

Chinmaya Smrithi



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

Volume 20, Number 3-- May 16, 2010

Message for Chinmaya Jayanti Day 2010 Swami Tejomayananda

In Srimad Bhagavatam¹, Bhagavan Sri Krishna praises trees for their selfless service of others. They offer their leaves, flowers, fruits, roots, bark, timber, sweet-smelling sap, wood, tender shoots and ashes – all to serve others. They bear the wind, rain and heat, and give us shade and protection from them. They provide sustenance to all creatures in every way. This is how Pujya Gurudev lived and wanted us to live.

We celebrate Chinmaya Jayanti Day as Seva Day, reminding ourselves to serve others all through the year. Nature nourishes us, and it is our duty to nourish it in turn. We have to serve and preserve our natural environment.

This can be done in two ways: by not polluting the atmosphere and by preserving and enhancing the existing natural resources. Each one of us can do this by making small adjustments in our lifestyle. It will go a long way in bequeathing a healthy, green Earth to the future generations.

¹ Bhagavatam, 10. 22. 29-36



Events & Library

- Events and Links
- News Briefs
- Flyers: CMW 2010 Vedanta Course; 2010 Mahasamadhi Family Camp; Acharya Sadanandaji's Memorial Day Camp; Pittsburgh Sundarakanda Camp

Bala Vihar Articles and Stories

- Frederick Community Activities
- Ramayana Activities – Sundaram Children
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- Our Visit to Thirupathi – Nirmala Limaye
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- Independence and Detachment – Vandana Bapna

Vedantic Thoughts

- Why Study Groups – Vijay Kumar
- Series: Brief Introduction to Gita: Ch 10– Nilkanth Bhatt
- Series: On Karma Yoga – Choiceless Choice - Acharya Dr. K Sadananda

Next Issue

- Articles for the next issue - July 2010, are due by June 30th 2010
- Email submissions to smrithi@chinmayadc.org. Submission instructions at www.chinmayadc.org, Smrithi link, "Information on publishing in Smrithi"

Calendar and Upcoming Events (www.chinmayadc.org, Link – Calendar of Events)

- May 22 – Saturday, starting at 7:30 AM Adi Sankara Jayanthi at Sri Siva Vishnu Temple, Lanham, MD. Swami Dheeranandaji and Dulles Bala Vihar children are on the program.
- May 22 – Saturday: 3PM – CMWRC Bala Vihar Graduation Ceremony
- May 29-30 – Sat-Sun – Memorial Day Spiritual Camp by Acharya Sadanandaji
- June 12-13 – Sat-Sun – Bala Vihar Annual Day by session
- June 13 – Sun at 4:30 PM – Performing Arts Annual Day at Chinmayam
- June 28 – July 23 – Summer Camp in Maryland
- July 25 – Guru Poornima
- July 26 – Aug 20 – Summer Camp in Virginia
- Aug 3 – Pujya Gurudev Mahasamadhi Day

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
www.chinfo.org
www.chinmayadulles.org
www.chinmayafrederick.org
www.chinmayava.org

Please Note

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

Editorial Staff: (smrithi@chinmayadc.org)

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

Bala Vihar students - Vishnupriya Krishnan, Asmi Panigrahi, Harsha Neerchal and Srikanth Kowtha

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



Camps at Chinmaya Vibhooti in 2010

Bala Vihar Summer Camp (Game of Life) – in English

By Swami Tejomayananda

(For children aged 10-12 years old)

Dates: 17th to 21st May 2010

We request for a minimum donation of Rs 3000/- per child to cover all expenses of the camp
(this amount is non-refundable)

[For more information or to download the registration form click here](#)

Kathopanishad Camp– in English

By Swami Tejomayananda

Dates: 23rd to 29th May 2010

We request for a minimum donation of Rs 4000/- per person to cover all expenses of the camp
(this amount is non-refundable)

[For more information or to download the registration form click here](#)

Upadesha Sara Camp– in English

By Swami Tejomayananda

Dates: 24th to 30th June 2010

We request for a minimum donation of Rs 4000/- per person to cover all expenses of the camp
(this amount is non-refundable)

[For more information or to download the registration form click here](#)

The Magic of Love (Narada Bhakti Sutra) Camp– in English

By Swami Swaroopananda

Dates: 15th to 21st August 2010

We request for a minimum donation of Rs 4000/- per person to cover all expenses of the camp
(this amount is non-refundable)

[For more information or to download the registration form click here](#)

Sampoorana Geeta (Essence of all 18 Chapters) Camp– in Hindi

By Swami Advaitananda

Dates: 12th to 19th November 2010

We request for a minimum donation of Rs 4500/- per person to cover all expenses of the camp
(this amount is non-refundable)

[For more information or to download the registration form click here](#)



CMWRC Events Held

- March 20th - 21st - 1st round of Annual Plays by Bala Vihar children were conducted to coincide with Sri Rama Navami
- March 30th - Hanuman Jayanthi was celebrated with the recitation of Hanuman Chalisa and an offering of Vada Mala at Chinmayam during Swami Ishwaranandaji's Jnana Yajna at Chinmayam
- March 29th – April 4th, Swami Ishwaranandaji graced CMWRC with Jnana Yajna on the Gita - 7th Chapter at Chinmayam, followed by a spiritual camp in Virginia on 'Chatusloki Bhagvatam' and conducting a Satsangh at Frederick
- April 26th – April 30th – Swami Chidatmanandaji graced CMWRC with a Jnana Yajna on the “Art of Healing”, based on Bhagavan Adi Sankara's Pancikaranam. The event was held at Chinmayam.
- May 1st and 2nd – Annual Gita Chanting event was held. This year it was conducted locally at the various CMWRC chapters
- May 8th – Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda Jayanti was observed 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

Be sure to read the May 2010 newsletter from Chinmaya Mission West.

Browse and download at www.chinmayamission.org/newsletter:

<http://www.chinmayamission.org/newsletter.php>





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

Pujya 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

Pujya 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, Atma Bodha, Drg Drshya Viveka, Panchadashi Ch. I, and Upanishads (Ishavasya, Kena, Katha, Mundaka)

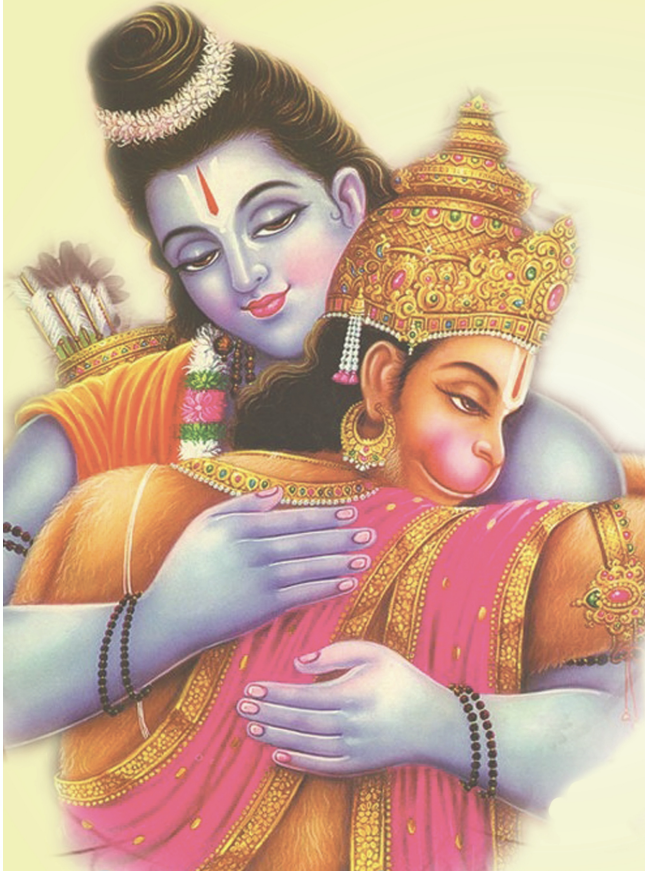
Acharya Sharada Kumar: Taittiriya Upanishad, Vivekachudamani, Vedic Chanting, Sanskrit, Sahasranamavalis, Bhajans



Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles Presents

17th **CHINMAYA MAHASAMADHI FAMILY CAMP**

July 29, 2010 • 6 p.m. PST – August 3, 2010 • 11 a.m. PST
 Marriott Hotel & Convention Center • Burbank, California



CAMP HIGHLIGHTS

- Spiritually focused approach
- Multi-track breakout sessions/ panel discussions on contemporary topics
- Cultural programs depicting important episodes in the life of Sri Rama
- Unique events designed for spiritual reflection
- Elaborate children's curriculum
- Special interactive sessions for youth
- Great ambience, conducive weather, catered Indian food

RAMAYANA SOUNDARYAM

Discourses on the beauty of "Ramayana"
 by H.H. Gururji Swami Tejomayananda
 Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide



Rare opportunity • Friendly payment plan • Special Rudra Puja

1-866-HARIOM-0 (1-866-427-4660)
 2010msc@gmail.com

Information and registration:
www.chinmayamahasamadhi.com



CHINMAYA MISSION

Kailas Niwas, 46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring, MD
(A non-profit religious organization registered in Maryland)

Presents



**Two-Day Spiritual Camp during the
Memorial Day Weekend on**

GITA NAVANEETAM

**Study of the 18 Chapters
of the Bhagvad Gita**

Major Themes: Karma, Bhakti, Jnana Yogas & Moksha

Excellent once in a lifetime opportunity for the Novice & Expert!

Dates: May 29th and 30th, 2010

8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

at Kailas Niwas, 46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring, MD

Meditation:	8:30	9:00	Lunch Break:	Noon	2:00
Session 1:	9:00	10:20	Session 3:	2:00	3:20
Tea Break:	10:20	10:40	Tea Break:	3:20	3:40
Session 2:	10:40	Noon	Session 4:	3:40	5:00

(A Simple Lunch & Tea will be provided at the Mission)

By ACHARYA Dr. K. SADANANDA



Acharya Sadananda is a retired scientist by profession (US Naval Research Lab), a disciple of Swami Chinmayananda, and one of the founding members of Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center.

He has conducted several two-day Memorial Day spiritual camps at the Chinmayam: Saddarsanam, Upadesasara, Dakshinamnurthy stotram, Advaita Makaranda, Mandukya Upanishad and Chandogya Upanishad.

He is currently teaching Uddhava Gita classes at Durga Temple and Mandukya Karika classes in Fairfax. An [Introduction to the Gita.pdf](#) in preparation for the Memorial Day Camp is available for download.

Note: The camp is FREE but registration is required by May 25th

Please spread the word to all your friends and family.

Please register by email: campMD@chinmayadulles.org;

subbaraokari@yahoo.com; navalagrawal@gmail.com;

Please provide Your Name(s), Address and Phone number. For Children provide Name and Age also.

Directions: I-495 to exit 28 North for New Hampshire Ave (towards White Oak), drive approx 6 miles and make a left on Norwood Road.

CHINMAYAM is the 4th building on the left

CMWRC will provide babysitting services subject to the availability of volunteers



Chinmaya Mission Pittsburgh

Hosts

Sundarkand Mahotsav 2010

July 16-20, 2010



7 PM to 9 PM Fri., Mon & Tues. 5PM to 7PM Sat., & Sun
Monroeville Convention Center, Monroeville, PA 15146
Attached to Doubletree (Hilton Brand) Hotel

by Param Pujya

Swami Tejomayananda

Head, Chinmaya Mission Worldwide



Saturday July 17th
10AM – 12 Noon
Sapta-Swara
Hanuman Chalisa
 chanting in seven
 different ragas by
Swami Tejomayananda

Sunday July 18th, 10AM – 12 Noon
 Sri Ram Parivar Utsav Murthi Installation and
 Swami Chinmayananda Paduka Puja
 at Chinmaya Sanjeevani/Hanuman Dham
 (3817 Northern Pike, Monroeville, PA 15146)

Daily Mahaprasad

Free Admission

Please donate generously to stage this event successfully

Free Babysitting

YOUR GENEROUS SPONSORSHIP IS REQUESTED

PRAMUKH YAJAMAN, DAINIK YAJAMAN,
YAJAMANS FOR: MAHAPRASAD, SHOBA-YATRA,
SRI RAM PARIVAR UTSAV MURTHI STHAPAN, GURUDEV PADUKA PUJA,
SAPTA-SWARA HANUMAN CHALISA, POTHU PUJA, AND AARTI

.Cash. Check. Credit Cards.

For More Information, Sponsorships & Hotel Booking:

Smita Gosai (724) 483-6386

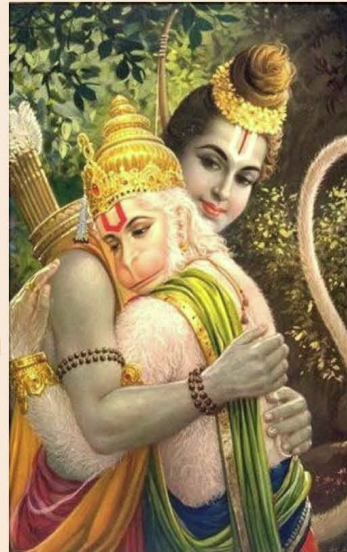
Gopal Krishnamoorthy (412) 373-5370

www.chinmayamissionpittsburgh.org

info@chinmayamissionpittsburgh.org

PLEASE MAKE YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION TO: "CMP - SUNDARKAND MAHOTSAV 2010"

CHINMAYA MISSION PITTSBURGH IS A TAX-EXEMPT CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION UNDER IRS CODE 501(C)(3) - Tax ID 26-0003216



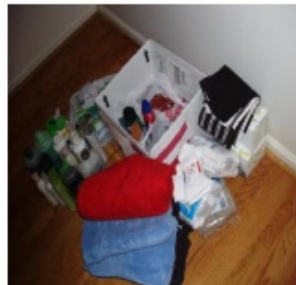
Chinmaya Mission, Frederick Community activities



Household Goods Drive

Chinmaya Mission, Frederick organized a drive for "Household Goods" for the adults in Community Living, Frederick. This facility has adults ranging from ages 18-85 who are all specially challenged. The household goods were delivered on Good Friday to the Community Living office at Frederick. The office staff were cheerful and thankful, when they received the supplies donated generously by the Chinmayam families.

"Kindness in words creates confidence, kindness in thinking creates profoundness, kindness in giving creates love."



Green Drive

"Modern technology
Owes ecology
An apology."

Remembering Bhu Matha, the Chinmaya community conducted a drive to collect old electronic gadgets (laptops, cell phones, MP3 players, etc). The collected items were sent to a recycling center.



Submitted by Devi Ramaseshan

Ramayana Activity

Submitted by Mangala Rao and Chetana Neerchal
Bala Vihar Teachers, Sundaram, Silver Spring Chapter



Siri Neerchal

4/17/10

Homework

Lakshmana

The main character in the Ramayana is Rama. He is the ideal person. However, many times Rama's example is very difficult to follow. In such circumstances, we should use Lakshmana as an example. Lakshmana is like Rama in a different form. But, Lakshmana is more like an ordinary human being. It is easier to connect with Lakshmana than Rama.

Lakshmana was the third son of Dasharatha. His mother was Sumitra. Lakshmana and Shatrughna were twins. Lakshmana was older. Rama and Lakshmana were inseparable. When Sage Vishwamitra came to Dasharatha's palace to request Rama's help to protect his ashram from rakshasas, Dasharatha was very reluctant to send Rama. After a lot of coaxing, Dasharatha finally agreed to send Rama, but he sent Lakshmana as well. Also, when Rama had to go into exile for fourteen years, Lakshmana didn't think twice about coming with Rama. He could not bear to be away from him.

As Lakshmana's faults can be seen, his example is easier to follow than that of Rama. Lakshmana's only faults are his quick temper and at times, lack of trust. Rama is often described as the perfect person, but he is not perfect. He is the *ideal* person. There are times in the Ramayana where Lakshmana was thinking more clearly than Rama. For example, when Sita was abducted by Ravana, Rama was so lost in his sorrow that he was ready to die. It was Lakshmana who consoled him and convinced him to start searching for Sita. Rama is the ideal person because he is as close to perfect as it is possible for a human to be. To be human is to be imperfect, and Rama and Lakshmana are beacons of light in the hazy fog of human error and imperfection.

“Is Gandhian Philosophy still relevant in solving present day world problems?”

Jitesh Nadimpalli

Mahatma Gandhi needs no introduction to the world. He led the Indian people to independence from the British rule with his mighty weapons “Satyagraha” and non-cooperation. He was killed on Jan 30, 1948. The world has undergone great historical changes since then: the collapse of Communism and the Soviet Union, the virtual renunciation of Marxism-Leninism, the unification of Germany, the end of the cold war, the unification of Europe, the rise of terrorism as well as constant conflicts between nations, cultures and religions. In addition, the collapse of morality and the breakdown of the family are becoming more and more serious problems on the global level. While advanced nations are prospering, 30 million people in Africa and Asia are facing starvation, and many children around the world are suffering with malnutrition. Unless these problems are solved, it will be impossible to realize the ideal of humankind.

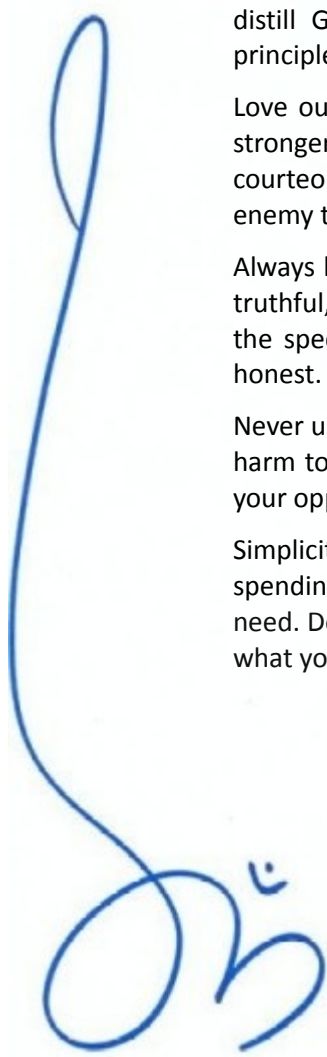
Can the principles preached and practiced by Gandhiji, or any modification thereof, help humanity with the present crises or problems? Gandhiji lived in South Africa and India, during 1920-40s and fought against discrimination towards colored people in South Africa and later for India’s freedom. We now live in a society and amongst a generation that has a lot more technology, is more materialistic, and we are not fighting for the same reasons as Gandhiji did. It is very difficult to answer this question without understanding Gandhiji’s principles. Gandhiji followed simple principles based on truth and non-violence. I have best attempted to distill Gandhiji’s principles based on my theory and understanding that “His life is his message and principles”.

Love our enemy: Love would be a great way of implementing Satyagraha (as long as our love for truth is stronger). We should try to understand and be sympathetic to our opponent. We need to act kindly and courteously towards our opponent, and probably need to care about our opponent. Then we will win our enemy to our side.

Always be truthful: The truth should be one of our strongest weapons. If people find out we have not been truthful, our cause is lost. We will not be believed and trusted. We will not win the hearts of our opponent or the spectators. Everyone is unique in this world and therefore, one should not compare with others. Be honest. If you think there is something to fix, then fix it.

Never use violence: Gandhiji made the British people feel badly about themselves. Violence and unnecessary harm to the opponent are completely inappropriate. You win the hearts of spectators when you suffer and your opponent does not. We must control our temper and our thoughts.

Simplicity: The greatness of Mahatma Gandhi is his simplicity. He led a simple life and gave up unnecessary spending. Simplicity doesn't mean foregoing all your desires, but not buying something you don't really need. Do we really need 10 pairs of shoes or 50-100 pairs of clothes? Simplicity also means being happy with what you are given and have.



Gandhiji is a strong believer in forgiveness. He once said *"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong"*. Therefore, we should learn to forgive.

Patience: Satyagraha appears to work slowly. In reality, there is no force in the world that is so direct or so swift in working. The 10 years between Rosa Parks and the voting rights act probably went slowly for Martin Luther King. However, 10 years now seems remarkably quick.

Gandhiji always said *"The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problems"*. The world right now is filled with so much violence with conflicts, terrorism and wars. The discovery of atomic power and nuclear weapons has proven to be a threat to human civilization itself. So, the necessity to find an alternative to war and violence is as great as finding a way for saving humanity from self-destruction.

Gandhiji's principle of Satyagraha is an effective substitute for violent and destructive ways of fighting evil in the form of injustice, oppression and all kinds of exploitation. So we must use this method for resolving conflicts of interests and outlook, whether between individuals or groups or nations. We can use this technique in all spheres of life. Gandhiji always believed that change should always happen at the individual level. He said, *"You must be the change you want to see in the world."* If we change ourselves, we will change our world. If we change how we think then we will change how we feel and what actions we take. And so the world around us will change. And the problem with changing our outer world without changing ourselves is that we will still be us when we reach that change we have strived for. We will still have our flaws, anger, negativity etc. intact and start to try to create even more problems and conflicts in our life and world. He also used to say, *"An eye for eye only ends up making the whole world blind."* Fighting evil with evil won't help anyone. We should always choose how to react to something.

Martin Luther King once expressed, "Jesus gave us the message, Gandhiji gave us the method". He followed Gandhiji's method of non-violence and waged a struggle for the civil rights moment. This happened 20 years after Mahatma Gandhi death. Nelson Mandela of South Africa said "We must never loose sight of the fact that the Gandhian philosophy may be a key to human survival in the twenty-first century." Nelson Mandela was inspired by Gandhiji's principles of non-violence and fought to end the apartheid in South Africa. What best example do we need that Gandhiji's principles of non-violence always work?

Gandhiji rightly quoted *"You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty."* While the trend of evolution is towards truth and non-violence, construction and achievement, the inner aspiration of man is towards the good and the true, the beautiful and the everlasting. Untruth, evil, violence, hatred and destruction are still acting as anti-evolutionary forces.

So my answer to the question is "Yes, we can" apply the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence to solve problems the world now faces. But, we need strong commitment from every individual and every leader. If individuals are committed, the leaders are committed; then, the nations will be committed and we can see the world as one family – the long cherished desire of mankind.

* * *

Our Visit to Thirupathi

Nirmala Limaye

Last December, we were in Chennai for a conference and decided to visit the Tirumala Venkateshwara Temple. Situated in the hill town of Tirumala, the temple is located near the city Tirupati in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

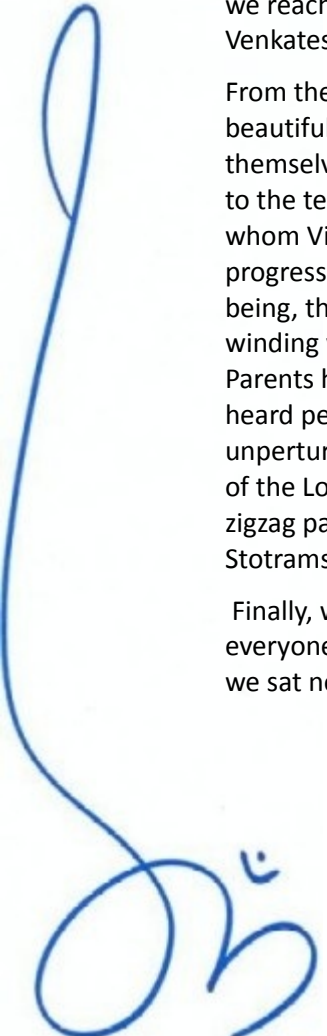
We were forewarned that on Sundays, the place is very busy, especially since schools are closed. Come to think of it, however, Tirupati is always crowded; as close to fifty thousand pilgrims visit the shrine of Lord Venkateshwara daily!

Exactly when the Tirumala Venkateshwara Temple was built is not known. The origin of the temple itself is a mystery, and many believe that its murti (idol) of Lord Venkateshwara is self-manifested (i.e. not man-made). However, there have been historic mentions that the temple was a pilgrimage place as early as 500 A.D. Additionally, there is evidence of royal support by the Chola, Pandya, and (after the 10th century) Vijayanagara dynasties. The temple is also known as the *Temple of the Seven Hills* (*Saptagiri* in Sanskrit) because it is built on the Venkatadri hill, one of the seven hills of Tirumala. Legend has it that the famous vishistaadvaitin Ramanuja climbed all seven hills on foot to pray to the Lord Venkateshwara. Since then, the temple has been revered and frequently visited as a pilgrimage site by millions of people. Sometimes referred to as the 'Vatican of the East,' the temple has overtaken the Vatican both as the richest devotional place in the world and as the most visited place of worship.

We began our journey from Chennai to Tirumala by luxury bus in the early morning. As we traveled, we got to see the beautiful surrounding terrain – lush, filled with trees, and interspersed with huge boulders – until we reached Tirumala city. At the bottom of the first hill, we saw a large lake. According to legend, Lord Venkateshwara rested at this very site.

From there, we had to transfer ourselves to the Andhra state bus service. The winding road, which was beautifully decorated with flowering trees and bushes, wove up and down through the hills. The hills themselves were surrounded by gorgeous green valleys. After we passed through the hills, a turn brought us to the temple complex. Supposedly, these seven hills represent Sheshanaga (the King of all Nagas, upon whom Vishnu is said to rest)'s heads. Could it be that these seven hills indicate the seven steps in man's progress into higher lokas such as bhuh, bhuvah, suvah, mahah, janah, tapah, and satyam – the last hill being, thus, the abode of the Lord? Amidst the usual crowd of vendors hawking their wares, we were led to a winding walkway which started getting narrow and stuffy as people began shoving and pushing to go ahead. Parents hoisted their children on their shoulders, their recently shaven heads shining. Every now and then, I heard people say "Govinda...Govinda!" with others joining in. I saw a gentleman ahead of us who was unperturbed by the rush of the crowd and was writing in a notebook in his hand, perhaps writing the name of the Lord. After many such turns, though we felt exhausted, we struggled harder and continued on the zigzag pathway until we entered the main hallway. I could not remember any of the Venkateshwara Stotrams, so I chanted the Shanti Path ("Sarve bhavantu sukhinah") instead.

Finally, we reached the sanctum and got ten seconds' darshan of the Lord. We were practically moving by everyone pushing us out, and our legs were screaming for rest. Outside the temple is a large square where we sat near replica of the Lord which makes the rathayatra on occasion.



I was thinking, “What a wait for two and half hours to get ten seconds of darshan!” Then, one thought came to mind: Doesn’t this journey reflect our life? We struggle to earn money and get pushed in life by various forces. Owing to these various distractions, we tend to remember the Lord only very few times in our life, and these experiences are comparable to the long wait and short darshan time that we experienced in our sacred journey.

On the way back, we received prasadam of laddu. Our co-passengers in the bus were a family of three – two parents and their little daughter. The little girl threw up periodically but would start smiling after the attack. Upon inquiry, the father told us that she had had one eye removed by surgery due to cancer, and the family was now traveling back to Chennai for a checkup. The girl’s parents thought that by bringing her to Tirupathi, she would be blessed and protected. Their steadfast faith moved me. Seeing the beautiful girl was on her mother’s lap fast asleep, we prayed for her in our hearts.

Overall, the journey, though tiring, was a fascinating yatra.

* * *



Liberation or Freedom

Shashikala Duraiswami

Although the words liberation and freedom are synonymous, the places and the occasions we use them and their impact on us is typically quite different.

The very mention of the word “Liberation” brings to my mind the picture of a saint clad in saffron meditating under a tree. In the very next instant I consider myself to be different from them and sigh - “Hmm. Liberation is not for me; it is neither within my reach nor is it the goal of my life! I am too materialistic and worldly to even think about Liberation. Liberation involves curbing desires and destroying vasanas; I am quite happy with my life and I don’t want to give up everything that I have worked so hard to get.”

Freedom is a “lighter” word that does not come with such a strict baggage and it is something that we care very deeply about. All of us like the freedom to choose our clothes, our food, our friends, our work etc. Freedom can also be experienced in the form of security, comfort or respect. For instance coming home after a long day at work we appreciate the freedom to be ourselves in our home. The phrases such as “being at home” (fish taking to water) has more to do with the feeling for comfort and security than about conquering or giving up something valuable to us. Imagine someone taking that freedom away from us! Whenever we experience discomfort at the physical level, we react very quickly to rectify and restore our control in that situation. Freedom of speech, freedom to express and freedom to act is our inborn desire and in the event that is compromised we experience discomfort or disharmony. So in reality freedom is something that we actively pursue and treasure yet we are intimidated to even think about liberation. The only difference between them is our association with them – we associate freedom with the gross and physical levels while liberation is associated with the subtle level. As Gurudev said – “Liberation or attainment of perfection is a condition experienced by the mind; liberation is only for the mind because the mind alone was in bondage”

The things that we accumulate in our lives via hard work and dedication are more tangible to us and we feel it to be our moral duty to treasure and protect them, and perhaps rightly so. We have earned them and we have every right to enjoy their possession. However, we are capable of achieving much more. Keeping our possessions, can we still try to work towards liberation? In other words, if we temporarily divest the word liberation of its baggage (removing the gross/physical requirements bound to the word), it now does not sound that intimidating. It is just freedom but at the subtle level – a freedom of mind! So what is this “freedom of mind”? We put impositions on ourselves in the form of expectations, attachments, desires etc and become a slave to our mind and thoughts. Instead of using our Intellect and knowledge to create appropriate thoughts, the thoughts are controlling and guiding us. In other words, we are reacting instead of acting in the situations and circumstances we face in our day to day life.

So the next time we think about liberation how about shifting the focus from physical renunciation to mental renunciation. There is not a requirement that to achieve freedom at a broader level (both physical and mental) we have to renounce everything (gross) right away. As one makes progress spiritually (moving further in the subtle level), physical comforts and needs will become secondary.

Renunciation is not about what we have or don’t have. It is about not becoming dependent on them and understanding the limited happiness and contentment they have to offer. It is also about pushing each of us towards becoming a more socially and morally responsible person. All our actions, including our speech have roots in our thoughts. So it is imperative to periodically monitor them so that our actions are not as a result of a reaction but that of a balanced and sensible judgment. While it is said that liberation can free us from the cycle of samsara, the very act and process of trying to attain liberation can help purify our mind (thoughts) and subsequently all our actions in the present, while we are living (now in this current birth).

And that’s a pretty good reason to think about Liberation!

When you are going for a goal, the journey is the best part! -- Kalpana Chawla

Unity and Yajna Spirit through Independence and Detachment

Vandana Bapna

Perhaps, one of the most stimulating and rewarding Mothers day gift I received was on May 9, 2010. It was the deep debate with my children on the concepts of 'independence and detachment'. Having attended Bala Vihar and Vedanta classes for over a decade, 'independence and detachment' were the key words in our vocabulary.

What amazed me was the variety of perceptions that each of us had regarding what constitutes Independence and Detachment. The Vedantic concepts are only indicators of the indescribable and subtle laws of life. If taken literally with blind faith, as black and white statements, their true meaning can get lost amidst misconception, confusion and conflict. All the concepts need to be mulled through, contemplated and assimilated only after full conviction.

I soon realized that there was a need for immense clarity on my part so that I could impart my understanding with deep conviction to the children. So, here is an attempt to pen it down. It seems that one of the offshoots of the concept of Independence is "Now, I am grown-up and self sufficient, I don't need anyone, I can take care of myself, I do not want any suggestions or guidance or interference, I don't want to depend on anyone, I am detached, I don't care!..."

- First, it is impossible to be completely independent while functioning as BMI (Body, Mind and Intellect), no matter from what angle one looks at it. Each one can contribute only to a small percentage of his/her own basic needs and it is the cooperative endeavor that keeps the individual as well as the society harmonious.
- Second, this perception dispels the connectedness and unity, creates a sense of separateness, enhances the ego, the competition, the stress-levels and research has shown it to be the cause of depression (and the proliferation of psychology departments) in the modern society.
- Thinking back to the days as I was growing up, I marvel at how each stage of life was revered in the society. The children received all the nurturing, love and education; the young parents were providers for the children and the elders; the elders shared their wisdom, love and were emotional/moral pillars for the children, young parents and everyone in the community. Everyone had the opportunity to contribute to the whole. Everybody was not perfect, but they lived together as one family with love and respect, while setting aside individual differences and wants. We did not hear of the psychiatrists back then! Could this attitude be the definition of true 'Independence and Detachment?'
- From this perspective, true Independence is freedom from dependence on anything/anyone for happiness. While acting in the world, the independent person joyfully and voluntarily gives his/her very best in all the respective roles. He/she is ever loving, serving, compassionate and reverent to everything and everyone. His/her thoughts, actions and words are independent of any expectation from anyone. In other words, there is a detachment of attitude from any fruits of action.
- Another striking attribute is that they live an authentic life attuned with their core values and deep convictions. They readily give up their worldly attachments/status if it involves compromising with their authenticity. Serenity and poise become the hallmarks of the Independent and the Detached.



- To be independent and detached, one has to be already full with love and joy so as to give it freely without the need to replenish or expect in return. One can give only what one possesses, be it love, joy, money, knowledge. And, the Self in all, the pure consciousness is the infinite source of everything!
- With this re-definition, Independent individuals naturally bring about unity and yajna spirit for the family, community, country. They act with goodwill for all without worrying about what they would get or lose in return. It is the exact opposite of the ego based separateness that defined an independent and detached individual at the beginning.
- So, we come back full circle into the thread of wholeness with the world around us, with the One infinite supreme consciousness connecting everyone. And, leading to the joyful contentment and connection that we all strive for.

Eventually, each of us needs to take full responsibility for the choices we make, after full study, deliberation and conviction only. We may make errors on the way: makes it even more fun to learn from them. There is no room for blind faith, or for ascribing the blame to scriptures and teachers due to our lack of proper understanding. Peace of mind and contentment would be the litmus tests that would clearly reveal if we are treading on the right path.

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Why Study Groups?

Vijay Kumar

Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center is blessed with 5 Acharyas, which is a blessing for the devotees in this area, which other centers do not have. We do hear from them daily or weekly basis, the knowledge of the Vendanta. Apart from this, we also have other visiting Acharyas from other centers occasionally.

However, in spite of all the listening, and in the hush between office, home and children, we are hardly able to keep what we heard, or contemplate on that. Some of us forget the moment we reach home after the camp, yajna or class. Someone told me recently that they forget in the parking lot itself! Then we wait for the next yajna.

The process of learning and absorbing the teachings of Vedanta is three-fold: sravanam (Listening), Mananam (Reflection) and Nidi-dhyasanam (intense meditation and practice).

Sravanam is actually much more than physically listening to the exposition of Vedanta. It involves the clear understanding of the primary message of Vedanta, its validity and its application in daily life. Sravanam is the focus in the Jnana Yajnas and weekly discourses that are a regular feature of life at the Chinmaya Mission.

But as mentioned before, we all know how difficult it is for us to recall clearly what we had heard and thought we understood during the talks by our Acharyas. That happens when we have not engaged in the second step of the learning process: Mananam.

Mananam is not merely thinking about what we have heard or read. It requires wrestling with the ideas, posing arguments and counter-arguments based on related texts or personal experience in life. This happens more easily when we engage in discussion with each other than in solitary reflection. And only then do our deep-set doubts surface so we can resolve these doubts and come to a deeper level of acceptance of Vedantic teachings. This is the domain not of Jnana Yajnas but of study groups.

A study group is a group of five to fifteen people who meet regularly to discuss one of the Vedantic texts. All members of the group participate equally, with one of them being a Coordinator. Poojya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda put the highest emphasis on participation in study groups by all sincere seekers.

CMWRC has several study groups operating currently, but not enough. Many more members will benefit enormously by participating in a study group regularly. We all should encourage others as well to attend one of these. A list of study groups meeting now can be found at our website: chinmayadc.org.

Let us commit ourselves to enhancing our own learning and understanding of Vedanta through participation in study groups. Take full advantage of the wonderful resources we have available by being members of the Chinmaya Mission family.

Now here is Gurudev's words on Study Groups

"Mere listening to my Yagnas will not add to your beauty. These ideas are to be reflected deeply and digested slowly. This process is hastened only when you discuss what you have studied with others. Study groups constitute the heart of our Mission . The ideas gathered by you, when discussed with others, not only become deeply rooted in yourself, but as they become clearer in your own understanding, they also inspire those who listen to you. Thus, each student, while trying to strengthen his own understanding, can become an instrument for the spread of this knowledge. This process is the dynamic STUDY SCHEME followed in the Vedantic tradition. This is not a Chinmaya methodology, it is the most ancient Vedantic tradition of Study."

Series – Summary of the Gita
Ch. 10 (Vibhuti Yoga) - The Glories of the Divine

Nilkanth Bhatt, Richmond Chapter

One of the age-old questions is “what is the source of this universe?” The question still remains largely unanswered by science. Every time science attempts to answer the question, it seems more questions arise out of the attempted answer. It is generally accepted in the scientific community that the universe started with a big bang; however, it is not clearly understood what existed before the big bang? And what really caused the big bang?

The very fact that the universe exists makes it imperative to have its source. Not only does the universe exist, it also seems to be governed by implicit laws. So there must be a law enforcer for this universe somewhere. As far as we know, nothing exists anywhere other than this universe. So we must come to the conclusion that the source of this universe and the law enforcer of this universe must be one and the same and inherent in the universe. It is not possible for us to know the source of this universe as long as we are part of this universe.

Bhagavan Krishna says, “Neither the Devas nor the great Rishis (Scientists) know my origin because I am the source of them all”. All the various qualities which make people different from each other, such as intellect, wisdom, non-illusion, forgiveness, truth, self-restraint, calmness, pain, happiness and unhappiness, birth and death, fear and fearlessness, non-injury, equanimity, contentment, austerity, fame and infamy all arise out of him alone.

He is also source of all of us and therefore it is not possible for us to know him. Source of my sight is my eyes; therefore I cannot see my own eyes. However, I am firmly convinced that I see through my eyes because of my awareness of them. Similarly those who become aware of the Lord as the source of all beings, and worship (identify) him with steadfast mind, the Lord blesses them with “Buddhi Yoga;” the pure intellect which helps them become one with the Lord.

The question still remains “how does the God exist pervading this entire universe?” How should we think about the unthinkable Lord? And how should we meditate on him?

Bhagavan says, “I am the Self, seated in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning, middle and the end of all beings”. All beings are nothing but the Lord’s manifestation. It is not easy for us to accept this statement. We divide this world into Good and Evil, Right and Wrong etc. Bhagavan says to help ourselves feel his presence; we should see the Lord in everything that is glorious in this world.

Bhagavan says, “I am Vishnu among all Aditya. I am the radiant Sun among all luminaries. I am Moon among all asterisms. Among Vedas I am Sam Veda. Among senses I am mind. I am life in all beings. Among Rudras I am Sankara. Among yakshas I am Kubera Dhanapati. Among the natural elements I am Fire. Among mountains I am Meru. I am Brahaspati among priests. I am the great Skanda among all army generals. I am ocean among waters. I am Pipal tree among trees. I am Narada among all Rishis. Among archers I am Rama. Among rivers I am Ganges. I am knowledge of the wise. I am the splendor of the splendid. I am victory of the victorious.” All the glories we see in this world are the glories of the Lord alone.

All things indicated above are positive and it is not difficult for us to accept, but Bhagavan also says: “I am gambling among the cheats. I am scepter among punishers. I am silence among the secrets and I am all devouring death.” These are not the qualities we consider positive. We must remember that positive and

negative are relative terms. Something positive in one situation may be negative in other situation. Singing a song is a positive action but singing a song in a Library, where people are quietly studying, is not a positive thing. All positive and negative actions are only possible by living beings only, and Bhagavan says I am life in all beings; therefore one can say that all actions good or evil are only possible due to the Lord's presence.

Bhagavan says "Whatsoever is the source of all beings is also me. There is no being (entity) moving (living) or unmoving (inert) that can exist without me." The Lord is the cause and this Universe is the effect. The effect cannot exist without its cause, just as a clay pot cannot exist without clay.

We must know that whatever is glorious, prosperous or powerful in any being in this world is nothing but the manifestation of the Lord's glory. However all the glories in this Universe combined cannot even explain the fraction of the real glories of the Divine.

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Stages of Karma Yoga

Acharya Dr. K. Sadananda ji

[Editor's Note: This is 7th and last in the series – On Karma Yoga]

For convenience, we can think of three stages in Karma yoga. We recognize that to transform karma into yoga we need to bring Iswara. Iswara means the Lord who is the author of this entire universe. People consider some things as man-made and some thing as natural. There is nothing that is really man-made. The possibilities for a man to make and the laws governing for making (as well as for breaking) are already available in nature. Man only discovers and makes use of these laws and creates or assembles using his intelligence. The creation is only an intelligent assemblage of existing matter since both matter and energy are conserved in nature. Krishna provides in the second chapter an absolute law of conservation. 'naasato vidyate bhaavo naabhaavo vidyate sataH|' That which is non-existent cannot come into existence and that which is existent will not cease to exist'. Therefore Oh| Arjuna| There was never a time I was not there, never a time you were not there and these kings that we see in front. There will never be a time when they will cease to exist. Creation therefore cannot be some thing out of nothing but only a transformation of something into some other thing using the laws that are available already in nature. A scientist does not invent a law only discovers the law. The potential for modification or transformation already exists in the Nature, just as ornaments from gold. That is, gold has the capacity to transform into ornaments. The creative power arising from intellect is due to Iswara. Hence, Krishna says – 'buddhiH bhuddhimataam asmi' – I am the intelligence among the intellects.

There is a difference between action and labor. Intelligent action or purposeful action is karma in contrast to mechanical action, which constitutes labor. We do many actions mechanically, starting from getting up from bed to taking bath, cleaning, cooking, washing, walking (regular as well as for exercise), etc. Vedas considers these as part of samskaara karmas or purification rituals where a routine action is converted into a prayerful action.

Thus, even if there is routine obligatory action, engaging the available mind in thinking of the Lord is an intelligent way of performing that action. I remember my mother chanting Vishunusahasranama, Mukundamaala and other sthavas continuously while cooking and cleaning. This frees the mind from indulging unnecessarily into the past (regrets of the past) and worries and anxieties about the future. Even though the chanting can become mechanical, the thinking about the Lord becomes a natural by the saadhana. Hence, Krishna says:

ananyacetaaH satatam yo maam smarati nityashaH|
tasyaaham sulabhaH paarthaa nityayuktasya yoginaH| 8-14

Whoever thinks of me all the time, without any other thoughts in his mind, and who yokes his mind fully to Me, he will reach Me easily. If one engages in thinking of Him all the time, he cannot but think of Him in the last moments while leaving this body, and whoever thinks of Me and nothing but Me, while departing his body, he cannot but reach Me alone, and there is no doubt about it— says Krishna.

antakaalepi ca maam eva smaran muktva kalebaram,
yaH prayaati sa madbhaavam yaati naastasya samshayaH|| 8-8)

This can be achieved by constant practice (abhyaasa) and giving up the unnecessary indulgence of the mind in useless thoughts (vairaagya or dispassion). Krishna stresses these two aspects again and again, constant practice, abhyaasa, and dispassion, vairagya, as the essential ingredients for a success, in any field.

Nature of the mind:

If we examine the mind and see its operation, we find there are three distinct ways it engages itself. The mind is nothing but flow of thoughts, vRitti dhaara. Flow involves a direction. The direction is primarily set by the vaasanaas, which manifest as desires at the intellect level, agitations at the mind level, and actions at the body level. As we discussed earlier, vaasanaas only provide the environment for us to act, but as a human being with intelligence, we are given a choice to choose the direction of our thinking in spite of the pressure from the past. Thus, we are not just prisoners of our past but masters of our future. By redirecting the mind towards Him, we change our future vaasanaas until our mind flows naturally towards Him. Of the three distinct ways the mind functions, the first and the most useless avocation of the mind is 'stray' thinking. Whenever one is functioning mechanically, the mind also functions in mechanically thinking, jumping from one thought to the other, one topic to another, without any pause.

Ninety percent of the time, our minds, sometime even our conversations, are wasted in these unproductive engagements. This happens even when we sit for meditation as we are carried away by the thoughts without knowing how our minds were hijacked by our thoughts. For consistent flow of thoughts towards higher, a vigilant mind is needed. This can be achieved only by constant practice with full devotion towards the higher. For example, instead of listening to the junk music during a waking exercise, one can listen to the bhajan or to that which can direct the mind to higher. Some people put a tape recorder on but instead of listening, the mind slowly drifts back to 'stray' thinking. It is important therefore to engage both speech and the mind in chanting the prayers, particularly when one is involved in routine actions. By engaging the speech also in chanting His sthava one avoids useless speech. The routine actions such as taking bath, taking food, etc. become yagnas, if we bring in the Lord.

There was once a drunkard who went to a priest and asked, 'Sir, can I drink while we are praying?' – The priest said, 'No. You should not do any other action that takes your mind away from the Lord'. The drunkard thought about it and changed his question. "Sir, Can I pray while I am drinking?". The priest said immediately, " Yes, you can always pray, whatever you are doing". Hence, Krishna says, "yat karoshi yat ashnaati ... tat kurushva madarpaNam" 9-27, whatever you do and whatever you eat, offer it to me with full devotion.

We discussed the mechanical thinking mind with stray thoughts. By disciplining our mind to bring in deliberately the name of the lord while we are involved in mechanical actions, we curtail the mind from being carried by the 'stray' unproductive thoughts.

The second function of the mind is the objective thinking or intelligent thinking. This mind is useful mind that is needed for any inquiry. It is the discriminative mind, viveka, which is used for inquiry into the nature of Brahman. The objective mind can be classified into two types a) a sharp intellect, tiikshNa buddhi and b) a subtle intellect, suukshma buddhi. A sharp intellect as the name indicates is the mind that divides and analyzes the object. Hence, it is also termed as 'analytical mind'. All scientific investigations are done using this mind. In any objective field, the more one dissects and investigates the more the system reveals, and the field of investigation becomes narrower and narrower. One becomes a super specialist. Ultimately, in these investigations a stage comes where the field of investigation will be affected by the very process of investigation. Objective investigation becomes subjective in the sense that the observed data becomes subjective.

The subtle mind, suukshma buddhi, in contrast, is the mind that integrates or synthesizes. It is this mind that is called as Viveka. Viveka is defined as the mind that can discriminate the eternal from the ephemeral. It is the synthetic mind, which sees oneness in the plurality. It requires wisdom to see the oneness, which is changeless and eternal in the multitude of changing plurality. A mind that is fully detached and that has the equanimity to witness all turbulent onslaughts of ups and downs in life without getting affected by them. That mind has gained what Krishna calls as samatvam or equanimity. It is this mind that is capable of inquiring the highest nature of reality that goes beyond understanding. The mind is cable of inquiring even the notions about oneself and about the mind itself. It is this mind that discovers the truth about itself as well as about the objects and the associated thoughts. 'mana yeva manushyaanaam kaaraNam bandha mokshayoH|'. Mind is responsible for both bondage and liberation. Mind has the notions about one self, as I am this and this, etc. In the realization of oneself, the notional mind drops out leaving behind an objective mind, which has clear understanding of the true nature of oneself and still functions 'as though' it is mere equipment for the self, which is limitless and eternal.

There is the third type of mind or thought flow which is called a mind with aavesha or possessed mind. It is this mind that becomes a problematic mind. In the second chapter, Krishna warns how human mind can degrade itself by developing intense attachments. Krishna says by constant thinking about the object one develops a desire for the object, the desire can lead to anger when it is not fulfilled, anger leads to delusion, delusion leads to loss of discriminative intellect and makes one to perform actions that cause him complete down fall. One is 'possessed' with intense desire leading to intense anger or jealousy etc that drains the energies of the individual and makes him incapacitated. One can become neurotic with such a mind which requires even medical help to put it to rest since one has lost complete control of it. It is important to be attentive so that one does not get into such an irreparable damage. The medicine is as Shankara sates in bhajagovindam:

sat sanghatve nissanghatvam, nissagatve nirmohatvam|
nirmohatve nischala tatvam and nischala tatve jiivan muktaH| |

Mind associated with the good will lead to detachment, and detachment will lead to loss of delusion and loss of delusion will lead to mind in meditation and mind in meditation will lead to liberation. Thus, just as mind attached to lower will cause to down fall, the mind attached to higher will evolve to liberation. Hence, only way for the mind to go towards higher is to redirect the mind towards the higher so that notional mind can drop out in the understanding of the nature of the reality.

In the first stage of Karma yoga, we train the mind to recognize the higher nature of the reality and offer all the actions and thoughts to the Lord as naivedyam or kaikaryam.

In the second stage of karma, yoga involves recognizing that He is the Lord of the entire universe and nothing moves without His support. He is like a thread that supports everything together as 'suutre mani gaNaa eva'. I am only His servant like an ambassador functioning on behalf of a Government. Ambassador does everything but only as the representator of the government only that which is beneficial to the Government that he is representing. In the same way, I have to perform all my actions that are beneficial to the Lord. Since Lord is everywhere and is not different from the totality, everything that benefits the totality is beneficial to the Lord. When you are taking care of the lowest of the lowest, you are taking care of Me, when you clothing the lowest of the lowest, you are clothing Me. When you are feeding the lowest of the lowest, you are feeding Me, says the Bible.

As the mind evolves and contemplates on the nature of the reality along the direction indicated by the Vedas that one recognizes that he is and was never a doer. The actions are done by the prakRiti itself in the presence of the Lord. If everything is Lord, and whatever that I can point out is nothing but the Lord, then this body, this mind and this intellect which are part of prakRiti and therefore belongs to the Lord and not to me. All actions are done by the body-mind-intellect complex that is enlivened by His presence. Hence, Lord says:

prakRitiH kriyamaanaaNi guNaiH karmaaNi sarvashaH |
ahankaaravimuuDhaatmaa kartaa2hamiti manyate || 3-27

All actions are being done by the prakRiti propelled by its guNa (satva-raja-tamo guNa). However, the egocentric individual because of delusion says that he is the doer and claims that which does not belong to him and suffers the consequence of that misunderstanding. It is like a villager who traveled in a train. Feeling sorry for the train for carrying so much load, he wanted to share some burden of the train. Hence he kept his big luggage on his head while sitting in the train and traveling. He started complaining that that the luggage is too heavy for him to carry any further. That is exactly our status.

Recognition that prakRiti itself is performing the action in my presence becomes a knowledge. Although the appropriate actions are being performed in response to the situation through the body-mind-intellect complex, which is part of the prakRiti, there is no more delusion that I am the actor. 'akartaaham abhoktaaham ahamevaaham avyayaH' – I am neither a doer nor an enjoyer, I am that I am, that inexhaustible source of happiness that I am – will be the knowledge that arises in the realization of who I am. There is nothing for him to do since there is nothing he is going gain by doing or loose by not doing. If at all anything is done by that body-mind-intellect complex by the Lord, it is only for loka kalyaaNam. That karma yogi evolves to jnaani who recognizes that he is never a doer while appropriate actions are being done in his presence.

Thus, karma yoga is needed to gain the jnaana yogyata, or to gain qualifications required to do jnaana yoga, and jnaana yoga is what helps to recognize that I am never a doer in spite of all the doings. Thus, there are three stages of karma yoga:

1. First recognition of role of the Lord and his presence in all my activities and offer all the actions as a prayer to the Lord. At this stage, there is still a notion that I am doer but I am doing as an offering to the Lord. Hence, I do my part my best in the spirit of yagna.
2. The second stage involves performance of the action as an ambassador or His trustee. This includes taking care of my spouse, my children, my office, and all my transactions. I am no more accountable for any of the actions, as long as I perform them as His representative I have to make sure that 'His will' will be done and not mine.
3. The final stage is actually the culmination of the knowledge itself that I am and I never was a doer while all actions are being done in my presence. Krishna also provides this vision in the third chapter while discussing the karma yoga. This is the culmination of all understanding. The purpose of life itself is fulfilled. Whatever He does will only glorify the universe. He is called kRitakRityaH, who accomplished what needs to be accomplished. 'kulam pavitram jananii kRitaarthaa vishambaraa punyavatiica tena' – The whole lineage is blessed by the presence of such great one, his mother is blessed for giving such a son of the world, and the whole universe is blessed by his presence. It is only the result of merits of many lives that one achieves that state of understanding.

This is the very purpose of life and any other pursuit in life is not worth the effort. Krishna assures that again that it is important to start the life of a karma yogi since even a little bit of effort in that direction will take us a long way.

nehaabhikramanaashosti pratyavaayo na vidyate |
svalpamapyasya dharmasya traayate mahato bhayaat | | 2-40

Once one starts, the effects of this yoga gets compounded fast. Nothing gained will be lost if one could not pursue further and there will not any disastrous side effects either when one stops doing karma yoga. However if one does even a little bit, that will take him a long way in the pursuit of his ultimate goal. However, Krishna has already warned that it is not a choice. It is a choice less choice since if we do not perform with the attitude of karma yoga, we will get more and more entangled in the ocean of bondage and cause our own self-destruction.

The choice is ours – says Krishna.

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