

Chinmaya Smrithi



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

Volume 21, Number 3- May 23, 2011

Message for Chinmaya Jayanti Day 2011

Hari Om!

Eyes are two, but the vision is one. Lips are two, but the speech is one. Mahatmas are two – Bhagavan Adi Shankaracharyaji and Pujya Gurudev, Swami Chinmayanandaji, but their vision is one – the vision of the oneness of the Self. Their message is one – know thy True Self and be free from all bondages. Their teaching through their lives is one – abiding and revelling in the Self, remain engaged in the welfare of all beings. On 8th May, 2011, we pay our homage with utmost reverence to these two great Mahatmas.

भव शङ्कर देशिक मे शरणम् ।

भव चिन्मय देशिक मे शरणम् ॥

bhava śaṅkara deśika me śaraṇam,
bhava cinmaya deśika me śaraṇam.

With Prem & Om,

Tejomayananda
Tejomayananda



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

- May 28-29 – Memorial Day Weekend Spiritual Camp by Acharya Dr. K. Sadanandaji on Rama Gita. Watch for announcements.
- June 11-12 – Bala Vihar Annual Day by Session at all chapters. Last Day of Bala vihar Classes.
- June 19 – Father's Day observation at Chinmayam
- June 27 – July 22 – Summer Camp in Virginia
- July 4th – Spiritual Camp on Sri Adi Sankara's Dhyanashtakam by Swami Ishwarananda at Walkerville Middle School, Frederick MD
- July 5-7 – Jnana Yajna – Excerpts from Srimad Bhagavad Gita by Swami Ishwarananda – Free Evening Talks at Urbana Middle School, Frederick MD
- July 15 – Guru Poornima Celebration
- July 25 – Aug 19 – Summer Camp in Maryland
- August 3rd - Sri Gurudev Aradhana Day
- September 10-11 – Bala Vihar Classes Commence for 2011/2012

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

Next Issue

- Articles for the next regular bi-monthly issue – July 2011, are due by July 15th, 2011
- Email submissions to smrithi@chinmayadc.org. Submission instructions at www.chinmayadc.org, Smrithi link, "Information on publishing in Smrithi"

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)

Sitaram Kowtha, Raju Chidambaram, Acharya Vilasiniji, Acharyas, Chapter Coordinators and Teachers. & BV students - Vishnupriya Krishnan, Asmi Panigrabi, Atman Panigrabi, Harsha Neerchal and Srikanth Kowtha

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

CMWRC Events Held

- Spring Carnival was held at Chinmayam on April 2nd. There was food, shopping and fun for everyone. The icing was dance performances by students of local dance schools. The organizers, the Annapurna team, raised more than \$5,000 for Chinmaya Somnath.
- 1st round of Annual Day plays were performed by Bala Vihar children on April 9th and 10th to coincide with Sri Rama Navami. (2nd round of Annual Plays will take place on June 11/12)
- Hanuman Jayanthi was celebrated at Chinmayam on Sunday, April 17.
- Youth Seva Day was observed as Achal Amin and Eagle Scouts completed a nature trail and outdoor classroom in the wooded area near Chinmayam.
- Geetha Chanting Competition was held at the CMWRC chapters, in Silver Spring, Frederick and Springfield/Dulles on Saturday, April 30, with Gita Chapter 12 – Bhakthi Yoga as the theme. A total of 200 children and 60 adults participated in the competition: Over 90% of the participants scored more than 90 out of a total of 100 points winning awards in the diamond category and about 15% of the participants scored a perfect 100!
- Chinmaya Jayanthi Seva Day was observed at Chinmayam on Saturday, May 7th.
- Chinmaya Jayanthi Day was observed locally at all chapters. At Chinmayam, Pujya Swami Dheeranandaji encouraged Bala Vihar children and adult members to prepare and give a brief speech on Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda.

Chinmaya Somnath Project

You can follow the progress on Chinmaya Somnath project – new center in Northern Virginia at www.chinmayasomnath.org

The page is continually updated to show progress and designs. Please review the fund raising appeal and use the pledge form, available for your convenience at the site, to support this important CMWRC initiative.

Chinmaya West Newsletter

Be sure to read the May 2011 newsletter from Chinmaya Mission West. Browse and download at www.chinmayamission.org/newsletter:

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



"CHINMAYA SOMNATH"

-- Phase-1 Construction Contribution (Tax-Deductible) Pledge Form --

From:

Mr. /Mrs. / Miss : _____

Date: _____

To:

The Treasurer,
Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center
46 Norwood Road,
Silver Spring, MD 20905



I/we Mr/Mrs/Miss _____ wish to pledge pay my/our tax-deductible contribution toward the construction costs of Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center's "Chinmaya Somnath" building to be built at 4300 Pleasant Valley Road, Chantilly, Virginia, as indicated below.

I/we understand that this contribution is in addition to my/our annual membership contribution.

<input type="checkbox"/>	\$30.00 per month*	For two / three / five years	For a Total of \$ _____ per year
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$50.00 per month*	For two / three / five years	For a Total of \$ _____ per year
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$100.00 per month*	For two / three / five years	For a Total of \$ _____ per year
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$200.00 per month*	For two / three / five years	For a Total of \$ _____ per year
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____ per month*	For _____ years	For a Total of \$ _____ per year
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____	Lump sum payment	Enclosed Check# _____ Dated _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____	Pledge	Payment will be mailed by date: _____

* BANK DEBIT AUTHORIZATION

I hereby authorize CMWRC to initiate debit entries for the amount of \$ _____ every month for a period of _____ years, starting from _____ 20____, till _____ 20____ to my Checking account indicated below for credit to CMWRC's account with the Washington First Bank or such other bank as CMWRC may deem appropriate. I will notify CMWRC immediately if there is any change to my Bank information.

Name of Bank: _____

Transit/ABA Number: _____ Account Number: _____

Note: Please attach one of your checks, marked "VOID," for verification of bank particulars.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____ Email: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____ Email: _____

Home Phone: _____ Mobile Phone #: _____

*** Please mail this form to the address above and mark to "ATTN: Treasurer. Make Checks payable to "CMWRC" ***

"Chinmaya Somnath"

~~~~~ Phase-1 Construction Contribution (Tax-Deductible) Pledge Form ~~~~~

## Announcements

### **TGIF- Thank Gurudev It's Friday Socials**

TGIF socials are held on Friday evenings for CHYK and Chinmayam students/parents. TGIFs are get-togethers hosted by a CMWRC family. The agenda is simple: free-form discussions, mentorship time, potluck dinner, and fun activity or hangout time. While Chinmayam kids and CHYK hang out, parents have their fun. TGIFs will be held each month, alternating between Maryland and Virginia.

### **Upcoming TGIFs (All TGIFs start at 6:30 PM and end around 10 PM)**

*Friday, February 11th in Virginia*

*Friday, March 25th in Maryland*

*Friday, April 29th in Virginia*

*Friday, May 27th in Maryland*

*Friday, June 24th in Virginia*

Contact: Email [chinmayamTGIF@gmail.com](mailto:chinmayamTGIF@gmail.com) and/or call Abdulla Meer at (240) 381-1984 to RSVP or for further information, or with any questions, comments or concerns.

### **INTERESTED IN TEACHING BALA VIHAR?**

Are You Interested in Teaching Bala Vihar?  
Or Learning About Imparting Spiritual Values to Children?

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM IF YOU ARE INTERESTED  
New Teacher Volunteer Form  
and send to [anil.kishore@yahoo.com](mailto:anil.kishore@yahoo.com)

WE WILL ADD YOUR NAME TO THE BALA VIHAR TEACHERS' ORIENTATION  
WORKSHOP  
to be held

June 11, 2011 at 12:00 NOON  
at Chinmayam, 46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring

Please RSVP by May 31, 2011

### **CAMPS**

Memorial Day Camp on Rama Gita by Acharya Sadananda at Chinmayam May 28 & 29  
Discourses are Free, but registration required. See Attached Flyer.

Upcoming Camps in July

- July 4: One Day Spiritual Camp on Adi Sankara's Dhyanashtakam by Swami Ishwarananda
- July 5-7: Jnana Yajna – Excerpts from Srimad Bhagavad Gita by Swami Ishwarananda

Details at [www.chinmayadc.org](http://www.chinmayadc.org) - Events Page



## CHINMAYA MISSION

Washington Regional Center

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



### Role of Spirituality in Joyful living based on Sri Rama Gita Two Day Camp on May 28 and 29

Even modern science agrees role of spirituality in a joyful living. A retired scientist by profession Acharya Dr. Sadananda will share the greatest wisdom available in the ancient scriptures of Hinduism. Unique methods of teaching by Sadaji provide ample practical tips for our day-to-day life. Over the years many people benefited from his spiritual camps.

Sri Rama's teaching to Lakshmana, often described as sruti-sara-sangraha is a brief summary of the very essence of all the Vedas.



|                    |                   |                      |                 |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Meditation</b>  | 8:30am – 9am      | <b>Lunch Break *</b> | Noon – 2pm      |
| <b>Session 1</b>   | 9am - 10:20am     | <b>Session 3</b>     | 2pm - 3:20pm    |
| <b>Tea Break *</b> | 10:20am - 10:40am | <b>Tea Break *</b>   | 3:20pm - 3:40pm |
| <b>Session 2</b>   | 10:40 Noon        | <b>Session 4</b>     | 3:40pm – 5pm    |

\* Free Lunch, tea, coffee and snacks will be provided.

CMWRC will provide babysitting services subject to the availability of volunteers

Please register before May 25: Camp is **FREE** but registration required. Send email to [campMD@chinmayadulles.org](mailto:campMD@chinmayadulles.org) with Your Name(s), Children Names and Age, Address and Phone number; for more Information contact Subbarao Kari @703-981-1808.

**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

# CHINMAYA MAHASAMADHI FAMILY CAMP 2011

Chinmaya Mission Chicago

Chinmaya Mission Northwest Indiana

## Mind and Beyond: The Gītā Way



Discourses on

*Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā*

*Chapter IX*

by

His Holiness

**Swami Tejomayananda**

Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide

**July 29 - August 3, 2011**

### Camp Highlights

- Additional Discourses: *Jñāna Sāra* by Swami Shantananda
- Bala Vihar Classes for Children • Cultural Program • Recreation: Golf, Mini-Golf, Tennis, Swimming
- Yuva Kendra (CHYK) Program for College Students and Young Professionals • Vegetarian Meals
- *Upanayanam Ceremony* in Holy presence of Swami Tejomayananda — website for details

### Camp Fees

(Rates Effective until March 31, 2011)

Double Occupancy: \$700/person

Children: \$275/child

CHYK: \$475/person (Quad)

### Contacts

Ach. Shanker Pillai (630) 789-6607

Rajul Bhalala (847) 302-2383

Padmini Makam (219) 924-7268

For Camp Details and Registration go to: [www.chinmayamahasamadhi.com](http://www.chinmayamahasamadhi.com)

E-mail: [info@chinmayamahasamadhi.com](mailto:info@chinmayamahasamadhi.com)



### Camp Venue

**Hilton  
Indian Lakes Resort**

250 W. Schick Road  
Bloomington • IL 60108





## Spring Carnival, Annual Day Plays, Chinmaya Seva and Jayanthi

*Photos by Srini Pemmaraju*



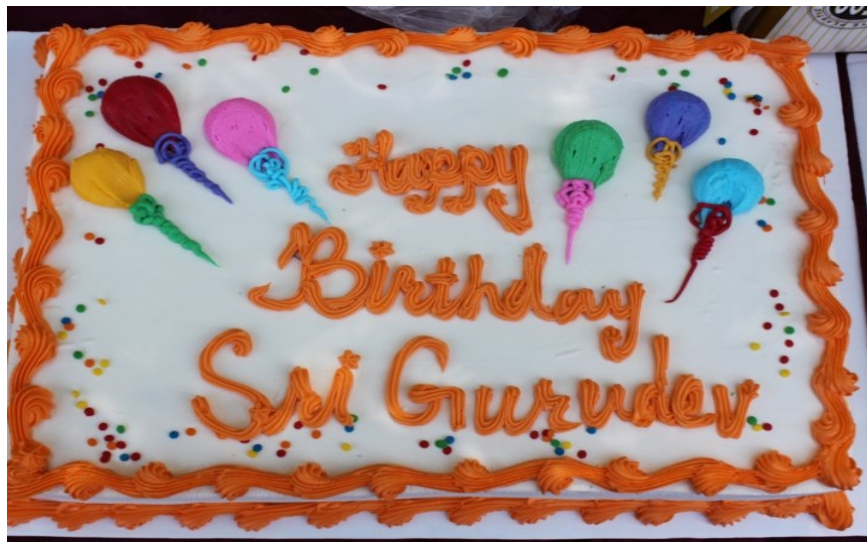
[Check out more photos and video on the [www.chinmayadc.org](http://www.chinmayadc.org) website, under RESOURCES]















## Spring to Green

### Frederick Chapter Earth Day Activity

*Devi Ramaseshan*



April is Bhu Matha month. During this month in particular, it is important to reflect on our actions and how it impacts this planet that we live in. We should also think about our environment, which consists of the Pancha Bhuthas (space, air, fire, water and earth). Before we repeat the same damages let us all STOP, take a deep breath, rethink and save our environment, thereby saving our mankind.

To pay our respects to Bhu Matha, Chinmaya Mission, Frederick chapter organized an awareness program called "Spring to Green" in the community. As a part of this program, adults and children participated in a number of activities. Green messages such as "Go Green", "Every Day is Earth Day", "Plant tree and flowers in your backyard" were written on leaves and glued on to a tree constructed and decorated by recycled materials. Bookmarks made out of recycled greeting and invitation cards with eco-friendly messages were distributed to adults and children as well. A drive for unused electronic gadgets was conducted and the collected materials were sent to the recycling center for refurbishment. These activities reminded us to respect our planet and instill in us a sense of duty towards protecting it.

**Every Mother Likes a Neat Home-Even Bhu Matha.**

## Chinmayam Bala Vihar Class Summary

*Vishnupriya Krishnan*

We began the class with the opening prayers.

Then, Aniket Uncle posed the following statement/question to us: “God hates Bernie Madoff. True or False?”

We went over the Madoff situation as well as the workings of a Ponzi scheme:

- People with lots of money usually go to other people (like Madoff) to get their money invested.
- If the investment yields good results, people usually invest more of their money (and if the investment yields bad results, they usually invest less)
- Madoff took the money of large investors (individuals or institutions) and guaranteed 15-20% return (virtually unheard of)
- In reality, these returns consisted of other people’s money
- Estimated money lost = around \$70 billion

*[This webpage also provides a good overview of the scandal:*

*[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/m/bernard\\_l\\_madoff/index.html?inline=nyt-per](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/m/bernard_l_madoff/index.html?inline=nyt-per) ]*

At first, most people held the opinion that “No, God doesn’t *hate* anyone.” Aniket Uncle mentioned that God is even referred to in Hindu spiritual texts as “*karuna ki saagar*” – the “ocean of love.”

Others responded that they didn’t think God felt either way; they thought God was not subjective and not a judge.

Then, Aniket Uncle posed this question: “Is God present in equal amounts in Madoff and Gandhi?”

One student answered, “God gives us the ability and the choice to act, but he’s not responsible for the ways in which those abilities are used.”

We then discussed the significance of the question we were debating: deciding whether God is arbitrary or detached, whether he hates or loves has pretty large implications. Additionally, what we believe about God’s attitude especially affects our own attitudes toward prayer.

This generated the question, “Why do we pray?” People mentioned reasons like comfort, luck, and well-being (mentioned in the closing prayer, which states: “May all be happy; may all be healthy; may all seek auspiciousness; may none suffer). In other words, all of us are praying with following attitude: “Let good things happen that are out of my control.” This attitude *assumes* that we are acknowledging (or accepting) that some things ARE out of our control, and that we are OK with it; we reconcile ourselves with this fact through prayer.



Aniket Uncle then provided us with two scenarios to illustrate the above conclusion. In both scenarios, a student is trying to pray for a good grade, but each student approaches the situation differently. One student prays to do well (meaning he/she is indirectly wishing for others to do badly), and the other student prays that he/she will achieve a score that reflects his/her studying amount. The second student has the right attitude towards praying, because he/she has assumed the attitude that we are encouraged to adopt by the closing prayer.

A student then posed a question about reincarnation: "Graphs reflect population growth every year. However, according to the Hindu theory of reincarnation, shouldn't the number of souls stay the same? Why doesn't the information match up?" Another student gave the answer that "the same overall amount of life is present in the universe – and has been present from the beginning to now. The population of bugs, other animals, or even extraterrestrial creatures could be decreasing as the human population increases." Further observations supporting this statement were made – the First Law of Thermodynamics states that energy in the universe is constant. Additionally, according to the Hindu scriptures, selfish actions create vasanas/impressions that in turn create tendencies within all of us. These tendencies have to be exhausted somehow and somewhere; this need for a suitable environment in which to exhaust these vasanas is the basis for the theory of reincarnation.

Returning to our discussion about God's attitude, we read verses 7-13 (along with Gurudev's commentary) of Chapter 9 of the Gita. Verses 7-8 are an expression of creation, describing how at the end of each era (*Kalpa*), the Lord regenerates and revitalizes the whole universe by means of his divine power (*Prakriti*). In verse 9, the Lord describes how, "Sitting like one indifferent and unattached to these acts...these acts do not bind Me." This verse echoes Krishna's advice to Arjuna earlier in the Gita – to be the same in pleasure and pain. Perhaps (and most likely) the way Krishna is instructing Arjuna to act is an expression of the Lord's essential nature. Thus, despite being the creator of the whole universe, the Lord remains unattached and indifferent.

To illustrate this idea, Aniket Uncle provided us with the analogy of the growth of Chinmaya Mission: when Kailas Niwas was built, there was no Balavihar, but there was an idea/vision for the program. Additionally, even though Gurudev wasn't physically present at all times, no part of the program would have been created without his sanction. Thus, this example provides a clear example of detachment being present in the midst of things occurring.

We then read the commentary of verse 11, which discusses the distinction between God as represented in an idol and the Supreme Lord. Lord Krishna asserts that the idol (and even the guru) stands for something greater, and that we should not get caught up in the specificity of names and forms by making religion all about the "container" rather than about its "contents." By assuming that God IS the idol, we make our concept of the infinite God finite, and thus we establish that God MUST be partial (loving some people and hating others). Judeo-Christian religions don't have idols (in contrast to Hinduism), but they do have prophets, which they idolize. When people mistake religious symbols for the things they represent, drastic societal problems (even war) can arise. Considering this thought even further, we can arrive at a number of other conclusions: sorrow arises from mistaking material objects for happiness, and for mistaking the body (instead of the Self) as our true nature.

Finally, we read and discussed the commentary of verses 12-13, which articulate the differences between Rakshasas/Asuras and Mahatmas. Gurudev states that “Deluded by false desires and wearied with false activities to fulfil those wrong desires, some become confused in intellect and totally confounded in their reasoning. Such people lose all divine perspective and become monstrous in their activities, expressing nothing but their demoniac sensuous nature at all times.” Thus, those deluded beings (like Ravana), who cannot perceive the infinite nature, become deluded and fall into vicious cycles of evil (like Madoff). Where did Madoff’s delusion come from? Probably from the ideas that 1) He was not going to get caught and 2) The people entrusting him with their money were already rich, and so no significant evil could arise from his actions. In contrast to these deluded ones, what makes someone noble? Gurudev asserts, “The Great-Souls... know [the Lord] to be the Origin of all beings; and those who know the mud to be the origin of all mud-pots cannot fail to see the mud in all pots...If the present generation is not able to understand and appreciate this spiritual socialism, which is the only panacea for the ills of the world...it is because of the predominance of the *Asuric* forces in it.” In other words, everyone is capable of recognizing the One-ness that is present in all beings, because all of us have the life-force that endows us with the means necessary for this realization. However, what we do with that energy determines whether we are Rakshasas/Asuras or Mahatmas – and *this* is the difference between Bernie Madoff and Mahatma Gandhi. Many students were surprised at the social implications of Lord Krishna’s message (about the Mahatmas) in verse 13, and they remarked on the far-reaching societal benefits that this advice could have.

We concluded with the closing prayers and plan to rehearse the play next week.



*Nature Trail at Chinmayam, paved on National Youth Seva Day, April 2011*

## Human Values in Ramcharitmanas

Dr. Pragya Pandey (Dixit)

Bala Vihar Sanskrit Language Teacher – Frederick Chapter

*Ramcharitmanas*, written by *Goswami Tulsidas*, is one of the most famous, popular, important and spiritual scripture of Hinduism. The text guide future generation through story of Rama, which would help everyone to follow a path of mortality, righteousness, how to live and respect natural creatures. The Holy Scripture *Ramacharitmanas*, extols the glory of ideal brotherhood, noble friendship and greatness of love and affection. Lord Rama knows how to do good to virtues people. He was familiar with the application and advantage of the karma. He trained himself in *Yajurveda* (sacrificial veda), skilled in *Dhanurveda* (the science of archery), other *Vedas* and *Vedangas* (Shiksha, Kalp, Vyakaran, Nirukta, Chhanda and Jyotisha).

Lord performed himself a hundred horse sacrifices (*Ashvamedha yajnas*) and a lot of other sacrifices. According to *Ramcharitmanas*, he never thought about his greatness. Rama was well wisher not for his people but each and every creature of earth. He established a happy and progressive society, free from the discriminations due to caste, religion, community and sex. Every person enjoyed his part of life and equally contributes in society.

“Raj ghat sab vidhi sundar bar, majjahi yaha baran charahu nar” ।।

Lord Rama behaved with *kolas*, *kiratas* and *bheelas* like his own family. He pronounced everybody should follow his duties with satisfaction on their own position.

“Sab nar karahi paraspar preeti ।

Chalahi nij dharm nirat shruti neeti”

It is human nature to perform his duties in an ideal condition so he described the time of difficulty in order to test the dutiful person, wife, patience as well as friends.

“Dheeraj dharma mitra aru naree, aapatkal parikheou chari” ।।

King Dashratha could not bear the separation from his sons but Rama respected his word. Rama, Laxmana and Sita spent fourteen years in exile to uphold the promise which he was given to his father. Lord himself had taught the lesson of custom (*maryada*) to monkeys, bears and asuras. It was described in this text that lord Shiva cursed the *Kakabhusundi* when he disobeyed his duties.

Wondering in forest, Rama, Laxmana and Sita showed the path of success with facing troubles in their lives. Lord Hanuman, who is great servant and a devotee of Rama, surrenders his life in doing work for his master. In Sundarkanda, Hanuman simply touched the mountain with his hand and then made obeisance to it saying.

“Ram kaju keenhe binu mohi kahan vishram” ।।

“There can be no rest for me till I have accomplished Sri Ram’s work”. He is renowned for his bravery, courage, selflessness, and loyalty.



Rama rajya was marked by peace, prosperity and harmony. What type of relation should be between king and his public (*raja-praja-sambandha*) was proposed? It is also narrated by Tulsidas where he taught the duties to Bharata,

*“Mukhiya mukh so chahie, khan-pan kahu ek. l-  
Palahi-poshai sakal anga tulsi sahit viveka” l-l-*

The principles behind the practice of ramrajya is shown here-

*“Sachiva baid guru teeni jyoun priya bolahi bhaya aas-  
Rajdharma tan teenikar hohi begihi nasa” l-l-*

When a minister, a physician and a religious preceptor –These three use pleasing words from fear or hope of reward, the result of that was dominion, health and faith—All the three forthwith go to the dogs.

As Tulsidas continues, who bears himself pain for the welfare of all, his holiness is defined like the river Ganga. She never differentiates among all the human beings, only flows to purify others-

*“Keerati bhanati bhooti bhali soi l-  
Sursari sam sab kah hit hoi” l-l-*

It is an open secret that god has created the universe consisting of animate and inanimate beings as partaking of both good and evil-

*“Jad chetan gun doshmaya bisva keenha kartar l-  
Sant hans gun gahahi paya parihari bari bikar” l-l-*

The swan is in form of saints, imbibe the milk of goodness and reject water in form of evil.

*“Kam ,krodha mad lobha sab nath narak ke pantha. l-  
Sab parihari raghubeerahi bhajahu bhajahi jehi sant” l-l-*

Lust, anger, vanity and covetousness are all paths leading to hell, abjuring, all these adore the hero of raghu’s line, whom saints worship.

In short, according to *Ramcharitmanas*, the tale of the lord of Raghu’s O Tulsidasa, brings forth blessings and wipes away the impurities of the Kaliyuga.

*“Mangal karani kali mala harani Tulasi katha raghunatha ki l-”*

(Rcm 1.10.1)

\* \* \*

## Thirumaloor and Thirumandhiram

*Ravi Ravichandran*

Thirumandhiram is an ancient Tamil scripture written by one of the celebrated 63 Saivaite sages from Tamilnadu. I have been fortunate enough to have the desire as well as ability to read this text. Of the three thousand verses, I have so far managed to read about a hundred of them at the rate of one a day. The more I read, my curiosity about the composer grew. In my search, I found his story very fascinating. This is my attempt to share what I have learned about Thirumandhiram and its composer. While this is not by any means authoritative, the information given in this is reasonably accurate and is based on the literature available in print.

Thirumoolar is a Yogi called Sundaranāthā residing in the Mount Kailash. Sundaranāthā is the first disciple of "NANDHI". Once he undertook a journey to the south to meet his friend Agasthiar, residing in the Pothigai mountains (southern region of India). One evening he found himself in the outskirts of the Sāthanur village. He was deeply moved to notice a herd of cows lowing miserably around the dead body of their cowherd Moolan. The yogi by his yogic powers realized that Moolan is a great devotee of Lord Shiva. Hence he felt it was his duty to do something to help the cows. By virtue of his yogic power he abandoned his body and entered the body of the cowherd Moolan. Leaving His body in a nearby tree, the yogi now in the body of Moolan led the cattle to the village. He returned to the spot where he left his old body. He was surprised to find that the body had disappeared. By his yogic power he realized that it is an act of Lord Siva, who had a mission to fulfill through his devotee Sundaranāthā. So the yogi continued to live in the cowherd's body, immersed in tapas in Thiruvaduthurai and composed Thirumandhiram.

We do not know how and when the 3000 verses were recorded, but it is acknowledged that they form the nucleus for the Saiva Siddhānta that developed in Tamilnadu. The vision of Thirumandhiram is liberal and is relevant today as when the work was first composed. It is said that he was in Samādhi most of the time and he uttered one verse whenever he came out of the Samādhi. He is said to have composed 3000 verses over a long stretch of period. Some even say he composed one poem a year over a span of 3000 years. If he came down to see Sage Agasthya, and then he should belong to the very ancient time.

The dates of Tirumūlar's life are hotly contested and, because his work makes reference to so many currents of religious thoughts, the dates that different scholars assign are often appealed to for anchoring the relative chronology of other religious literature in Tamil and Sanskrit. Verse 74 of the Thirumandhiram makes the claim that Tirumūlar lived for 7 aeons (*yuga*) before composing the Thirumandhiram. Some are therefore inclined to place his composition well before the Common Era. There are poems composed by the famous quartet from Tamilnadu Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar and Manickavasagar which all refer to Thirumandhiram or Thirumoolar. Hence, one can at least say that his period must have been before 7<sup>th</sup> century AD.

There are three thousand verses. Trying to select outstanding few is like trying to select the best galaxies in the milky way. That is like the attempt of the cat standing by the ocean of milk and trying to drink as much milk as it can!

The following is the very first verse immediately following the invocation to Lord Ganesha.

|                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>ஒன்றவன் தானே இரண்டவன் இன்னருள்<br/> நின்றனன் மூன்றினுள் நான்குணர்ந் தான்ஐந்து<br/> வென்றனன் ஆறு விரிந்தனன் ஏழும்பர்ச்<br/> சென்றனன் தான்இருந் தான்உணர்ந் தெட்டே.</p> | <p>ओन्द्रवन् ताने इण्डवन् ईन्नरुक्<br/> नन्द्रनन् मून्द्रनिक् नान्गुणर्दान् ऐन्धु<br/> वेन्द्रनन् आरु वरिन्दिनन् एळुम्बर्<br/> सेन्द्रनन् तान् इरुन्दान् उणर्न्देद्वे</p>                                                                                                                                           |
| <p>onḍraṇan tāne iraṇḍavan īnnaruḷ<br/> ninḍranan mūṇḍrinuḷ nāṅguṇardān aindhu<br/> venḍranan āru virindanan eḷumbar<br/> senḍranan tān irundān uṇarndette</p>          | <p>English translation<br/> The One is HE, the Two HIS sweet Grace,<br/> In Three HE stood, in all the Four witnessed, the<br/> Five<br/> HE conquered, the Six HE filled, the Seven<br/> worlds<br/> HE pervaded, manifests the Eight and so HE<br/> remains<br/> Think of Param thought of elements recedes..</p> |

ONE - HE is ONE.

Two -HE manifests as two – Sivam and Sakthi. He and His Grace

Three- HE is in all the Waking- Dream and Deep Sleep state as the witness

He is in all the three Sakthis- ichcha , kriya and Jnana sakthi.

HE manifests as trimurthis.. He is in the three genders- masculine, feminine and neuter. HE is Pati-  
Pasu-Pasam-

FOUR: HE is the knower of Four Vedas. The four also represents the four paths to God-realization-  
Dasa marga,- Satputra Marga Sakha marga , Jnana marga

FIVE: HE is the Lord of the five sense organs. HE is the Lord of five elements.

HE is the Creator, Preserver, Destroyer, Obfuscator and Liberator.

SIX: HE Is in all the Six philosophies – Saivam, Vaishnavam, Ganapathyam, Saaktham, Koumaram  
and Sauram.

HE is the embodiment of 6 steps to final realization- Sound, Letter, Syllable, Light, Principles of  
matter and the World.

SEVEN: HE is the Lord of Seven Worlds ; : Five Sence Organs+ Mind and Intellect

HE is the Lord Five organs of sense, manas and Buddhi-

EIGHT: HE manifests in eight – Five elements, Sun Moon and Jiva.



Another very well known verse by Thirumoolar is

|                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>மரத்தை மறைத்தது மாமத யானை<br/>மரத்தில் மறைந்தது மாமத யானை<br/>பரத்தை மறைத்தன பார்முதல் பூதம்<br/>பரத்தில் மறைந்தன பார்முதல் பூதமே</p>                        | <p>मरतूतै मरैतुतदु मामद यानै<br/>मरतूतलि मरैन्ददु मामद यानै<br/>परतूतै मरैतूतन पार् मुदल् भूतम्<br/>परतूतलि मरैन्दन पार् मुदल् भूतमे</p>                                                                                                      |
| <p>marattai maraittadu māmada yānai<br/>marattil maraindadu māmada yānai<br/>parattai maraittana pār mudal bhūtam<br/>parattil maraindana pār mudal bhūtame</p> | <p>English translation<br/>Think of wooden-elephant, image of wood<br/>recedes;<br/>Think of wood, image of wooden-elephant<br/>recedes;<br/>Think of elements , thought of Param recedes<br/>Think of Param thought of elements recedes.</p> |

The beauty of the toy elephant sculpted and painted by the carpenter hides the viewer from seeing the wood, If the paint and shape of the elephant are taken away, the wood shows itself. Similarly, this universe which is composed of the five elements hides the Brahman. When we realize the fact that Brahman is the efficient cause and the material cause of this world, the five elements disappear and only Brahman remains. This verse reminds us of the verse 8 in Atma Bodha where Bhagvaan Shankar says ,”like bubbles in the water, the worlds rise exist and dissolve in the Supreme Self which is the material cause and the support of everything”/

The last verse I would like quoted here is very popular among Tamil scholars.

The meaning of this song is very evident. Lord is Love and Love is Lord. They are inseparable because they are one and the same.

|                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>அன்புசிவம் இரண் டென்பர் அறிவிலார்<br/>அன்பே சிவமாவ தாரும் அறிகிலார்<br/>அன்பே சிவமாவ தாரும் அறிந்தபின்<br/>அன்பே சிவமாய் அமர்ந்திருந் தாரே</p> | <p>अन्बु शविम् इरण्डु एन्बर् अरविलार्<br/>अन्बे शविमावदु आरुम् अरहिलार्<br/>अन्बे शविमावदु आगुम् अरन्दिपन्<br/>अन्बे शविमाय् अमर्न्दु इरुन्दारे</p>                                                                       |
| <p>anbu śivam iraṇḍu enbar arivilār<br/>anbe śivamāvadu ārum arihilār<br/>anbe śivamāvadu āgum arindapin<br/>anbe śivamāy amarndu irundāre</p>    | <p>English translation<br/>The ignorant prate that Love and Siva are two,<br/>But none do know that Love alone is Siva<br/>When men but know that Love and Siva are the<br/>same,<br/>Love as Siva, they e`er remain.</p> |

For those who can read and understand Tamil, there is an excellent website [www.thevaaram.org](http://www.thevaaram.org). In that site, there are the twelve Thirumurai (scriptures). Thirumandhiram is called The Tenth Tirumurai.

## Tribute to Sri Gurudev on his 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday Jayanti: May 8, 2011

*Vandana Bapna*

*[Editor's Note: This is one of several speeches given at Chinmayam on May 8<sup>th</sup> on Sri Gurudev on his 95<sup>th</sup> birthday. Additional speeches will be published next time, in the July issue]*

Hari Om! It is indeed a blessing to talk about Pujya Gurudev on his 95th birth anniversary today.

I have not met Gurudev personally, only met him through his books and discourses. In real time, I met him through the guru-shishya parampara through Swamiji, acharya Vilasiniji and our other acharyas. Gurudev lives through them. So, in some ways I have met him but not in the physical form that we see in these pictures.

Recently, I was trying to compose some thoughts on our experiences as our second child, Mayank, is ready to graduate from Bala Vihar. Here is what came to mind. Swami Dheerananda has been currently giving a discourse on the Chapter 10 of Bhagavad Geeta. In the verse 31, he was talking about the divine manifestation through the attributes of 'air'. Air is the greatest purifier, humbly offering itself to everyone at all times. One is breathing it but does not realize it unless the air is absent. The presence of air is illumined and perceived only when one suffocates in its absence. Just a few seconds, and what we take for granted becomes vividly apparent.

On reflecting, our experiences at Chinmaya Mission have been like this 'breath of fresh air'. What if our family had not been blessed and fortunate to have had the presence of Chinmaya Mission in our lives? How would our lives have unfolded? Even the thought is suffocating. The Mission had become a part of 'our lives', just like the air had been a part of 'our being'.

At the Mission, we have been suffused with the priceless and precious knowledge to lead fulfilling lives, inspiring guidance from our acharyas, lifelong and deep friendships, a sense of belonging to a wonderful community and a sense of pride towards our glorious religious and cultural heritage, while living amidst a melting pot of foreign culture. This has been immensely valuable for our children and gratifying for the parents as we struggle to come to equilibrium with the two cultures.

So, if we go back in time to the roots, we are enjoying (these wonderful and joyful times) thanks to Sri Gurudev and eventually thanks to our Swamiji and other acharyas who are carrying forward the guru-shishya legacy. Chinmaya Mission is the fruit of Gurudev's life.

On behalf of all of us, our heartfelt gratitude is to All for being the 'Air' in our lives, for being a loving extended family, for the laughter, learning, caring, sharing, celebrating and for the joy and richness that has been bestowed into 'our lives'. These memories will forever be treasured and cherished.

So, I was wondering as to what should be presented about Gurudev's glories today. There is so much material that we can talk may be our whole life. I came across a fascinating interview of Gurudev conducted by Pritish Nandy. Pritish Nandy is a well known Indian journalist, poet, painter, politician, media and television personality, animal activist and a film producer. He interviewed Swami Chinmayananda in 1980 in Calcutta. This interview is like a nutshell explanation of the Frequently Asked Questions that have been answered by Gurudev in the most sincere, logical and striking style, with a good dose of wit and humor. Here are just a few excerpts, perhaps just 10 percent of the interview that inspired me the most; and I feel it will always be timeless, illumining and relevant to all of us.

The questions (Q) were asked by Pritish Nandy and the answers (A) were given by Swami Chinmayananda. The italicized remarks in parenthesis are my comments either spoken or in thought.

#### Is being a Guru Tough for Gurudev?

Pritish Nandy reports: I met him over two long sessions at Calcutta, saw the tired lines on his face as he smiled and suffered stupid questions about the behavior of the stock exchange, drank coffee and fruit juice from persistent hostesses at half-hour intervals. "It must be tough to be a guru." I said to him, after a particularly tiresome session. "Not tough: it's lonely." said Hinduism's most famous hostage. *(At another time, when asked by someone as to how many people he thought may have changed by his Gita teachings, Gurudev paused for a minute and answered "one person". The interviewer was now very keen to know who this lucky person may have been. And, Gurudev told the interviewer "you are talking to that person" ☺)*

#### On Materialism, Self realization and Religion

Q) But, why is this vast gap, let's say, between the search for spiritual values and the quest for a materialistic reordering of society based on principles of justice and equality?

*("We also keep wondering which way to go and how to balance it...")*



A) Materialism you know. It is purely selfish. I don't care a hoot for others. It is utterly self-centered.....

Q) But surely religion is the same. Each and every religious person is searching for his own private nirvana, his or her own self-realization. This is an equally self-centered search.

A) You see, (in striving for) nirvana (he/she) is trying to expand his/her consciousness. He/she wants to embrace the whole universe (Totally opposite of selfishness). Not with his hands. Not with power. Not with money. But, with understanding. It's a new dimension of consciousness he is attempting. ("So, we cannot really compare materialism with spirituality") On one hand you have bhog: sensual, materialistic living. On the other (side) is: now, in this finite world, in the realm of time, I cannot have a permanent, peaceful, happy state. Thus, yoga is to withdraw the mind's attention from the world of objects - and to turn it towards the spring of life in you.

*("So, how does Spirituality connect to Religion?")*

It is not only sufficient that we know philosophy (of spirituality) - - but we must have a technology by which we can reach there. Purify your mind... find out which direction you should turn your attention to.....In fact, religion means the (mental) gymnasium where the mind is trained to withdraw and turn towards the high.

*(This answers "A very common struggle between spirituality and materialism!")*

#### On Freedom and Choice to Reach Perfection

Q) But this spiritualism you are talking about has often been the means to social exploitation. ("Religion is misinterpreted and there is exploitation. Gurudev very nicely replies...")

A) Look at you. You are a Hindu - and yet you have the right to say you don't believe! You are allowed this freedom. You, as a Hindu, you want to go to church - go. You want to go to a temple - go. You want to do only social work - do. Why is this? Because, we believe that in freedom alone can perfection be reached.

*("I thought that was also very beautifully put.")*

When the average man is not given education nor taught what is religion, slowly the whole thing becomes tainted. This happened around the 16th century in India. But where will you get it (abusive power) as long as the Vedanta is prominent in your society? Everyone knows he is from Narayana; everyone is equal. So, the scripture books became dangerous for political maneuvering in those times. ("And the average man was not allowed to have access to the scriptures to maintain the power.")

### On Detachment and Being a Witness

Q) How does a man detach himself from the world around him?

A) O Narayana! Stand apart as a witness to everything. Even anger. They are in me: I am not in them. You must feel this. The body, the mind and the intellect are in you -- but you are not in them. You are not a shareholder in their joys and sorrows. Only then can you become a man, free from the equipments of life. This is called freedom. Mukti.

### On the Coexistence of Materialism and Spirituality for Peace and Harmony

*("This next question is especially for us householders.")*

Q) But can a society like ours progress in materialistic terms and retain this spiritual freedom?

A) Lakshmi is worshipped in India. But we never worship Lakshmi without Narayana. What we want now is *(the)* so called materialistic civilization that is... Narayana should be ignored and we should wink at Lakshmi. Be careful. Lakshmi without Narayana, wealth without character is suicidal. A young man suddenly gets money; he will damn himself. A man of character, if he has got wealth, will use it wisely.

Q) Can modern science and religion coexist intelligently -- without constantly being at war? Must they walk separate routes?

*("Something which we should have a satsang on... for he gave a fun answer")*

A) We have always had materialistic sciences studied together with religious sciences. Ayurveda - the medicinal science - is a part of our Vedas. It is only through the materialistic sciences that we can reach out to the higher. We have been sent here to exhaustively chew the world around us - to chew it and spit it out with no regrets. *("Now, this is controversial, or something I don't think it is...but we should think (it out) carefully")* If a man runs after women and wine, don't blame him. Let him do it intelligently. There's nothing wrong in that. *(Comment to Swami Dheerananda: "Swamiji, we need to have Satsang on that! ☺")*

### Immoral Versus Evil and the Dilemmas

Q) But wasn't his *(Arjuna's)* indecision supremely moral? When a man refuses to fight, surely that is a moral decision in our time?

A) Such indecision is moral, true. But it can produce only disaster for the decision-maker and for the society. I won't say it's immoral but that which brings unhappiness to you and to the society is called evil. That which brings happiness to everyone is a noble, virtuous act. In Hinduism, the greatness of you lies in not what you possess but what you did with what you possessed.

## What is Sannyasa?

This true story is from the 1999 book: 'At every breath, A teaching: Stories about the Life and Teachings of Swami Chinmayananda: compiled by Rudite Emir.' Gurudev brings home the point as to what is Sannyasa in his characteristic witty style.

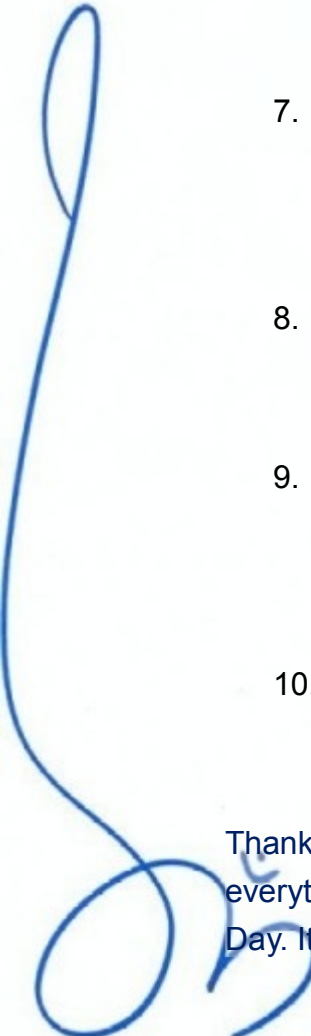
In 1979, Ram Kriplani and his wife were accompanying Gurudev for a Jnana yajna in Tirupati. He perceived Gurudev's life to be wonderful with sumptuous bhikshas offered by devotees and admirers... Same things that many of our children think about our Swami Dheerananda... (that Swamiji's life is cool... he gets such good bhiksha effortlessly!). In fact, that is one of the reasons they may think of becoming a Swami. ☺

On this particular day, Gurudev had to travel 25 miles for an inauguration of a new Chinmaya Mission center, visit an ancient temple for a lecture and then go for a lunch bhiksha at a devotees house. They all started from the host's house with a nice heavy breakfast since they had to travel all the way, 25 miles away. The hosts at the new Chinmaya Mission center thought that Gurudev must be tired after the journey and had prepared an elaborate breakfast. Somehow, Ram Kriplani joined Gurudev the second time, although quite full. When they reached the ancient temple, the story repeated again. By now, Ram Kriplani was beginning to feel sick at the sight of food. He was covering his hands over the plate. But, Gurudev continued to eat as though he was famished with hunger and thoroughly enjoying and appreciating the host's cooking skills. By lunch time, Ram Kriplani must have looked agonized. Gurudev quietly whispered to him... "THIS IS SANNYASA" ☺ ☺ The sacrifice and love for his devotees was evident as Gurudev continued to eat and encouraged his devotees by praising and relishing the food at all the four meals in the span of five hours. What a neat way to explain what genuine renunciation is! (It is also a clear example of the decreasing margin of utility in material pleasures.)

I will end with Gurudev's quotes and here are some of my favorites; I will call it as "Gurudev's Ten Quotation Path to Moksha":

1. **"The tragedy of human history is decreasing happiness in the midst of increasing comforts."** **Step 1:** This refers to the materialism that we are all struggling with.
2. **"Disappointment can come only to those who make an appointment with the future."** **Step 2:** This is about how we are constantly expecting something... always in return. That is why we are disappointed. We are not really accepting everything we are getting. This is very meaningful... to my life at least... right now.



- 
3. **“Sin is never in action, it is always in reaction.”** Therefore, **“Give the best and leave the rest.”** **Step 3:** This is very typical Karma yoga. (Reaction is always based on the past regrets or the future expectations. Giving the best unconditionally can occur only in the present moment.)
  4. **“In all adversities there is always in its depth, a treasure of spiritual blessings secretly hidden.”** **Step 4:** This is very beautiful for reflecting on all the things that disappoint us as well as please us. And, also feel gratitude for everything that we have been through. I was reading the other day while researching this... “Gratitude is the father of all virtues” (Cicero: 106BC to 43BC, Roman philosopher, orator, and statesman). That was very beautiful.
  5. **“Renounce your ego is Lord’s only request and I will make you God is the promise.”** **Step 5:** By eliminating the pressure of vasanas on the ego through karma yoga, one is slowly advancing spiritually, that is what probably he (Gurudev) is indicating. (Gain the tranquility of mind to be able to focus and turn the attention towards the inner light of consciousness, the God within us)
  6. **“Happiness depends on what you can give, Not on what you can get.”** **Step 6:** Once the ego diminishes, (the desires of the ego also lessen); it is easier to give and not expect at that point.
  7. **“We like someone because - - - -, we love someone in spite of - - - -”** **Step 7:** Without renouncing the ego, it is not possible for love to be universal. Only after renouncing the ego, love becomes universal, and it is possible to see everyone in himself or herself. And, hence it is possible to love in spite of - - - -
  8. **“Faith is to believe what you don’t see and the reward of faith is to see what you believed.”** **Step 8:** Unless one has faith to begin with (Bhakti yoga), steps 1 through 7 can be difficult to climb and to reach.
  9. **“The guru is nothing but pure Consciousness, absolute Bliss, and eternal Wisdom.”** **Step 9:** The divine guidance comes from the guru within (Jnana Yoga). But, Gurudev appeared as the physical manifestation to many devotees, whose lives he touched.
  10. **“Moksha is not `Freedom from Action’ but, `Freedom in Action’.”** **Step 10:** A self realized person can give the best without any expectations and with love for ‘All’ in spite of - - - -

Thank you very much for this opportunity, thank you for being a wonderful audience, for everything that you have given to all of us, on behalf of all of us...Happy Happy Mothers Day. It is a lovely day!

**Ch. 16 (Daiva Asura Sampati Vibhag Yoga) The Yoga of Divine and Devilish Estates**

*Nilkanth Bhatt, Richmond Chapter*

At any given time in the history of mankind, the entire mankind probably can be divided into three types of people, people with divine qualities, diabolically fallen people with wicked tendencies, and incorrigibly indifferent people. Irrespective of our religious faiths and our differing cultural backgrounds, we all generally can agree on which qualities are divine (*Daivy*) and which are diabolical (*Asuric*) and therefore core values for human beings are Universal.

We knowingly or unknowingly develop these qualities from our field of experiences and gravitate more and more towards the predominant qualities in our personality. If we are fortunate enough to fall in either of the first two categories, (*Daiva or Asura*) we can improve ourselves with our self-efforts. The people in the last category (*Rakshasa*) are generally at the mercy of nature's adversity, which eventually will break them and re-mold them for better.

Bhagavan Krishna tells us in this chapter that the people with the divine qualities are deemed for liberation and those with demoniac tendencies are for bondage. None of us choose bondage voluntarily, however our ignorance leads us to bondage of various kinds. To help us in our self-efforts Bhagavan enumerates and explains various divine and demonic qualities.

Fearlessness, purity of heart, knowledge, charity, control of the senses, sacrifice, austerity, straightforwardness, non-violence, truthfulness, control over anger, compassion for all beings, modesty, vigor, forgiveness, fortitude, absence of hatred and excessive pride are qualities born out of divine estate. In contrast to the above qualities, hypocrisy, arrogance, self-conceit, harshness, wrath, and even ignorance are qualities born out of demonic estate. The divine qualities were discussed at length in previous chapters of Bhagavad Gita. We generally do not like discussion of devilish qualities; however, it is important for us to know what are the symptoms of demonic qualities, so that we can avoid them and if we acquire them unknowingly from our environments, we develop enough courage and wisdom to up-root them.

Diabolically fallen people do not know what to do and what to refrain from; they lack discriminating intellect, purity and truthfulness. Filled with insatiable desires, hypocrisy, pride and arrogance they hold evil ideas due to delusion. They work but with wrong resolve. They are overly concerned about satisfying their desires and gratification of lust is their highest goal of life. They feel sure that they are right about it.

They are tied with innumerable ties of desires, lust and anger. They strive to obtain hoards of wealth by unlawful and unethical means for sensual enjoyments. They think I acquired this today; I shall also acquire that tomorrow. This is mine and that wealth will also become mine in future. I won over this enemy/competitor today; I will destroy the others also tomorrow. I am the Lord, I am perfect, I am the enjoyer and I am happy.

I am rich and born in high society and family. Who else is like me? I am doing all these good deeds, I am giving donations for charity and I will enjoy the success and rejoice. Thinking thus they are deluded by ignorance, bewildered by many a fancy, addicted to gratification of lust and fall into foul hell (in their minds).

Self-conceited, stubborn, filled with pride, intoxicated with power and wealth, they perform sacrifices (public work) and give donations in name only out of ostentation, contrary to scriptural ordinances.

Given over to egoism, power, haughtiness, lust and anger these malicious people hate the divine (self) in them and in others. These cruel haters, worst among men, hurl themselves into the womb of demons only. Deluded in life after life, they thus fall even lower each time (from their path and goal).

There are three gates of hell, lust, anger and greed. They are self-destructive and therefore one should avoid all three of them. A person liberated from these three gates to darkness of ignorance, practices what is good for him and thus achieves the supreme goal. One who ignores the wisdom of the scriptures and acts under the impulse of desire attains neither perfection nor happiness. Therefore learn from the wisdom of our scripture, what is to be done and what needs to be avoided to achieve the supreme goal of life, happiness.

\* \* \*



*Outdoor classroom at Chinmayam, completed in April on National Youth Seva Day*



# Jnana Yoga and Self Realization – Part I

*Acharya K. Sadanandaji*

In these series I am going to present my understanding of what self-realization means, what is involved in self-realization, and who realizes what.

Scriptures say - *tyaagenaike amRitatvamaanasuH* – only by renunciation one can gain immortality. There is an interpretation that only by taking sanyaasa, one can get liberation. This is part of the sloka we chant when we receive a sanyaasi with *puurna kumbham*. Is external sanyaasa a necessary requirement for self-realization, in spite of the fact that many ancient sages mentioned in the scriptures were *gruhasthaas*? Sage *yagnavalka* in *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, in spite of being a *jnaani* himself and even teaches his wife *Maitreye*, decides to take sanyaasa for *nidhidhyaasana* to contemplate on the self within.

What does the renunciation mean? - There have been some discussions in the *advaita* literature that it refers to *bhoutika* or external sanyaasa, that too *parivraajaka* sanyaasa (one who does not stay at any place, lest he gets attached to the environment) as an essential requirement for self-realization. Here I am presenting my perspective for whatever it is worth. I am presenting what is essential and what is helpful environment for a *sadhak*, who wants to know. Scriptures, *yukti* (logic) and *anubhava* or experience of three states of consciousness, form the basis for Vedantic analysis.

*gRihastha* and sanyaasa: I am going to give a broader definition for the purpose of the analysis. We normally relate *gRihastha* as an *ashrama*, and he is the one who is a house-holder or married person with associated attachments and obligations – obligations set by society and obligations set by Vedas like *nityaagni* or daily fire-ritual, etc. Thus *grahastha* is one who holds on to the house. In truth, the *gruhastha* is one whom house has a hold, the attachments that bind one down to the phenomenal world. We want wealth for our security, but now we are worried about security of the wealth. This is true for all things that we depend on. Having a house or wealth etc is not a problem but if they have hold on us, we become, instead of masters of the house, slaves of the house. Hence *Manu* says

sarvam paravasham duHkham sarvam aatmavasham sukham |  
etat vidhyaat samaasena lakshaNam sukhaduHkayoH |

Dependence on anything outside for my happiness ultimately results in suffering or *samsaara*, while dependence on myself for my happiness is the true independence and happiness. This is, in short, the definition of happiness and unhappiness. Hence any dependence other than on oneself is *samsaara*; and he is a *gRihastha*. Sanyaasa is then, renunciation of any dependence on other than oneself. From this aspect it is not a particular *ashram* but a particular frame of mind, which may or may not come with change in *aashrama*.

Whether one agrees or not, many of the traditional Vedic obligations have become mute, due to high population, two-income families, apartment living, extensive travelling for studies and employment, settling in places beyond the seas, and many other constraints.

For whatever reason, traditional obligatory duties prescribed by Vedas are rarely followed. I am not a sentimentalist nor I am interested in why people do or not do or cannot do the veda vihit karmaas, the obligatory duties prescribed by Vedas, but only interested in how to gain self-realization with all the constraints of time and place. Some feel that there will be pratyavaaya paapam (sin due to omissions, while no merits for commissions), if these obligatory duties are not done. Daily sandhyaavandanam, for example, is one of the obligatory duties for those who have undergone Upanayanayam ceremony. From my understanding, these karmas are all helpful for chitta suddhi or purification of the mind. The essential requirement for jnaana as emphasized by Shankara is chitta suddhi or purity of the mind measured by the four-fold qualifications. All aashrams, or change of an aashram is ultimately to attain this chitta suddhi. Chitta suddhi or purification of the mind makes one qualified for jnaana yoga. That a particular karma or particular renunciation of karma are pre-requisites for chitta suddhi is against the fundamental teaching of advaita as Shankara exhaustively analyzed in his bhaasya of B. Sutra 1. What are actions, inactions in actions, and unactions are explained by Krishna in Ch. 4, as introduction to jnaana yoga. The renunciation based on this chapter is what is needed, and it involves change in the attitude of a saadhak towards any action. One who does not act while dynamic action is going on, and not the one who renounces the action; or who understands that he is the witnessing consciousness witnessing the dynamic activities at the level of BMI, is a true sanyaasi – since he has renounced the notion that I am a doer.

Sanyaasin is a renunciate and traditionally it involves renouncing from other the three ashramaas to become a parivraajaka. There are different types of sanyaasas discussed but in essence all involve renunciation. With the renunciation from other ashramas, a sanyaasin is also relieved from the obligatory duties of the previous ashrama and embarks the duties of the sanyaasa ashrama. Traditionally gRihasthas as well as kings use to support the sanyaasa aashrama. Now along with the changes in the other ashrams, the parivraajaka aspect of the sanyaasa ashrama is mostly gone, and sanyaasins also need support to maintain them. Each sanyaasin has to built up his own infrastructure or belong to some organization that has infra structure for his own maintenance that is for food-shelter-clothing etc. With the required infrastructure they essentially are gRihasthaas in expanded version of the meaning of the word, with belongingness to the mission or ashrama with disciples or a member-roaster for support. We can see these in all maThaas or any missions, with an organizational structure. It is not a criticism but recognition of fact. This is unavoidable. There is inclusivity and exclusivity that can arise with the infra structure build-up with energy dissipation in terms of attachments. It is not that a sanyaasin gets attached to his infrastructure nor a gRihasti cannot get detached from his infrastructure, while living in their environments. We cannot make any sweeping statements that it is not possible for gRihasthas to realize and we do not have Janakaas in to-days world. It depends on the individual's desire or goal in life and commitment to it. Since his obligations are less, it is easier for a sanyaasin to develop a mind free from psychological attachments, compared to a gRihastha. A sanyaasin can get attached to his own koupinam or lion cloth; as someone jokingly said, there is no problem if koupinam is attached to him but problem comes if he is attached to his koupinam. In essence, attachments and aversions or raaga and dvesha can arise in any aashrama. What is to be strived for is chitta suddhi – or purity of the mind free from these attachments and aversions.

In essence – the traditional meanings, situations and obligations of both gRihasthaas and sanyaasins have changed with desha and kaala – with times and place.

Scripture says only by tyaaga or sanyaasa or by renunciation one can gain immortality – tyaagenaike amRitatvamaanasuH. amRitatvam or immortality is the same as self-realization, according to advaita, since self is immortal. Truly, I cannot renounce what I do not own. However, ownership of anything is only a notion; since in reality, I do not even own the body, mind and intellect (BMI), as they belong to prakRiti. Body is 'this', an object and 'I am' is the subject. Therefore 'I am this' is a notion, but taken as real due to lack of discrimination of what is the subject and what is an object. 'I am this' is the essence of ego. Hence ownership itself is a notion, if one understands correctly. If I understand that the ownership is only notional, I have already given up my attachments to the BMI. Truly, that understanding comes only when I realize that I am – pure self – that is of the nature of sat-chit-ananda. This happens only by dropping intellectually the 'this' part in 'I am this', with recognizing, 'I am not this, I am not this', neti neti. It is not giving up the body or pancha koshaas but giving up the notion that I am this. **That sanyaasa is essential for self-realization**, not the external giving up the panchakoshaas where I reside or the external environments where I reside. Hence giving up the ownership involves understanding that the ownership itself is only notional and not real; and that comes with jnaanam.

Thus we have a catch 22 situation – scripture says unless I give up my ownership to everything I cannot become immortal. However the very giving up the ownership involves understanding that I am pure self and everything else is non-self. Non-self (anaatma) is not real, since scriptures say that the self that I am is anantam or infinite, and hence there is nothing real other than the self. Hence everything else is only anaatma or it is mithyaa only. Hence renunciation involves understanding that I am pure self, and that itself is self-realization. It is the renunciation of the notion 'I am this'. If this is not done, any other renunciation is only notional, since in the process of giving up, I am giving up things that do not belong to me. I am not this – neti neti is the renunciation that is involved in the statement tyaagenaike amRitatvamaanasuH. Here I am giving up the notion that I am – this, where this involves objectification which includes the whole universe that comes under this; not just some ashrama or adopting one way of life by giving up some other way of life. However, giving up attachments is not easy. Hence as preparatory for the mind, it should start physically and mentally give up the notion of ownership. The best way to give up is to offering to God – iswaraarpita buddhi – or nivedana buddhi. What is offered is naivedyam and with His blessings it becomes prasaadam that need to be shared with everyone. tvadiiyam vastu Govinda tubhyameva samarpaye – Oh Lord this is yours only, but I am offering it to you since I have a notion that this is mine. Naivadyam includes not just some food that is offered but everything that I think I own. Hence Krishna says – yat karoshi yat ashnaasi yajjuhoshi dadaasi yat | yat tapasyasi kounteya tatkurushva madarpaNam | | Whatever you do, eat, sacrifice, offer as gift, perform as austerity, Oh! Arjuna! – do this as dedication to Me. This is required to change the attitude of the mind in terms of ownership. True renunciation comes when one recognizes that everything is nothing but LORD only – there is nothing to give or nothing to own; but something to understand.

Then how do I give up notional ownership? Any notion can only be given up by clear understanding the problem in perspective. That requires jnaana as saadhana until jnaanam takes place. That is the essence of jnaana yoga. It has nothing to do with a particular ashrama but it has everything to do with giving up the attachments and aversions or raaga dveshas recognizing that they are the cause of human suffering or samsaara. Hence Krishna mentions several values in Ch. 13 that mind needs in order to overcome these attachments and aversions. Krishna provides a long list



of values starting from amaanitvam (humility), adambitvam (without haughtiness), ahimsa (non-violence) , shanti (peacefulness), arjavam (straightforwardness), aachaaryopaasanam (devotion to the teacher), soucham (purity), sthairyam (persistence), aatma vinigraham (self-control – shama etc), indriyaartheshu vairaagyam (dispassion towards sense-objects), anahankaaram (ego-lessness), janma mrityu jaraa vyaadhi duHkha dosha anudarshanam (recognition of sufferings in birth, death, old age, disease) , asakti (detachment) and anabhiswangaH putra-daara gruhaadhishu (unattachments to son, wife, house, etc), nityam ca samachittatvam ishTa-anishTa upapattiShu (equanimity all the time for pleasant and unpleasant), mayi ca ananyayogena avyabhichaariNii bhakti (single pointed devotion towards Me without any other diversion), vivikta desha sevitvam (seeing solitariness) , aratiH janasamsadi (aversion to crowds), adhyaatma jnaana nityatvam (always after spiritual knowledge), tatva jnaanaartha darshanam (clear understanding of the truth), etc. Having these values is the mark of chitta suddhi and itself is the jnaana saadhana, says Krishna. It is not the aashrama but it is these values required for chitta suddhi (purified mind) that gives chitta ekaagrata (single pointedness) and chitta vishaalata (expansion of the mind to embark the whole universe).

In this list we have also putra daara gruha aadishu anabhiswangaH (lack intense longing for ones son, wife and house) indicating all those who depend on him and in those that he depends on – not just son, wife or house per se. That is the lack of the notion of any ownership as well as any dependency. Hence, in principle, a gruhastha is one who has that attachment that this is mine or mamakaraa, which goes with ahankaara as I am this. Thus essential two aspects are a) I am this and b) this is mine – ahankaara and mamakaraa; all the rest follow from these two. We can now define who is a gRihastha - One who has these two, ahankaara and mamakaraa – I am this and this is mine – the contents of ‘this’ include whatever one feels as his. A sanyaasin, therefore, is one who drops those attachments of I and mine. This can be done only by attaching oneself to something higher – Hence here Krishna says that higher is Him – hence mayi ananya yogena avyabhichaara bhakti – that is single pointed unwavering devotion towards Me, the self in all. That can happen only if one has intense desire for aadyaatma jnaanam which involves shravana, manana, and nidhidyaasana to gain the clear vision of the reality – tattvajnaartha darshanam, which can be gained only by the study of the Vedanta under a competent teacher with devotion or what Krishan calls as aacharya upaasanam, that involves discipleship to gain the knowledge. That knowledge will not take place unless the mind is purified with other qualities that were listed – amaanitvam, etc where the mind is humble enough to learn when the teaching is given.

One can follow the tradition and take up sanyaasa aashram, in order to minimize – possessions, obligations, relations and transactions, and to insure one does not get attached to that by giving up one set of attachments to another. Parivraajaka, one who does not stay in one place to avoid attachments, is mentioned but that is not possible in the current environmental set-up. In all these, what is to be given up is not the ashrama per se, but notions of I am this and this is mine. Hence Krishan’s emphasizes as anahankaaram – egotistical notion that involves I am this or I have this- In the above sloka it is dharmic ego that is given up while Vedantic ‘I am this’ is given up or can be given up only with the clear understanding of I am – sat chit ananda swaruupam- and all this is nothing but His vibhuti or ultimately my own vibhuti!

Hari Om!

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