and infant.

The position paper also reviews available evidence concerning the effects of vegetarian diets on cardiovascular disease, obesity, osteoporosis, renal disease, dementia, diverticulitis, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Specific vegetarian considerations regarding specific nutritional programs are also reviewed, including the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; child nutrition programs; feeding programs for elderly adults; corrections facilities programs; military and armed forces programs; and other institutions and quantity food service organizations.

During the next decade, the number of vegetarians in the United States is expected to increase. Vegetarian diets are typically characterized by certain healthful features that may lower the risk for chronic disease — notably, reduced consumption of saturated fat and cholesterol and increased consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, soy products, fiber, and phytochemicals with potent antioxidant, antiproliferative, and cancer-protective activity.

However, individual diets should be evaluated to ensure that they are nutritionally adequate, given the variability of dietary habits among vegetarians. Other important roles for food and nutrition professionals are to educate vegetarians regarding sources of key nutrients, food purchase and preparation, and individual dietary modifications to meet their specific requirements.

Recommendations for a Healthy Diet

Specific recommendations to help ensure that vegetarians have healthful diets with sufficient nutrients are as follow:

- The diet should contain a wide variety of healthful foods, including whole grains, vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, and seeds, as well as dairy and eggs if desired.
- Consumption of foods that are high in sugar, sodium, and fat, particularly saturated fat and trans-fatty acids, should be minimized.
- The diet should contain a wide range of healthful fruits and vegetables.
- For vegetarians who consume dairy products and eggs, moderation is recommended, as well as use of lower-fat dairy products.
- A regular source of vitamin B-12 is recommended, as well as of vitamin D if sunlight exposure is limited.
- Nutritionists should be able to recommend local, reliable sources for purchase of vegetarian foods, or mail order sources in some communities where suitable local sources are unavailable.
- To facilitate meeting nutrient needs on a vegetarian diet, clinicians should collaborate with family members, especially the parents of children following vegetarian diets.
- Practitioners unfamiliar with the principles of vegetarian nutrition should help their vegetarian patients find a nutritionist or other qualified provider to advise them regarding their diet.

"It is the position of the American Dietetic Association that appropriately planned vegetarian diets, including total vegetarian or vegan diets, are healthful, nutritionally adequate, and may provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases," the position paper authors write. "Well-planned vegetarian diets are appropriate for individuals during all stages of the lifecycle, including pregnancy, lactation, infancy, childhood, and adolescence, and for athletes.... Food and nutrition professionals can assist vegetarian clients by providing current, accurate information about vegetarian nutrition, foods, and resources."

J Am Diet Assoc. 2009;109:1266–1282.

Healthy Eating – The Vegetarian Way

Sarojini Gore, MS, RD, CDE

(Registered Dietician, Certified Diabetic Educator)

The vegetarian diet comprises predominantly plant foods. The eating patterns of vegetarians vary considerably. VEGAN diet includes plant foods but excludes all animal products (dairy, eggs, meat, fish, and poultry). LACTO-VEGETARIAN diet includes only plant foods and dairy products. LACTO-OVO-VEGETARIAN diet includes only plant foods, dairy, and eggs. All of the above diets can provide all the necessary nutrients, if they are properly planned.

NUTRITION CONSIDERATIONS FOR VEGETARIAN DIETS

Getting Enough Protein

Often, vegetarian diets are high in carbohydrates and low in protein. Plant sources of protein can meet your protein needs. Include a good source of protein in most meals from the list below.

Plant Protein Sources: Soy Foods – tofu, soy burgers, soy cheese, soy milk, soy protein powders; legumes, dried beans, daals, soybeans (these contain protein and carbohydrates).

Dairy Protein Sources: Cheese – cottage, ricotta, paneer, hard cheeses; milk, butter milk, yogurt (select low fat / non fat).

CALCIUM

Vegan diets can provide adequate calcium, if you regularly include the following foods.

Calcium fortified foods – cereals, soy milk, tofu; dried beans, nuts and seeds, broccoli, collard and kale. Calcium supplements are advised when calcium requirements are not met from food.

Lacto and Lacto-ovo-vegetarian diets can easily meet calcium requirements, as milk and milk products are rich sources of calcium.

VITAMIN D

Vitamin D is vital for absorption of calcium. Few foods are high in vitamin D naturally. Dairy products, some cereals, and soy and non-dairy milk are fortified with vitamin D. The body can make its own vitamin D when skin is exposed to sunlight. People who do not consume dietary sources of vitamin D regularly and who have limited exposure to sunlight, may require vitamin D supplement.

IRON

Plant foods which contain good sources of iron are: iron fortified breads and cereals; legumes, nuts, leafy vegetables, dried fruit, soybeans, and tofu. Plant foods contain non-heme iron, and this is poorly absorbed compared to heme iron found in egg yolk, meat, fish, and poultry. Eating vitamin C rich foods (i.e. citrus fruits, broccoli, green peppers, tomatoes) in the same meal **increases absorption of iron from plant food.** **Iron supplement may be required for those with iron deficiency.**

VITAMIN B-12

This is found only in animal products, including eggs and dairy products, and in some cereals, soymilk and soy products fortified with Vitamin B-12. B-12 supplements or regular use of fortified food is advised for vegetarians who exclude or limit animal foods.

MEAL PLANNING GUIDELINES

Variety is the spice of life. Choose foods wisely from each of the following food groups for balanced meals.

Food Groups: Starch, Protein Foods, Milk, Vegetables, Fruits, and Fats.

Starch includes all cereals, grains, breads, chapatti, starchy vegetables, legumes, and snack foods. Most Indian snacks are starches, for example idli, dosa, upama, poha, samosa, shev, chivda, etc. Starches mainly contain carbohydrates. Legumes are also good sources of proteins. Select whole grain foods to increase fiber intake.

Protein and Milk Group -- These have been described above under "Getting Enough Protein".

Non-starchy Vegetables -- These are low in calories and carbohydrates and are good source of fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Eat plenty of vegetables (fresh or frozen) in your daily diet.

Fruits -- Mainly contain carbohydrate. They are also good sources of fiber and vitamins. Select mainly fresh fruits. Limit your intake of canned/dried fruits and juices.

Fat -- Includes oil, nuts and seeds, avocado, olives, margarine, salad dressing, butter, cream, ghee, etc. Select mainly heart-healthy monounsaturated fat -- canola/olive/peanut oil, almonds, pecans, peanuts, sesame seeds, avocado and olives. Fats are high in calories, so eat them in moderate amounts.

These are general guidelines. Vegetarian diets, when planned appropriately, are nutritionally adequate and can provide health benefits in the prevention and treatment of certain diseases. However, it is important to consult a Registered Dietitian for your individual nutritional needs.

Swami Ishwarananda ji's talk on Hamsa Gita

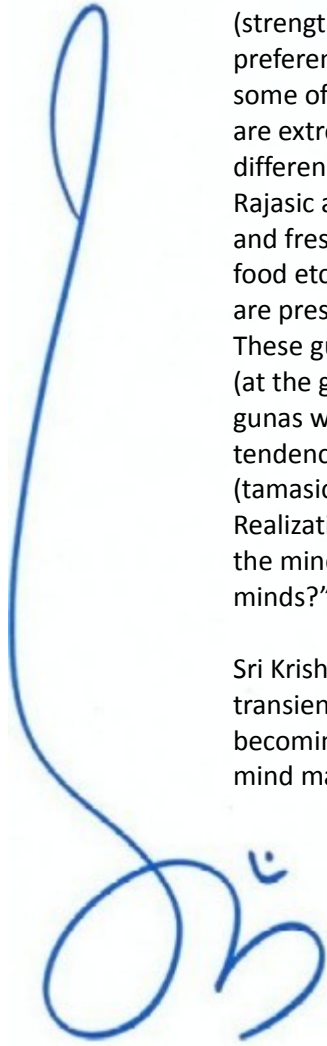
Shashikala Duraiswami

Hamsa Gita is one of the last discourses between Sri Krishna and Uddava before Sri Krishna left his physical body. This text can be broadly divided into two sections. In the first section the dialogue consists of mind analysis and the various factors that influence our thoughts. The second section addresses Krishna's teaching to the Santa Kumars (mind born sons of Brahma) on how to separate the mind from the objects of the world. Sri Krishna took the form of a "Swan" which has the discriminating capability of separating milk from water- to impart his teachings. Hence the name "Hamsa Gita".

The mind is a flow of thoughts and it gains knowledge via the five sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin). The stimuli from the sense organs provide it with fuel from the external world to generate thoughts. These thoughts are nothing but impressions of objects from this external world. Objects could be persons, animate or inanimate things, experiences of situations (happy occasions, sad encounters) etc. In other words, the mind is reacting and generating thoughts based on the objects perceived through the senses. And since these external objects are temporary and constantly changing, the mind or the mood/thoughts also keep fluctuating. The only way to stabilize and calm the mind is by focusing or directing our sense organs predominantly towards something that is finite and constant.

Before we learn to shift this focus of the sense organs it is important to know what the current tendencies (strength and weaknesses) of our mind with the sense organs are. Sense organs are just tools but our preferences and likes and dislikes come from the mind's attachments to the sense objects. For instance, some of us love sweets while others are predisposed to spicy food. Some of us are introverted while others are extroverted. Some of them are more spiritually inclined whereas others are worldly. What causes such differences? Differences in our pre-dispositions are the result of the distribution of the three gunas- Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic. Sattvic gunas include devotion, compassion, and selfless service, and a liking for mild and fresh food. Rajasic gunas include the activities we perform, competitiveness, greed, liking for very spicy food etc. Tamasic gunas include lethargy, laziness, dullness, and a liking for burnt/stale food. The three gunas are present in all of us, although in differing quantities and hence the differences in our predisposition. These gunas are present both at the gross body level as well as at the subtle mental level. Hence our actions (at the gross level) and our thoughts (at the subtle level) should both be conditioned to increase Sattvic gunas which will automatically reduce the Rajasic and Tamasic tendencies. The Rajasic and Tamasic tendencies cannot and should not be completely eliminated. Since some kind of activity (rajasic) and sleep (tamasic) is necessary to lead a Sattvic life that could facilitate inquiry and contemplation leading to Self-Realization. In the second section, the question that the Santa Kumars raised was – (1) "How can we prevent the mind from going towards an object?" and (2) "How can we prevent the object from entering into our minds?"

Sri Krishna says that the mind can be prevented from entering into the objects by understanding the transient nature of the happiness that the object gives us and consciously staying away from it or at least not becoming dependent on it. However, this does not imply that our mind will not think about that object. The mind may still entertain the thoughts of that object due to vasanas that are at the



causal level. So the treatment has to be at both levels – at the physical (gross) level which has a direct impact on the subtle body and at the causal level. Understanding the nature and distribution of the gunas in us we can slowly work on reducing our tamasic and rajasic tendencies and increase the Sattvic gunas to the extent that it would not only address the deficiencies at the gross and subtle level but will eventually weaken the vasanas at the causal level. Channeling our rajasic tendencies towards Selfless service, cultivating devotion are just few ways of managing the gunas. Continuing further, Sri Krishna emphasizes that once we see the common thread (Existence) between the mind and the objects and reject the differences then there will be no need to make an attempt to differentiate between mind and objects.

Note: The question was originally posed by Santakumars to their father Brahma. However, since Brahmaji was busy- active creating the world (prominent rajasic quality), his mind was not subtle enough to answer them. For the mind to have more sattvic qualities it is necessary to consciously curb and channel rajasic and tamasic tendencies else proper inquiry cannot be possible.

To conclude: Happiness is our true nature and yet we continue to be unhappy or discontented due to our close proximity and association with the non-Self sensory/subtleobjects due to our vasanas. In order to realize our true nature, we need to associate ourselves closely to the Self. The mind relies on knowledge communicated by the sensory organs and it exists and functions only to exhaust the inborn tendencies. We use our senses according to the distribution of the gunas. There is a need to rise above the gunas that are present at the physical and mental levels and know the real Self. Krishna advises that by consciously curbing the rajasic and tamasic tendencies and inculcating sattvic tendencies one evolves. Hence by curbing and limiting our external stimulus (gross), the internal stimuli (subtle) can be controlled and with added devotion and faith to counteract the vasanas, all the three bodies can be used for higher contemplation and truth.



My Reflections on Faith and Devotion Based on Swami Ishwarananda ji's talk on Mukunda Mala

Shashikala Duraiswami

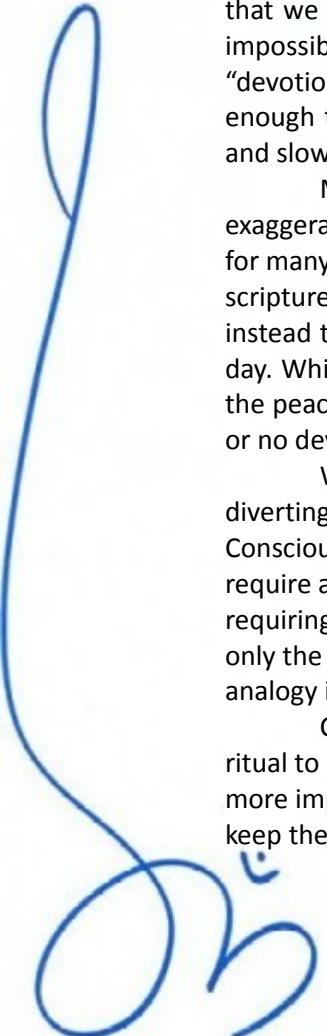
Mukunda Mala is one of the devotional pieces on Lord Krishna written by King Kulashékara. The king was a great devotee of Lord Narayana. While the text itself was interesting, what Swamiji's talk brought out was the role that devotion plays in one's path to Self-Realization, and these are some of my thoughts on it. Devotion is an integral part of the path to Self-Realization. Without devotion, the assimilation of knowledge and abidance in the Self is not possible. While listening to the scriptures (Sravana, Manana and other steps) ensure that one has the correct intellectual understanding of the knowledge, it however cannot result in a revelation of the subtle emotions within our heart. Swamiji emphasized that this can only be revealed through devotion. Devotion is true love and total surrender into the Lord/Self. All emotions that are triggered through our sensory organs are superficial and constantly changing. Emotions (such as love) that are cultivated by fixing our focus on the constant and unchanging Self or Supreme Consciousness can only be achieved by devotion. Such love is unconditional and eternal.

Most of us have faith but are lacking in devotion. Faith is a belief whereas devotion is a long-drawn process. In today's materialistic world, where time is money, we feel that anything that requires considerable amount of time and energy needs to be justified. Moreover, because of our attachment with worldly objects and because of our ability to manipulate and successfully fulfill many of our short-term goals makes us feel that we are in complete control of our lives. This boosts our ego to such an extent that it becomes nearly impossible for us to surrender to the invisible Lord. Such surrender is one of the important characteristics of "devotion". Of course, faith is an important first step – a prerequisite to devotion. A simple faith is often enough to open the door to Self-Realization and as one starts walking this path faith can be strengthened and slowly converted to devotion.

Most rituals currently have either been reduced to a minimum formality or are performed in an exaggerated manner as a pompous show-off. In today's fast paced world, it has become increasingly difficult for many of us to devote the necessary time and effort to perform the rituals in the manner prescribed in the scriptures. The rituals are supposed to be a form of worship to the Lord using our body, mind and speech – instead they have become yet another "chore" that is intermingled with the million other things we do in a day. While at the end of the day, a person can be satisfied in getting the chore done, it has failed to invoke the peace and tranquility the ritual was supposed to bring, since this was performed mechanically with little or no devotion. This brings us to reassess the definition of ritual.

What is a ritual? I would like to define ritual as a practice that helps calm/purify the mind – by diverting our attention from worldly objects to focusing on the one constant non-changing Supreme Consciousness. By this definition, a simple chanting or a silent meditation is a ritual. Now these practices require a certain discipline of the body – which is why many of the traditional rituals were elaborate requiring us to worship with support from our body, mind and speech. In a silent meditation for example, only the mind is used and the other supports are not available [Upadesa-sara: Bhagwan Maharishi]. A similar analogy is that of a table with 4 legs being able to support more weight than a table with 3 legs.

Consequently, based on our predisposition, we may want to choose our rituals. It is ok to shorten the ritual to accommodate it in our hectic daily schedule. But let us drop the unnecessary frills and keep the more important aspect of rituals. Regardless of the type of ritual we choose to perform we should always keep the true purpose of the ritual in mind – which is to calm the mind and fill it with love and devotion.



Crossing the River of Maya

Sangmesh Konareddi

Jnaneshwari is a commentary on the **Srimad Bhagavad Gita** written more than seven centuries ago by **Sant** (Saint) **Jnaneshwar** (Dnyaneshwar or Gynandev) (1290 AD) in the contemporary Marathi language in verse form. It brought the philosophy of the **Gita**, until then the prerogative of Sanskrit pundits, to common man.

Sant Jnaneshwar says in **Jnaneshwari** (Verse numbers mentioned are from this book):

Lord Krishna tells **Arjuna** that:

Arjuna, the problem is how to go beyond this Maya of mine and realize Me (7:68). Whatever steps one takes to cross this river of Maya become harmful (7:82).

1) Those who try to cross it on the strength of their intellect get lost (7:83-84).

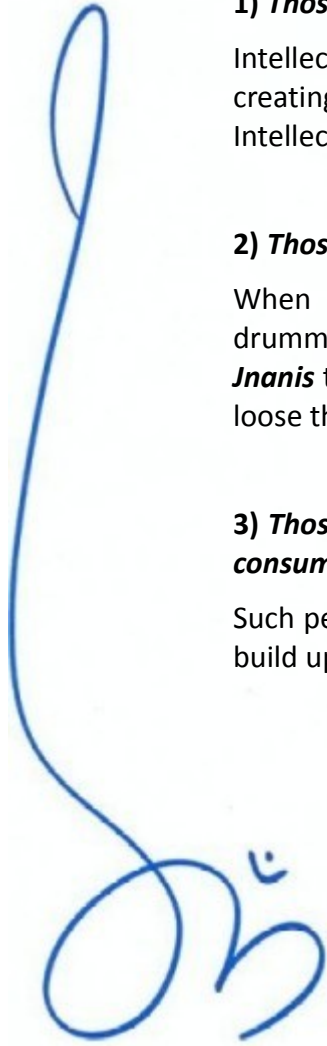
Intellect has ability to extrapolate and create its own imaginations. Intellectually one will go on creating its own universe. This is like a new Maya created by the Intellect. This becomes an Intellectual hobby and finally one gets lost in it.

2) Those who try to cross using knowledge are completely swallowed by pride (7:83-84).

When anyone acquires new knowledge, that person becomes eager to show it. They go on drumming about this new achievement. Such people even talk, show and argue with **realized Jnanis** too! Such people are overcome by pride and think they are superior to others and thus they loose the focus to cross the river of Maya.

3) Those who take the help of the Books (Vedas, scriptures etc.) are burdened by the ego and are consumed by arrogance. (7:83-84).

Such people are proud to show their book selves. Get addicted to acquiring and reading books and build up more egos with no practical application.



4) Those who tried to use their youthful strength were caught in the lust (7:85-88).

Some people enjoy the youth thinking that, youth is meant for enjoyment. They say, they will do the spiritual stuff when they retire. The Body-Mind-Intellect (BMI) equipments are so fed up on sense gratification that they refuse to go inwards in old age. The BMI equipments either don't listen or don't function properly in old age. They forget that the old age is ahead and right around the corner!

5) Those who perform Yajnas get trapped in the wedge of heavenly enjoyment. (7:89).

All such **Yajnas** are for acquiring heavenly pleasures after death. Remember that even this heaven is part of Maya only. They are running after heavenly pleasures, instead of going for liberation, which is achievable right Here and Now!

6) Those who, desiring liberation, perform ritualistic actions get caught in the issues of right and wrong. (7:90).

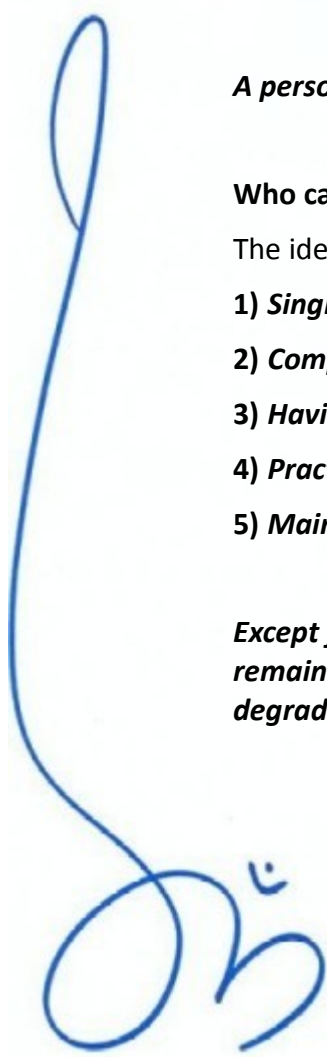
Ritualistic actions are meant to be entry point to begin the spiritual journey. These are initial baby steps. One is supposed to drop them and move on to next process based on the individual's qualities. Most of them do it to earn name and fame in society. They get immersed in this process and forget to progress.

A person cannot cross this river of Maya by his own efforts (7:96).**Who can cross this river of Maya?**

The ideal path to cross over Maya is by:

- 1) Single-mindedly devoting to Me (7:97).**
- 2) Completely surrendering to a True Guru (7:98-102).**
- 3) Having complete devotion in your Guru, God and scriptures (7:98-102).**
- 4) Practicing and following the Guru's and scripture's advice to the hilt and**
- 5) Maintaining a constant alertness to avoid the pitfalls of ego and desire. (7:98-102).**

Except for that one devotee all others are affected by ego and therefore they forget the Self. They remain unaware of their lack of religious observances, are not ashamed of impending degradation and develop the tendency to do what Vedas forbid. (7:103-104).



Pancha Kutumba Sadhana (Five Parenting Guidelines)

Submitted by Sowmya Sundararaman

[Editor's Note: The following is based on an article in Hinduism Today, published by Himalayan Academy Publications]

Five Parenting Guidelines or " **Pancha Kutumba Sadhana** " describe the principles that guide fathers and mothers in setting strong religious examples that nurture children and teach them to follow the path of dharma and thus pass Hinduism to the next generation.

1. Dharmachara: Good Conduct

Loving fathers and mothers, knowing they are the greatest influence in a child's life, should behave the way their dear children should when adults. They never anger or argue before young ones. Father in a dhoti, mother in a sari at home, all sing to God, Gods and guru.

2. Dharma Svagriha: Home Worship

Loving fathers and mothers should establish a separate shrine room in the home for God, Gods and guardian devas of the family. Ideally it should be large enough for all the dear children. It is a sacred place for scriptural study, a refuge from the karmic storms of life.

3. Dharma Sambhashana: Talking About Religion

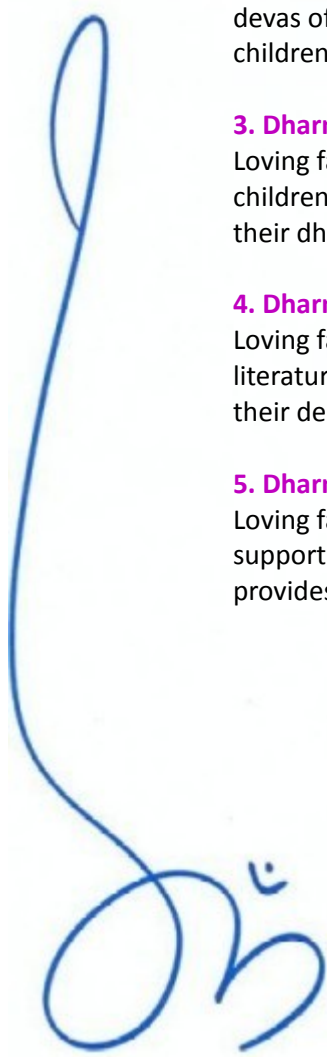
Loving fathers and mothers should speak Vedic precepts while driving, eating and playing. This helps dear children understand experiences in right perspective. Parents know many worldly voices are blaring, and their dharmic voice must be stronger.

4. Dharma Svadhyaya: Continuing Self-Study

Loving fathers and mothers should keep themselves informed by studying the Vedas, Agamas and sacred literature, listening to swamis and panditas. Youth face a world they will one day own, thus parents prepare their dear children to guide their own future progeny.

5. Dharma Sanga: Following a Spiritual Preceptor

Loving fathers and mothers should choose a preceptor, a traditional satguru, and lineage to follow. They support their lineage with all their heart, energy and service. He in turn provides them clear guidance for a successful life, material and religious.



Series – Summary of the Gita Ch. 6 (Dhyana Yoga) - Yoga of Meditation

Nilkanth Bhatt, Richmond Chapter

There are times in our life, when we feel that in spite of our best efforts we are going down and do not find a way out of the downward spiral. So we seek help from our friends and blame those whom we consider enemies for our situation. Most of the time in such situations we find out that the friends, who readily offered their help, when we did not need it, are generally not available when we really need help, and the people whom we blame for our misfortune, normally have nothing to do with it. Does that mean that no one has a true friend and no one has any enemy? Bhagavan Krishna says in Bhagavad Gita that all of us have one true friend and one real enemy, our own self.

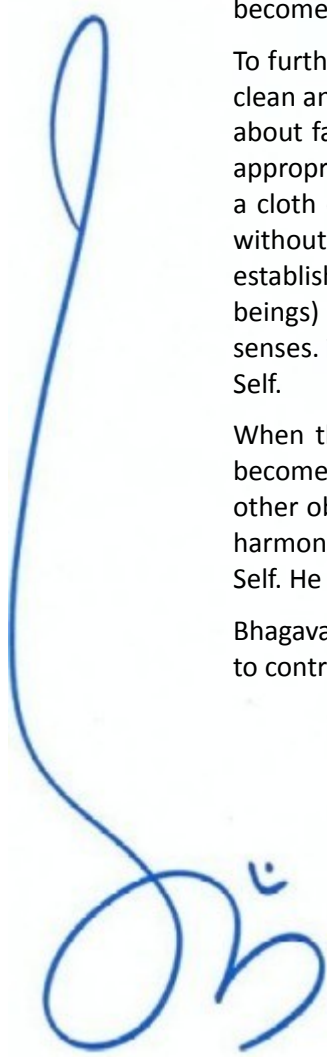
Our own self, if disciplined and trained, can be our best friend in the time of need to get us out of bad situation. However, if our self is not disciplined and controlled, it can become our enemy and put us into trouble. Therefore, it is very important for us to understand our own self and know how to keep it disciplined and in our control. Bhagavan advises us that we must raise ourselves by ourselves out of the low tendencies and once rose, be vigilant not let ourselves slip into our lower nature.

In disciplining ourselves, start with moderation in everything we do, including eating, sleeping, resting and also in working. Even though we feel good when somebody calls us workaholic, it is not a compliment. It only means that we do not know how to balance our life. The practice of moderation, once championed can become remover of all pains and unhappiness.

To further train our mind Gita gives us the true technique of meditation. To meditate one must first select a clean and firm seat, which is not too low or not too high, so that it is comfortable. One should not be worried about falling down from a high seat or exposed to dampness in a low level area. It may be made up of any appropriate material. In olden days a particular type of grass called Kush was used covered with deerskin and a cloth over it. On the meditation seat one must sit keeping neck, head and the body straight and steady without looking around. Keeping the gaze at the tip of the nose, one must close the eyes gently. Once established on the seat, the meditator should try to focus the mind on the Self (the all pervading Lord of all beings) and drop all other thoughts. Thus he will learn to gain control over the activity of the mind and the senses. This practice will purify the mind and intellect to become worthy of reflecting the nature of the true Self.

When the perfectly controlled mind rests in the Self-only, free from longing of all objects and desires; it becomes steady just as the flame of an oil-lamp in a windless place. Whenever the mind tries to run to the other objects, the meditator must try to restrain it and bring it under the control of the self. With the mind harmonized by the practice of meditation, the yogi sees the Self abiding in all beings and all beings in the Self. He sees the Self everywhere. Such a yogi is considered Self Realized.

Bhagavan says, undoubtedly, in the beginning the seeker will find that the mind is restless and very difficult to control but with practice and dispassion it will be restrained.



When the mind restrained by the meditation attain quietude, he sees Self by the self and he feels infinite bliss, which transcends all sensual experiences. Thus established in the Self the person will never again move away from the ultimate reality, which having obtained, he will know that there is no other gain superior to it. Even a deepest sorrow will not move such a person from his infinite bliss.

Certainly, most of us will think that such a firm control of mind may not be possible during one's lifetime. Then what is the purpose in striving for it? All the efforts will go in vain at the time of one's death. Arjuna asks a similar question and in its response Bhagavan says that the efforts put towards controlling and purifying one's mind never go to waste. Such a person will take birth in an appropriate household, where he will be united with the knowledge he acquired in the previous birth and strive more than before for perfection. The yogi thus purified from sins and perfected gradually through the efforts of many births attains the highest goal. Therefore we must strive for the perfection that we can attain here and now.



The Wheel of Action

Acharya Dr. K. Sadananda ji

[Editor's Note: This is 3rd in the series – On Karma Yoga]

We discussed in part II, the secret of success in any endeavor. The success is possible when one performs the action in the spirit of yagna. The spirit of yagna involves a collective cooperative endeavor with each component contributing to its best in complete self-sacrificing mode for the benefit of the totality. Then totality will prosper. While providing the secret for success, Krishna also warns that if the action is not performed in the spirit of yagna, it will bind the individual causing one to go down the drain. Bhagavaan Ramana says – 'kRitimahodadhou patanakaaranam' – one gets trapped into the whirl-pool of action, or karma to janma to karma, punarapi jananam punarapi maraNam. One is trapped in the ocean of samsaar, with no end in sight.

When collective effort is involved as in yagna, and when the results come out of such yagna, then the fair game is to share the results (yagna shishhTa) in proportion to one's contribution to the yagna. Krishna provides another warning here. Those that partake more than their share, depriving the others their share that is due to them, are essentially stealing from others. He will be not only committing sin but taking the other's sin as well. The law of action and reaction not only operates at the individual level, but also at organizational level and the national level, as well. In addition, those who do not work in the spirit of yagna but work for their own selfish goals (in the language of Gita, those who cook for themselves) they commit sin too.

The laws of action are uncompromisingly ruthless and operate at cosmic level. However, for those who understand these laws and operate within the laws, the same laws protect them. Looking at small window of one own life span, one gets the impression that one is getting away without any appropriate compensation or punishment. The laws operate at the cosmic level. The law of action and result is 'everyone gets what he deserves', and not what he wants or avoids. The present is the result of past and future will be the result of the past modified by the present action. The choice is given for humans (karmani eva adhikaaraste) to steer out of the wrongdoings of the past by properly performing the actions now, in the spirit of yagna. One can also damn himself by improper action or adharmic action. The choice is ours. It is never too late to steer oneself out of this bondage. Krishna assures – swalpamalpasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayaat | - if one starts performing even a little bit with the spirit of yagna, he gains a lot in return and slowly goes beyond the fear of death.

The wheel of action:

In addition to the spirit of yagna, Krishna provides a glimpse of how the wheel of action operates at the cosmic level, using the language of the yore. This is beautifully picturized in the Mahabhaart TV series.

Every episode starts with the wheel rotating at the cosmic level, with all the planets and stars moving around. Indian astrology is based on the observation that the exact position of the stars and planets with reference to the time and place of the birth of an individual provides a clue about his praarabda – or conversely the place and time of his birth and the position of the stars and planets are determined by his praarabda. It is an interesting point to consider in relation to the wheel of action.

Krishna says that when one performs the yagna (with all the do's and don'ts) properly, the gods will be pleased and those gods in turn please those who performed the yagna. Thus by pleasing each other, one attains the success. So, the second condition for success is pleasing the Gods. This leads to topic of the eternal wheel of action: Krishna says the beings are born out of food, the food is born out of rains, rains are born out of yagna, yagna is born out of action, action is the product of Vedas, and Vedas are from the Lord; – therefore know that Lord is always established in yagna. Therefore Arjuna, yagnartham kuru – do the action for yagna sake that is do the action as an offering to the Lord. This becomes iswaraarapita buddhi.

We can unravel the significance of the words used above to appeal for our rational intellects. Gods are the production potential in the field of action. Pleasing the gods therefore means performing the action as the field or the situation demands. Gods are pleased when the required actions are performed to their best. When the Gods are pleased they have to give the results appropriate for the action. When the results come, one has now a new set of environment that demands next action which again has to be performed in the spirit of yagna to please the Gods. Thus by pleasing one another the wheel of action is set in motion. The life involves dynamic action. Nature by itself is dynamic. The earth rotates, the seasons come and go, the seeds sprout, plants grow producing seeds, which again sprout giving rise to plants and thus life goes on, and the beginningless cycle of creation, sustenance and decay goes on eternally.

In Tai. Up. it says aatmaanam aakaashH sambuutaH ... and so on and pRithivii then oshadayaH, then annam and then it says annaat purushH. Annam stands for what you eat (if you eat too much then it will eat you). annamaya kosha is born out of food, sustained by food and goes back into food. (Food also supports mano maya and vijnaana maya koshaas too – You can test this by fasting more than a day or two and see how your mind loses the capacity to think. Of course, if you eat too much also the mind cannot function, as it goes to sleep. Hence Krishna advocates yukta aahaaram, a balanced amount of food.). Food, here, includes all that one consumes through the five senses. When one consumes the karma phala, it will leave vasanaas behind which forms the kaaraNa or cause for beings to be born. Hence Krishnaa say annaat bhavanti bhuutaani – beings are born because of enjoying the karmaphala with ego-centric attitude. If annam is taken as prasaadam then the question of enjoying prasaadam is not there. You accept whatever is given with reverential attitude. Thus partaking prasaad or as prasaad purifies the mind.

Food is born out of rains. Rains are essentially the results that are showered due to the actions that are performed. Hence Krishna says 'Food is born out of rains, parjanyaat anna sambhavaH'. The results that one desires come from yagnas as we discussed above, where yagna stands for cooperative endeavor. Hence 'yagnaat bhavati parjanyaH'. Since yagna involves cooperative endeavor Krishna says the rains (results) are due to karmas or actions. Karma comes from Veda – since we are dealing with Veda vihita karmas or obligatory duties specified by Veda. To be more general, Veda means knowledge. The obligatory duties come from clear understanding (or knowledge) of one's role as an individual in the family, in the society, in the nation and in the world.

Finally the Vedas come from the Lord. This is to be understood both from the Veda as pramaana which is considered as apourusheya or not authored by any human. It also means in the absolute sense Knowledge which is unborn, is eternal, ever present. It is essentially the Brahman as cit swaruupa, knowing where there is nothing else to be known, 'yat jnaatvaa naaparam jnyeyam, tat brahmetyavadhaarayet'. Therefore, know Arjuna that all pervading Brahman is eternally present in the yagna

In essence, perform your duties in the spirit of yagna and from the results that come out of that action take what you deserve. Keep only what you need and return back to the totality in the form of yagna (which includes all the pancha bhuuta yagnas discussed above). Thus become an participant in this eternal wheel of action. This way one purifies his mind and makes it free from the pressure of Vasana-s. Swami Chinmayandaji has developed a Chinmaya Mission pledge, based on this principle, which essentially is recognition and commitment to this eternal wheel of action, to be performed by a saadhak for his growth.

**We stand as one family
bound to each other with love and respect.**

**We serve as an army,
courageous and disciplined,
ever ready to fight
against all low tendencies and false values,
within and without us.**

**We live honestly
the noble life of sacrifice and service,
producing more than what we consume,
and giving more than what we take.**

**We seek the Lord's grace,
to keep us on the path of virtue, courage and wisdom.**

**May Thy grace and blessings
flow through us
to the world around us.**

**We believe that the service of our country
is the service of the Lord of Lords,
and devotion to the people
is the devotion to the Supreme Self.**

**We know our responsibilities;
Give us the ability and courage to fulfill them.**

Om Tat Sat .