

Chinmaya Smrithi



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

Volume 22, Number 1 January 20, 2012



Chinmaya Mission West



When the mind is changed,

The man is changed.

When the man is changed,

The year becomes new.

Not only on January 1st.

The day you change

Is the New Year for you,

A New Life for you.

You are the Master of it.

- Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

Wishing our CMW Family

A Joyous and Spiritually Fulfilling 2012!



Love and OM,

Chinmaya Mission West Board of Directors

His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda, Dr. Apparao Mukkamala, Pranjivan Lodhia, Gulu Advani,
Acharya Vilasini Balakrishnan, Brahmacharini Aparna Chaitanya, Dr. Gopal Dwarakanath, Acharya Sharada Kumar,
Acharya Shailaja Nadkarni, Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty, Dr. D. V. Pillai, Acharya Shanker Pillai, Swami Shantananda

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

- Sat Feb 18th – Bala Vihar Teacher Retreat at Chinmayam Observed.
- Sun Feb 19th – Mahashivaratri Observation. Details will be posted on the website.
- March – Jnana Yajna or Spiritual Camp with Acharya Vivek Gupta at Frederick. Details to be announced.
- Saturday, March 31st – Sri Rama Navami
- Friday, April 6th – Hanuman Jayanthi Celebration
- April 7th/8th – No Bala Vihar classes; Spring Break
- Saturday, April 21st – Gita Chanting Competition, will be held locally at each chapter, from 1-5PM

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.chinmayapublications.com
- Srimad Bhagvad Gita with Sri Gurudev's commentary is online at www.myholygita.com

Next Issue

- Articles for the next regular bi-monthly issue – March 2012, are due by March 1st, 2012
- 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, Gopal Gopinath, Raju Chidambaram, Acharya Vilasiniji, Acharyas, Chapter Coordinators and Teachers. &

BV students - Ananya Krishnan, Asmi Panigrabi, Atman Panigrabi, Harsha Neerchal, Nandini Kishore, Vishnupriya Karedy and Keshav Kowtha

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

CMWRC Events Held

- Annual Fundraising event was held on November 12th at Herndon High School in Herndon, VA. The highlight of the program was “Jagadaananda Kaaraka”, the story of Rama, performed in multiple dance styles. The event was sold out, and raised close to \$100K towards the construction of the Chinmaya Somnath facility in Chantilly, VA. Pictures from the event are posted in the Picture Album section of www.chinmayadc.org website.
- Swami Dheeranandaji held Jnana Yajna in Northern Virginia on Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Verses 1-18, from Monday, November 21 to Saturday, November 26, 2012. See the activity report in this issue
- Tapovan Jayanthi and Gita Jayanthi were observed on December 10th and 11th.
- TGIF (Thank Gurudev it's Friday) Chinmaya CHYK connection (CCC) social was held on December 10th. The next event is planned for February/March time-frame.
- At Chinmayam, Swami Sarveshananda, Acharya of Chinmaya Mission Dallas, conducted Winter Youth Camp for high school children from December 26 through December 29. He also presided over Chinmaya Yuva Kendra (CHYK) youth and young professionals retreat on December 26 and 27; and Adult Spiritual Camp on December 28 and 29 on the topic of “Purusha Suktam” or “The Universal Person”. The programs were well attended. Please see the event summary in this issue.
- New Year's Day Puja events were held in Virginia and at Chinmayam.
 - The Puja and all arrangements were well organized (thanks to Karpagam, Rameshji and all other sevaks). Thanks to Pramila and Anantji for gracing the occasion. We had two sevak families (Yekkalas and Hariharans) who served as Yajamaans. Program started exactly at 10.00 AM and finished at 12.10 PM. followed by lunch. Around 120 adults/children attended the program. Neelima did a great job coordinating food that was enough for 150+ attendees. The children's participation was wonderful especially in leading the Guru Paduka Stotram and Mahalakshmi Astottara Namavali. Around \$1700.00 were collected in the form of Guru Dakshina donations in VA on this day.
 - At Chinmayam, Dr. DC Raoji guided the Guru Paduka Puja, Sri Chinmaya Ashtottara Sathanamavali, and followed that with a new year's message on a firm resolution to be a better human. Songs by Vani Ravichandran and devotional Bhajans by Purvi Nanavaty completed the program.

News

- Annapurna Kitchen at Chinmayam inaugurated, December 10th, 2011



Announcements

Tulsi Ramayan Mahotsav

Planning and preparation is in full swing for hosting “Tulsi Ramayan Mahotsav” in June at Herndon High School, Herndon VA. Puja Guruji will treat us to a devotional rendering of the story of Rama, as composed by Saint Tulsidas in 'Ramcharitmanas'. Please visit the website (www.chinmayadc.org) for further information. A flyer is posted in this issue.

Children's Summer Camp 2012

Be on the lookout for announcements for 2012 Summer Camp. Summer camp sevaks have been busy finalizing the details.

Thank Gurudev It's Friday (TGIF) Bala Vihar – Chinmayam class CHYK Connection (CCC) Socials

TGIF socials are held on Friday evenings every other month for CHYK and Chinmayam students/parents. (Chinmayam is Bala Vihar classes for Grades 10-12). TGIFs are get-togethers hosted by a CMWRC family, and all Chinmayam parents across CMWRC are invited to attend. 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.

Next TGIF social is planned for December 2011 or January 2012. Details to follow.

Contact: Email 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.

Recent Pravachans Available for Download or Purchase (www.chinmayadc.org, Audio)

Pujya Swami Dheeranandaji's recently completed Jnana Yajna on Chapter 2 of the Gita, verses 1-18: MP3 files are available for download

Current/Upcoming Events

- **Bala Vihar Teacher Retreat on Saturday Feb 11 at Chinmayam**
- **Mahashivaratri Observation on Feb 19. Details soon.**
- **Summer Camp registration**
- **Summer Camp Youth Volunteer registration**
- **Spiritual Camp with Acharya Vivekji at Frederick in March**
- **Spring Carnival at Chinmayam hosted by the Annapurna Team**



Be sure to read the January 2012 newsletter from Chinmaya Mission West. Browse the latest newsletter at www.chinmayamission.org/cmwnews.

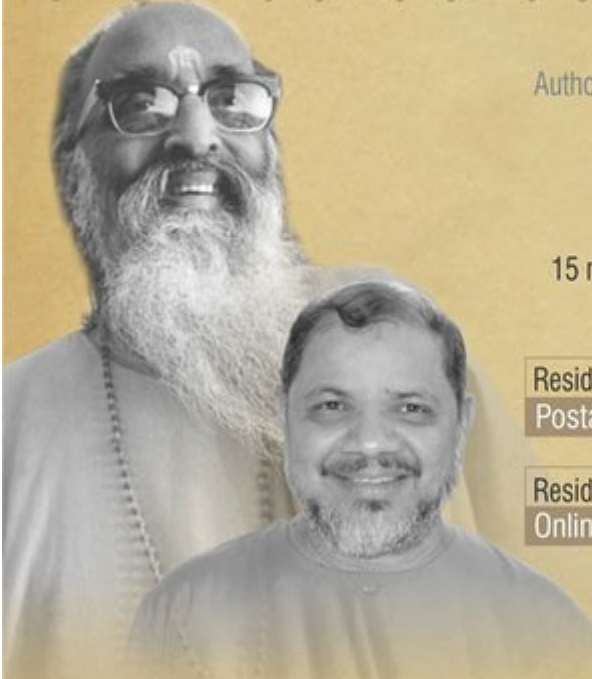
cif Chinmaya International Foundation

Affiliated to Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi & recognised by Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)

launches

BHAGAVAD GITA COURSE

Go through Gita... Grow through Gita...



Author: **His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda**
Head, Chinmaya Mission Worldwide

Course Highlights:

18 Chapters covered in 30 lessons
15 months duration @ 2 lessons per month

Course Donation:

Residents of the Indian sub-continent: ₹3,000
Postal Course Other Residents: US\$250

Residents of the Indian sub-continent: ₹3,000
Online Course Other Residents: US\$200

Knowledge of Sanskrit is not required
as the medium of instruction is English.

REGISTER NOW!

For online registration visit: www.chinfo.org/courses/bhagavadgita

For further details contact:

Administrator, CIF Home Study Courses
Chinmaya International Foundation

Adi Sankara Nilayam, Adi Sankara Marg, Veliyanad, Ernakulam – 682 319, Kerala, India

Phone: +91-484-2749676, 2747307 Fax: +91-484-2749729

Email: gitacourse@chinfo.org

~ Om Namah Shivaya ~



Chinmaya Mission Celebrates
Maha Shivaratri

Sunday, February 19, 2012
Chinmayam / 46 Norwood Road
Silver Spring, MD 20905
www.chinmayadc.org

All Are Welcome!

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 5:00 a.m. - 7:00 a.m. | Shiva Manasa Puja / Morning |
| 5:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. | Shiva Manasa Puja / Early Evening |
| 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. | Veda / Sloka Parayanam (Sri Rudram, Bilwa Patra Stotram) |
| 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. | Lord Jagadeeshwara Puja (Interested families, give your name to the session coordinator) |
| 8:00p.m. - 8:45 p.m. | Bhajans/Dance by Bala Vihar Children (Interested Bala Vihar students, inform session coordinator) |
| 8:45p.m - 9:30p.m. | Maha Prasad |
| 9:45p.m. - 10:30p.m. | Bhajans |
| 10:30 p.m.-11:55 p.m. | Bhajans and Naama Japa |
| 11:55p.m.- 12:05a.m. | Conch blowing, Silence and MAHA ARATI |

For more information contact:
Your session coordinator
or
Andrea Beri (443) 472-0819
Paulomi Nanavatty (410) 980-7002

DHARMA SEVAK COURSE

CHINMAYA MISSION TRINIDAD



COURSE ACHARYA:

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VIMALANANDA**

ASSISTED BY: SWAMI PRAKASHANANDA

February 1st to March 11th 2012

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- ◆ Learn the fundamentals of Vedanta
- ◆ Learn Sanskrit
- ◆ Learn how to conduct and be firmly grounded in spiritual practices
- ◆ Celebrate auspicious occasions like Ganesh Chaturthi, Janmashtami.



SAVE NOW!

Register Before
Gandhi Jayanti
2nd October,
2011

For A
15% Discount

COURSE DONATION

4000 USD / person (over 25yrs) with AC
3500 USD / person (over 25yrs) w/out AC
2500 USD / person (under 25yrs) with AC
2000 USD / person (under 25yrs) w/out AC

CHINMAYA ASHRAM

#1 SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA DR., CALCUTTA RD#1,
MC BEAN, COUVA, TRINIDAD, WEST INDIES.

TEL: 1-868-679-3652/1-868-636-1571

FAX: 1-868-679-3652

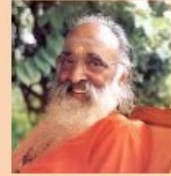
EMAIL: CHINMAYAMMISSIONTT@GMAIL.COM



Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center

Invites you to

Tulsi Ramayan Mahotsav



June 24-30, 2012 at Herndon High School, Herndon, Virginia

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda
Head, Chinmaya Mission Worldwide

**Tulsi
Ramayan
Pravachan**



**Daily
Evenings**
7:30 - 9:00 PM



Kaivalya Upanishad

Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya

Acharya, Chinmaya Mission San Jose

Weekday Mornings: 9:30 - 10:30 AM

SPECIAL CHILDREN'S PROGRAM
Concurrent with Morning and Evening Pravachans



UNDER GUIDANCE OF
ACHARYA VIVEK GUPTA
CHINMAYA MISSION NIAGARA FALLS

DAILY BHAJANS

DAILY POTHY YATRA

**GURU PADUKA PUJA AND SPECIAL
CELEBRATION ON JUNE 30TH -
GURUJI'S BIRTHDAY**



FREE ADMISSION. ALL ARE WELCOME.

For More Information or to Sponsor an Event, please contact us

Email: mahotsav@chinmayadc.org Web: www.chinmayadc.org

YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION MAY BE MADE OUT TO: "CMWRC", 46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring MD 20905



Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center

Invites you to

Tulsi Ramayan Mahotsav



June 24-30, 2012 at Herndon High School, Herndon, Virginia

Tulsi Ramayan Pravachan by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Sunday, June 24th Morning | Inauguration | 10:00 AM |
| | Tulsi Ramayan Pravachan | 10:30 - 11:30 AM |
| Sunday, June 24th Evening | Bhajans | 6:30 PM |
| | Pothi Yatra | 7:15 PM |
| | Tulsi Ramayan Pravachan | 7:30 - 9:00 PM |
| | Aarti | 9:00 PM |
| Mornings, Monday, June 25 Thru Friday, June 29 | Kaivalya Upanishad by Prabodh Ji | 9:30 - 10:30 AM |
| Evenings, Monday, June 25 Thru Friday, June 29 | Bhajans | 6:30 PM |
| | Pothi Yatra | 7:15 PM |
| | Tulsi Ramayan Pravachan | 7:30 - 9:00 PM |
| | Aarti | 9:00 PM |
| Saturday, June 30th Morning | Guru Paduka Puja | 9:30 - 10:30 AM |
| | Special Cultural Program by Children | 10:30 - 11:00 AM |
| | Message by Pujya Guruji | 11:10 - 11:30 AM |
| Saturday, June 30th Evening | Bhajans | 5:00 PM |
| | Pothi Yatra | 5:45 PM |
| | Tulsi Ramayan Pravachan | 6:00 - 7:15 PM |
| | Aarti | 7:15 - 7:30 PM |
| | Guru Dakshina | 7:30 - 8:00 PM |

Mahotsav Sponsorship Opportunities - Your Generous Support is greatly appreciated

Pramukh/Grand Yajman Dainik/DailyYajman Paduka Puja Yajman Pothi Yatra Yajman Arati Yajman

Hotel Accommodations

CMWRC has negotiated special rates with the following hotels, subject to first-come, first-served.

- The Crown Plaza, Dulles Hotel (Hilton brand), www.cpdulles.com. Negotiated Group Rates of \$119 + 9% tax per night (Sun-Wed); \$79 + 9% tax per night (Thur-Sat) for dates 6/22/2012-7/1/2012. Reserve by 6/4/2012
- The Holiday Inn Express, www.HIHerndon.com. Negotiated Group Rate of \$99 +13% tax per night for dates 6/23/2012-7/01/2012. Reserve by 5/22/2012.

For More Information or to Sponsor an Event, please contact us

Email: mahotsav@chinmayadc.org Web: www.chinmayadc.org

YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION MAY BE MADE OUT TO: "CMWRC", 46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring MD 20905

Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Aradhana Family Camp 2012

July 29 - August 3, 2012

Flight to Freedom



Conducted by Swami Swaroopananda

Texts/Topics

*Sankat Mochan, Gayatri Mantra,
Maha Mrtyunjaya Mantra, Ik Onkar*

Wyndham Hotel

123 Old River Road, Andover, MA 01810

A Rejuvenating Spiritual Retreat for the Family

- National CHYK Camp for Young Adults
- Chinmaya Bala Vihar Camp for Kids
 - Guided Meditation / Yoga
- Workshops / Group & Panel Discussions / *Satsangs*
 - Cultural Programs
- Optional Tour of Historic Boston

SWAMI SWAROOPANANDA,

a disciple of the spiritual luminary, His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda, and a protégé of the present Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide, His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda, brings the perennial wisdom of Vedanta to all ages. His eloquent and profound insights, filled with warmth, wit, and logic, have transformed thousands of lives around the world. A respected spiritual teacher and highly sought motivational speaker, Swamiji is also the present Director of the prestigious Chinmaya International Residential School in Coimbatore, India, and Chinmaya Mission's Head of the Asia-Pacific region.



CHINMAYA MISSION BOSTON WELCOMES YOU!

Register Now/ Get More Details /
Sponsor Aarti / Offer Bhiksha:

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www.chinmaya-boston.com

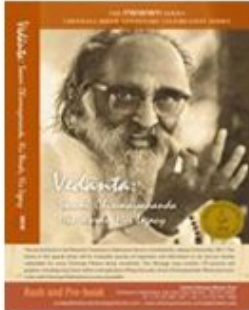
(978) 749-0876



| 5-Day Family Camp Rates Per Person | Per By March 31 | After March 31 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Quad Occupancy | \$440 | \$475 |
| Triple Occupancy | \$535 | \$585 |
| Double Occupancy | \$650 | \$725 |
| Single Occupancy | \$1,000 | \$1,100 |

Rates given are per person; include lodging and
boarding (vegetarian meals); exclude transportation

Chinmaya Publications New Releases



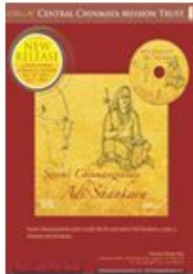
**Vedanta: Swami Chinmayananda,
His Words, His Legacy**
(Mananam, Chinmaya Birth Centenary Series)
\$15



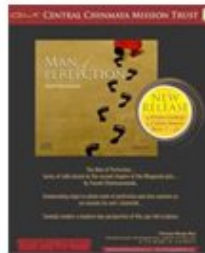
**2012 Chinmaya Calendar:
"Love Thyself, Love Thy Self"**
\$2



**Talks on Karma Yoga
by Swami Chinmayananda CD**
\$10



**Talk on Adi Shankara
by Swami Chinmayananda CD**
\$6



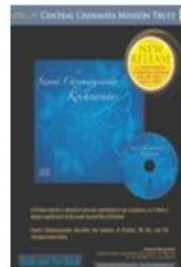
**Talk on Man of Perfection
by Swami Chinmayananda CD**
\$6



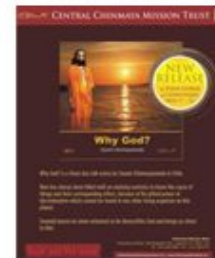
**Shvetashvatara Upanishad
Commentary by Swami Tejomayananda**
\$6



**Tarangini 4
(children's storybook in color)**
\$6



**Talk on Krishna Avatara
by Swami Chinmayananda CD**
\$6



**Talk on Why God?
by Swami Chinmayananda CD**
\$6

**Order through the local bookstore or online at
<http://www.chinmayapublications.com/index.php>**

2011 Winter Youth Camp with Swami Sarveshanandaji

Sandhya Piratla

Tapovanam, Silver Spring Chapter

Usually during winter break, I like to sleep in, spend time with my cousins and watch TV all day. Naturally, when my mother told me that I would be attending the Winter Camp, I was a bit skeptical. Part of me was cool with it, because my aunt in India knows Swami Sarveshanandaji very well, but the other part of me was sad because I really do like watching TV. However, when I started thinking about it hard, I thought: Why am I throwing such a big fit about going? It's not like I won't be able to sleep in the summer.

During the camp, I expected to just listen to lectures, but we actually had discussions. We learned about controlling, altering, and deleting certain aspects of our personality, freedom and happiness, and how to be self-conscious about what we do. We also learned a new meditation technique.



On the first day of camp, Swamiji told us to make a personality chart with boxes. They were devoted to four categories: description of myself, how I portray myself to the world, how others see me as, and what is the "ideal" me. While filling out the second box, I realized that I show so many sides of my personality to many different people. In school, I tend to be very quiet, while with my friends at parties, I am very loud and funny. If I can't be the same around different people, then how can I become the "ideal me"? Another thing that I liked was the meditation technique. It taught me how to control my numerous (and extreme) emotions. I found out that just by focusing on my breathing, I was able to clear my head of any emotion. I can use this technique when I'm really mad, which happens a lot, so that I will calm down and prevent myself from saying something that I would regret later.

One of the things that I liked best about the camp was the fact that not only did we have discussions, we also had a lot of fun playing games such as the hopping game and the "Psychiatrist". We also watched the movie, "Batman Begins". On top of this, Swamiji was so much fun to be around. He made everyone laugh and was really cool. On the last day he prepared food for us to eat during the bhiksha. I am really glad that I went to the camp.

What Sri Gurudev Means to Me

Atman Panigrahi

Tapovanam, Silver Spring Chapter

In *The Ageless Guru*, Swami Chinmayananda's life is chronicled. Gurudev's actions have assisted millions of Hindus around the world. He has brought peace and contentment to many, and he helped make the world a better place. Furthermore, Gurudev's experiences and teachings inspired people to change their lives. For me, Gurudev is an inspiration and a mentor. He guides me and helps me make my decisions, and he is always with me.

Gurudev faced many hardships and obstacles on his way to becoming a sanyasi. Due to his involvement in the Indian independence movement, Gurudev was sent to prison. He dealt with terrible conditions, beatings, and ultimately, he contracted Typhoid. Not only that, he was then mercilessly thrown onto the streets, left to die. However, Gurudev never lost hope, and he was taken in by a kind and generous passer-by. Gurudev recuperated and managed to get back to full health. This shows me that you can never lose faith or hope. Gurudev has taught me to stay strong and keep trying in whatever I do.

One important statement of Gurudev's is on my mind every day. Gurudev always said "Keep smiling". These two simple words have had a profound impact on me, and are the first things I think of when the thought of Gurudev crosses my mind. Rather than reacting angrily and violently to adversity and unfavorable situations, I now try to remain happy. Gurudev's words remind me to control myself and stay positive. He has changed my outlook and helped me succeed.

Swami Chinmayananda's experiences and words have supported and guided me. To me, "Gurudev" is synonymous with resilience and happiness, and I am thankful for having the opportunity to attend Bala Vihar and learn more about him.

2011 Winter Youth Camp with Swami Sarveshanandaji

Meera Ravichandran

Camp Theme:

Ctrl+Alt+Del (Control + Alt + Delete)

Is our Desktop cluttered?
Is our CPU overloaded?
Is our processor slowing down?
Can our processor be upgraded?

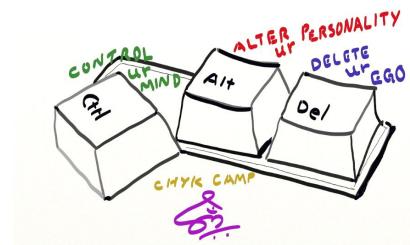
Control of our mind(CPU) & fine tuning it is the solution.

Is our OS outdated?
Can our OS be upgraded?
Can our OS be altered or changed?

Alt the Personality (OS) and upgrade it.

Are there viruses in the system?
Are there healthy viruses VS unhealthy ones?
Do we have Trojans corrupting our system?
Identifying, isolating, quarantining these viruses a possibility?

Delete this EGO (viruses) - is this even a possibility.



Highlights of the camp included inspiring discourses by Swami Sarveshanandaji, interactive group activities and discussions, practicing silence (mouna) & meditation, the positive company of fellow students, and quality time with CHYK volunteers. The topics covered were discussions on Contemporary Movies, Music, Life Situations and Personal Experiences. Swami Sarveshanandaji raised the awareness among the camp participants including CHYKs about the freedom of Happiness, Conscious Living, and Right Thinking.

Many thanks to Maryland families who volunteered to host registrants in order to alleviate commuting challenges. Special thanks to Raja & Meera Kirkire for hosting a North Carolina registrant, and to Andrea Beri for providing transportation from and to the airport.

CHYK satsangs were held on Monday December 26th and Tuesday December 27th in the evenings from 6:30 – 8:00 PM and around 20-25 CHYKs attended the satsangs.

Swami Sarveshanandaji accommodated special request from Bala Vihar Director for Teacher satsangs and member requests for Adult satsangs, which were held on Wednesday December 28th and Thursday December 29th. These satsangs (from 7:00 – 8:30 PM) were open to all CHYKs and the topic discussed was Purushasooktam – The Universal Person.

2011 Winter Youth Camp Pictures

Photographs by Krishna Bhammidipati



Gita Jnana Yajna by Pujya Swami Dheeranandaji

submitted by Sri Gopalakrishna

We recently concluded the Gita Jnana Yajna by Pujya Swami Dheerananda November 21-26 on Gita Chapter 2, Vs 1-18. Each of you helped in some way to make this possible and made sacrifices to make this program a priority.

The areas of facilities, transportation, logistics, child-care, audio and recording, hosting Swamiji and bhiksha were all coordinated by our key sevaks, many who were present through the entire week. Our sincere thanks for your seva and we hope that each of you and your children benefited from this program spiritually.

Many families came by and thanked us for an enjoyable week. The children had a good time and it was wonderful to hear them chant the Gita verses each day. Pujya Swamiji has told us he enjoyed the visit and expressed happiness with arrangements. Our sincere thanks to Swamiji for his presence and inspiration.

We received around \$9000.00 in offerings through Gurudakshina and Bhiksha. These will be used for our Mission's growth, especially for the Chinmaya Somnath project.

Note: the audio from the Jnana Yajna are available for download from www.chinmayadc.org website, under audio. Please navigate to Swamiji's page.

New Year 2012 Puja in Northern Virginia

Photos by Rathankar Putta



More photos at
<https://picasaweb.google.com/115895679710155986171/ChinmayaMission2012NewYearPooja?authkey=Gv1sRgCJ3Wp56sl-3LtAE>

Annual Fundraising Event
“Jagadaananda Kaaraka” Dance Drama
presented by Subha Maruvada

Photos by Srini Pemmaraju



More pictures at www.chinmayadc.org – Picture Album link.







Class Summaries -

Chinmayam Students, Silver Spring

Alec Beri

Oct 30, 2011

Goals, including spiritual and personal goals, were discussed in class. Among these goals was having clarity of thought. Failure to do this puts one's mind at unrest and causes one to be agitated. Another goal was to sharpen the intellect. Many focus on sharpening the body and mind, but the intellect is also a critical part of the whole equation. Reducing the amount of desires we have was another goal, as this is the way to achieving true happiness. We made an equation to calculate happiness: desires fulfilled by desires one has. Another goal was to have more focus, instead of letting our minds wander and become agitated, preventing us from achieving what can be achieved.

We also discussed personal goals. These included time management, which involves making a schedule planning one's whole day out, and sticking to it. We would all like to relieve stress, and there are many ways to do this. One of the main ways to help oneself relieve stress is simply to talk to someone you trust, instead of bottling everything up. Many of us said we would like to be more independent in studies. This means to go ahead and do what needs to be done instead of being told to, and taking responsibility for everything academic in your life. Kids need to balance school, activities, family, and a social

life. Yet school should always come first and kids often have a hard time doing this.

The discussion moved onto the aspect of forgiveness. Frequently in life people make mistakes that affect us in negative ways. The best thing to do is to forgive and forget. But this is no easy thing for us to do. It may take time to let go of what has happened and truly forgive the person for what they have done. Sometimes, however, a person who is too easily forgiving will be walked over and disregarded. We cannot allow this to happen to ourselves. If it does, then it is best to sever the relationship with that person. Forgiveness has its limits. And to say one has forgiven another when that person has not fully found the forgiveness within themselves does nobody any good, and will have repercussions.

Another major concept we discussed was stressors and how to deal with them. Many of the stressors included schoolwork, college preparations, scheduling, and balancing everything (school, sports, clubs, family, friends). Stress has to be controlled. We all know this. The build-up of too much stress can cause mental and physical problems. The class brainstormed options to deal with the stress. These methods included playing video games, meditating, punching a pillow, going for a run or a walk, watching a movie, and praying. Finding ways to relieve stress that allow you to both sharpen your mind and intellect, and move forward in your life are desirable and achievable challenges.

[Addendum by Chinmayam teacher, Harshita Saxena, to Alec's summary]

Spiritual Goals:

1. To have clarity of thought...when you mind is filled, the mind is agitated and at unrest
2. Sharpen my intellect
3. Have less desires (we reflected back on "Self-Unfoldment" and the happiness equation)
4. Be more forgiving
5. Learn more about how our actions affect other
6. Have better focus
7. Communicate better with others
8. Learn to take things in stride
9. See the best in everyone
10. Get closer to God

Personal Goals:

1. Relieve stress and manage time better (nothing in the world is so bad that you can't handle it)

-Arjun relieved his stress by talking to Krishna

-you should have someone you can trust/can vent to...someone who listens well

-
Gym/tabla/dancing/singing/karate/walking...all ways we relieve our stress

2. Be more independent in my studies

Nandini Kishore

November 13, 2011

Last class, Sunday November 13th, we continued our discussion of Chapter 12 starting off with the topic of "without otherness," otherwise called "Ananya Yoga." This concept means that one's mind should be ever steady with no sense of "otherness."

We discussed two viable examples for which this concept is important. The first was being on a newspaper staff. While on a newspaper staff, the very first issue is always the hardest. We discussed that in the beginning of the year it's difficult because new staff members don't know what to do. In addition to that, people seem to not take the newspaper seriously and don't try. It's after a few weeks when everyone starts to "identify with the paper." They start realizing that without a sense of otherness their work becomes easier. They way the collaborate and publish the paper improves.

The second example was a choir group. We discussed how everyone needs to be focused and understand his or her role to make the choir sound good. In both of these examples, we discovered the importance of focusing on the goal in mind and not getting side tracked.

We then read verses 6-19 to understand what Lord Krishna had to say on this matter. In these verses, the Lord explained that in certain definite conditions are faithfully followed; those who are following His instructions will be saved from their mortal limitations. In other words, if you work with God in mind, every thing will be easier. This sounds hard to do, but Gita mentions what to do if you can't do this.

If one can not focus their mind on God, it is important that they practice "Abhyasa Yoga." This practice means that when one is trying to fix his/her mind on something and extraneous thoughts keep entering the mind, they should "gather all the rays of the mind" and focus them again and again on the Divine Form. The last piece of advice Lord Krishna advises Lord Arjuna is that if both these methods don't work out, one should not be frustrated. Over time, as the mind wanders it will learn to focus on something and as time goes by it will all become easier.

Overall, this characteristic builds an individual. A focused mind helps one concentrate, communicate and collaborate well.

Purvi Nanavaty

November 20, 2011

Today in class, we talked about chapter 13 of the Gita: The Field and Its Knower (Kshetra-Kshetrajna Yoga). We talked about many different ideas during class.

The book defined the field to be the perceived world around us. The book gave some good examples of knowers and their fields. A swimmer is the knower of the field of swimming, and a driver is the knower of the field of driving. When the swimmer and the driver are separated from their fields, they are just individuals.

While we discussed the background information of this chapter, we came up with the idea that perceptions are really based on what you are and that the field is the perception of the task at hand. We then read the first two verses and their explanations. After reading the second

verse, there was an interesting idea: When we have bad dreams, we suddenly wake up in the night, realizing that it was just a nightmare. Why don't we realize it is just a dream while we are dreaming? We decided that a person is the knower of the field of dreams (when they are dreaming), so at the time, the dreamer doesn't realize that he/she is dreaming because he/she is so into the dream.

We then discussed verse thirteen. Lord Krishna promises to Arjuna that he will explain what he should know in order to be Immortal. Then Lord Krishna goes on to say, "... the beginningless Supreme Brahman, called neither being nor non-being..." We decided that everything living must die. We began to question ourselves: Can we go back to our beginning? It was explained that there is evidence that we have ancestors, we just do not know who our ancestors are. After reading the next few verses, we answered the question of how to perceive our surroundings. We perceive everything around us by using all of the senses.

Lastly, we talked about the Gunas. The three Gunas are Tamasik, Rajasik, and Satvik. Anil Uncle asked us if it was possible for a person to be very satvik or very tamasik. As a class, we came to the conclusion that people have a mix of gunas: No one can be extremely satvik or extremely tamasik. The Satvik Guna is the hardest because it requires constant hard work. As for Tamasik tendencies, a person can sit around doing nothing for as long as he/she wants, but sooner or later, he/she will have to get up and do some work. We then ended class by saying closing prayers.

Harsha Neerchal
December 4, 2011

In class we discussed the 3 gunas: *Sattwa* (unactivity), *Rajas* (activity), and *Tamas* (inactivity). To start, we brainstormed various tendencies and moods/states of mind that people may experience-laziness, passion, greed, happiness, etc. We then categorized these tendencies under the 3 gunas to get a better idea of what each guna involves.

A person is not necessarily defined by a single guna, as one may tend towards one more than others, but in the course of our lives, we will more likely than not experience each guna in some respect. Understanding the “symptoms” associated with each guna helps us understand which guna we are experiencing, as gunas can either take you on an upward path or a downward path.

We then read the text of the geeta and discussed the commentary to get a better idea of how each individual guna works:

- Sattwa-Purity
 - o The mind is steady, reflective, and healthy
 - o Free from evils
 - o The most divine mental attitude
 - o However, sattwa can also cause attachment, by binding us to the attainment of happiness and knowledge. This concept is kind of complicated, but Gurudev explains to us that “even goodness, though it gives us freedom from evils, can bind us with its own limitation.”
 - o We must try to avoid an anxiety for happiness, peace, and knowledge, because becoming anxious while trying to achieve

mental peace is very counterproductive

- Rajas-Passion
 - o This is the mood which causes us to act
 - o However, it is also the source of all our desires and attachments
 - o Desire is defined as our relationship towards that which we have not yet acquired, and attachment is defined as what binds us to that which we have already acquired.
 - o Thus we must temper our rajasic tendencies to avoid obsessions.
 - o Without rajas, however, we would not have the drive to act, so rajas is good in moderation
- Tamas-Inertia
 - o “born of ignorance”-tamas causes our ability to distinguish right vs. wrong to become clouded
 - o These are our tendencies of laziness and inactivity, and living under misconceptions
 - o This is clearly the worst state of mind to be in, as nothing good can come out of it at all
 - o We become attached to our state of inaction-when you aren’t doing anything, it’s tough to come out of that mood

Jitesh Nadimpalli
December 11, 2011

Today in class we started off by reviewing what we learned last class which was about the three gunas; Satwa - honesty and pureness, Rajas-passion, and Tamas-inertia.

We then separated into three groups. Each group was given a scenario and asked to first state the problem and which guna is prominent in the situation. Then we were asked to solve the situation and explain what gunas we used to solve it. The three scenarios are as follows:

Scenario 1: Leslie calls her high school friend Sheila about their common friend Alisha. Alisha came to stay with Leslie about 2 months ago, after "dropping out" of her second graduate program. She dropped out of law school after 2 years saying that lawyers were slimy. Now she has dropped out of her psychology masters because she thinks that psychologists are too nosy.

They both recall how she was an excellent student and a good honest friend in high school. But after going to college she turned into a wild child. They recall seeing her at Christmas break after their sophomore year in college. She gained a lot of weight and kept wanting to party. She switched her majors a few time before staying with political science. She did really well on her LSAT's and got into a good law school.

Now Leslie says Alisha just sits around all day. She occasionally helps out at the apartment. Though she says she is looking for work, the computer is often open to only facebook or twitter. A couple times Leslie came home from work she smelled alcohol on Alisha. Question: Diagnose Alisha and figure out what Leslie should do.

After discussing with the entire class everybody agreed that Alisha is highly tamasic and rajasic. Some solutions for Leslie the class came up with is give Alisha an ultimatum, tell her to clean up her act or get out. Other suggestions included: have an intervention with friends, take suggestions from her family, keep her preoccupied, help to find her a job, send her back to law school, and ask her to start paying rent. We all agreed that the only way for Alisha to improve was her to start doing something, anything to shake off the inertia she was in. It was noted that ultimately this required Alisha

herself to see the need for action. If she did not then there is nothing Leslie can do and Leslie needed to move on.

Scenario 2: A super hero named Soo Greev, gets his kingdom and his wife robbed by his evil brother Ba Lee. What do you do?

The group acted out what they would do. Soo Greev should use a satwic approach and try to reason with Ba Lee. If that doesn't work he should recognize that injustice has to be fought and should try a more rajasic approach, gather an army and take down Ba Lee.

Scenario 3: Lina loves music. She is a wonderful singer and dancer. Her friends have suggested a career in the music industry and Broadway. She attended an excellent program in performing arts, where she excels in her practice habits. Her parent disapprove but reluctantly agree to support her when she goes to NYC for 1 ear to and get into Broadway. Her first couple try outs go well but she doesn't get the part. Since her folks are supporting her, Lina decides to keep practicing to get better. After 9 months she still has only gone for 1 more audition. Her friends are puzzled as to why she doesn't try anymore. But all she says is she needs to practice.

Question: What should Lina's parents do?

After discussing with class everyone agreed that Lina had a combination of satwa and tamas. She was too attached to the arts, to knowledge and to perfection. So after this many failures she may have gotten discouraged. Most of the class agreed that what her parents should do is bring her home and ask her to take a small break and then start over. Most important was that she needed to sniff a little success. For this, we thought she could start by going for smaller parts and build up her resume. Finally when the time is right have her go back to Broadway.

Afterwards the class did a survey to see who would respond to tough love Alisha or Lina. It turned out to be Lina because Alisha would misinterpret it and think that everyone hates her.

Contemplating Light and Reflections

Sitaram Kowtha

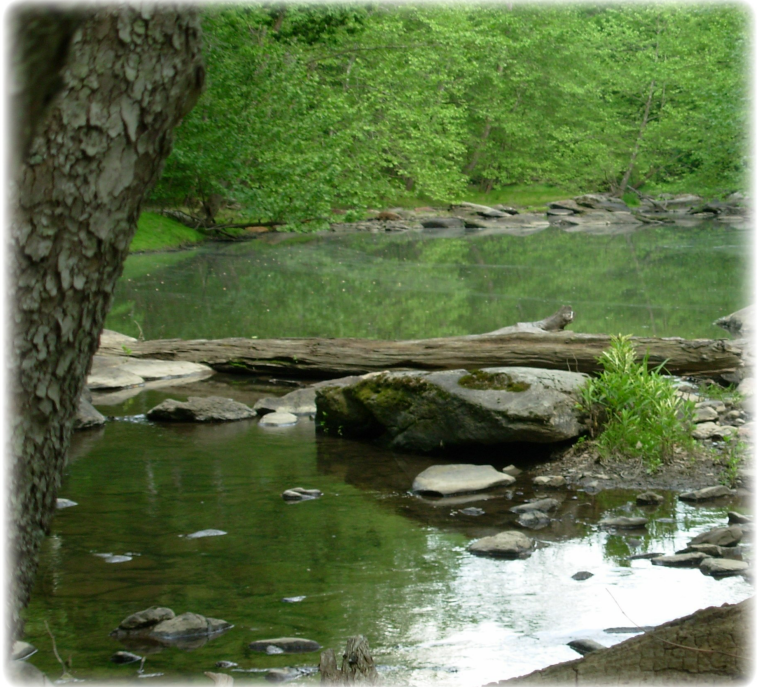
One of the tenets of spiritual study is 'mananam' or reflection and contemplation. In a sense, reflection and contemplation are synonymous, but they are distinct as well. I think contemplation is a series of reflections, where each reflection is purpose driven. This article is about contemplation of an aspect of light and its reflections, and how that is an indicator to the light of self-consciousness and its reflections.

Staring at a mirror, I was observing my own reflection. Then it occurred to me that the reflection and my perception of it were possible only because of the light present in the room. The actual physical source of the light was not in the room. Thus, I could not see the source of light, but there was no denying its presence. The reflection and my perception were proof of that. The source of light in this case was the sunlight bursting into the room through a window.

Then I wondered if there would be reflection in a totally dark room? The mirror would of course continue to reflect, but there being no light, there is no way to verify if the mirror is still doing its job. But again, if it could be verified somehow that the mirror was indeed reflecting, one needed a way to perceive it. In other words, light is the cause of reflection, and light is also the means to perception.

In a room where there was no physical source of light, light was the cause of effect (reflection), the means to the perception of that effect and ***only in the presence of light did this transaction (experience) take place.***

A common example with reflections of light used in Vedanta teachings is that of multiple pots of water. The sun in the sky is reflected by each pot when filled with water, as if each pot is a source of light. To an observer watching all the pots, it may appear that each pot is a source of light, thus there are as many sources as there are pots filled with water. But there is no doubt that the sun is one, and the reflections are many. The sun is self-luminous, where as the pots need the sun to help them cast light. No sun (or source of light), no secondary sources of light, and no reflection.



During one of his Jnana Yajnas, Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda described light in this way - to a gardener at a home near a beach, the sunlight shining on a flower brings out a smile. The same sunlight to a person on the beach, a short distance away, is a harsh glare. We can see the light only based on the reflections – the flower or the glare at the beach, but the light itself remains unseen. However, we have no doubt about the presence of the light. Whether the light brings smile or discomfort is in the eye of the beholder - based on the reflections they perceive, and their attitude towards it at that time.

In our worldly life, sometimes we get mesmerized by our daily experiences, giving us pleasure or fleeting joy. At other times we get overwhelmed by them causing us grief and delusion. If we are able to pause and inquire into the source of that experience, we may be able to rise above the grief or pleasure offered by the daily experiences, and find equanimity. ***That would be a small step in the direction of contemplation of reflections.***

Another interesting aspect of reflection of light in a mirror is that if the mirror is clean, the reflection is clear. If the mirror is completely fogged up or is covered with dust or dirt, then its ability to reflect light becomes poor or negligible. Thus the quality of reflection is dependent on the quality of the reflective surface of the mirror.

It is said that the cause of our griefs or joy are our inherent tendencies or vasanas. Our own thoughts, words and actions, and how we interact with the world around us reflect the colorings of these tendencies. The vasanas are the dirt that is covering our mind's mirror. If we take steps to cleanse our tendencies a little bit, then our interactions in our daily lives will be that much less colored and our understanding of the source of our self-consciousness will become that much clearer. Thus, ***contemplation on and cleansing of our tendencies becomes another small step.***

The contemplation of light and its reflections and its indication to the supreme is the essence of Gayathri mantra. The japa, a meditative repetition of the mantra, starts with 'Om' and expresses "we meditate upon the auspicious godly light of the Lord Sun; may that heavenly light illumine the thought-flow in our intellect". If the mantra is repeated with the knowledge of its import and meaning, during each repetition, then contemplation on light becomes that much more fruitful. (There is clear and concise discussion on 'Om' and the Gayatri mantra in Swami Chinmayananda's "Meditation and Life", available in the bookstore).

As I close, I remembered the prayer, "Tamasoma Jyothirgamaya" (lead us from darkness to light).

Hari Om!

Jnana Yoga and Self Realization – Part V

Acharya K. Sadanandaji

We discussed that Jnaanam is immediate and direct, since the object of Jnaanam is the very subject itself which is ever present. Shree Sureswara says in Naiskarmyasiddhi that by Shravanam alone one can gain the knowledge –tat tvam asi– once I have the clear understanding of the terms –tvam- the subject of the sentence, and tat asi, the meaning of the predicate involving ‘tat’ and the identity relation implied in ‘asi’. The knowledge will take place immediately, if the terms are understood the way Vedanta implies. For knowing ‘tvam’ or who that ‘I am’ is, one has to use anvaya vyatireka knowledge to differentiate the subject, I am, from any object, this is. That discriminative intellect is called viveka. Shankara defines it as nitya anitya vastu viveka – discriminative intellect that differentiates the subject, I, from the object, this. In all objective or transactional knowledge, there is a tripuTi or three fold aspect of pramaata-prameya-pramANa, knower-known-and the means of knowing are involved. Among the three, only pramaata remains the same while prameya, the object of knowledge, and pramANa, the means of knowledge keep changing. In the waking state, mind in conjunction with conscious entity, I, becomes pramaata, while prameya, the world of objects, keep continuously changing, and the means, pramANa, also changes depending on the objects to be known. As we go to dream state, mind that has been a part pramaata, now itself becomes an object of my perception as it projects multitude of plurality. The projections of the mind keep changing and I, using part of the mind become pramaata or knower of the field. In the deep-sleep state the mind is essentially folded and I alone am there – as a saakshii, a witnessing consciousness, without any knowledge of objects, and therefore no associated thoughts present. Thus in the deep-sleep state, the absence of all projections or absence of duality becomes the subject of my knowledge, thus itself forming an experience. The common experience is I was there in the deep-sleep state, but I do not know anything. I would not even go to sleep, if I think there is even a remote chance that I am not going to be there during that time. When the mind awakes, the recollection of the absence of the mind (as in missing 18.5 min of Nixon tapes in the Watergate case) occurs but expressed as ‘I slept well’ and ‘I did not know anything – space, time or object-wise. The one who was awake even in the deep-sleep state cannot be called as pramaata, since the status of pramaata comes with tripuTi with prameyam and pramANa present. In the deep-sleep state, I am pure saakshii, the witnessing consciousness, witnessing ‘nothing or no-thing’. In fact Vedanta says I, as witnessing consciousness, am present all the time, in the waking, dream and deep-sleep states. ‘tvam’ in the ‘tat tvam asi’ refers to that pure witnessing consciousness. All the states of experience come and go; I am ever present and ever awake as saakshii. Krishna says that saakshii is the universal consciousness, the ever present, knower of all fields, KshetrajnaH; Kshetrajnam ca api maam viddhi sarva kshetreShu bhaarata; and that forms the mahaavaakya.

Now let us discuss some problems or pratibandhakas that inhibit the correct understanding of the mahaavaakya. Mind always has a tendency to project or objectify any knowledge, since it works in the field of tripuTi alone. tat vijijnaasaswa – one has to inquire into the nature of reality, says the Upanishad. The inquiry can only be done with the mind. That is, I, with the mind is the

enquirer, since mind by itself cannot do any inquiry without the support of a conscious entity. Hence, I say I am conscious of the inquiry too. That is what pramaata means involving the tripuTi-s. Hence even in the self-inquiry, the mind habitually has a tendency to project or objectify what that 'I am' is, while the scripture is trying to guide the inquiry by saying that you are not this – na iti– na iti – not this – not this. Mind is used to objectify and the scripture says it is the subject that is involved in all objectifications. In the very habitual objectification, I miss the subject, the conscious entity, or to state exactly I do not pay attention to the subject. This is the major problem for many spiritual seekers. Even the advanced student of Vedanta, although understands that he is that witnessing consciousness, he still looking for some Brahman out there. Everybody says I understand Vedanta but I have not realized. That the understanding itself is realization, is missed completely. One of the problems is that during the saadhana time, the mind is set to look 'out there' for Iswara, while the scriptures keep pounding at us repeatedly – na idam yat idam upaasate- not this that you worship is Brahman, since any worship involves objectification. One has to switch from karma yoga to jnaana yoga in the evolution of self-realization. Hence we understand Vedanta but mind is not ready to switch. Vedanta is good to listen in the class but when problems come, I rush to the temple to take shelter in Bhagavaan. Vedantin is one who understands Vedanta, and when the problems come seeks solace in that understanding – as Krishna says:

***maatrasparshaastu kounteya shiitoShNasukhaduHkhadaaH,
aagamaapaayino2nityaaH, tan titikshaswa bhaarata | | -***

Only because of sense-contact one undergoes suffering, they come and go and therefore forbear them; as what comes and goes is only mithyaa or anaatma, while I am ever free, effulgent, and ever present consciousness. What comes and goes is due to praarabha. That teaching has to sink in. Then the world that comes and goes is seen as vibhuuti of the Lord, nay, vibhuuti of myself.

The confusion for many Vedantic students can be formulated in terms of four ways:

1. I have an understanding, but I am not a jnaani, since I have no knowledge of Brahman.
2. I have understanding, but I have not realized; I am not a jiivan mukta.
3. I have understanding, but I have no experience or Brahma anubhava, I need to meditate on it; no more these intellectual gymnastics.
4. I have understanding, but I am not liberated or I am not mukta.

These confusions are interlinked. They get confounded by statements by some experts. Here are some statements. It is very difficult to realize. Advaita is very difficult to understand, why the teaching cannot be simple. Bhagavaan Ramanuja says jnaana yoga is paradharma, while karma yoga is swadharma; it is better to do swadharma than paradharma, said Bhagavaan Krishna. Best and simple path is prapatti or sharaNaagati. In kaliyuga, all one has to do is bhagavat naama samkeerthana, that is singing the glories of the Lord with the faith that He will take care of everything. To added difficulties, some say, one has to take up sanyaasa to realize; even if one is a jnaani. As a gRihastha, one cannot realize; may be possible then, but not now. Even those gRihastha, who have claimed that they have realized have not really realized, because of the

previous proposition that only sanyaasins can realize. There is a difference between jnaani and jiivan mukta. There are several types of jiivanmuktas (dvaita in advaita!), and the list goes on and on, and the confusion perpetuates. In contrast, Vedanta says you are nitya mukta swaruupaH, you are eternally free. There seems to be big misunderstanding here.

The statements that I have understood Vedanta but I have not realized, and I am looking for aatma anubhava or the experience of self-realization, I need to meditate on it, etc., are all in a way reflections of objectification of that Brahman with inherent remoteness associated with it. The Vedic statement is aham brahma asmi – I AM BRAHMAN – it is not I will become Brahman or I have to realize Brahman, but I am right now and right here, ihaiva, Brahman only. The tendency to objectify Brahman occurs at subtle level, in the very longing to know Brahman, and thereby resulting in the loss of discrimination or viveka at that subtle level. ‘aham dhyaata param dhyeyam akhanDam khaDate katham?’- how can you divide that indivisible as meditator and meditated, asks Dattaatreya in avadhuuta gita. That I am the very existence-consciousness that pervades the subject and the object, the meditator and the meditated, has to be clearly understood using the discriminative intellect. Such a suukshma buddhi or subtle mind develops as one constantly listens to the teachings of the scriptures taught by a competent guru, and reflects on it until the indivisible substantive of the subject-object duality is clearly understood. Then one recognizes that I am – the substantive of both the subject and the object without destroying the subject or object. It is pure understanding of a fact as a fact. That is the knowledge that removes the wrong notions of taking ‘this’ as ‘I am’, which is the very essence of ego. That knowledge is immediate and direct, if the pratibandhaas or obstacles for the knowledge are removed. It is like seeing the midday sun, direct and immediate, as soon as the obstacles, the clouds ‘covering the sun’ move out. The clouds can never cover the sun, yet clouds appear to cover the sun. The clouds that are covering the sun, I can see them only because of the sun that is being covered. In the very seeing of the clouds, if I could ‘see’ the sun covered by the clouds by seeing the sunlight that is illuminating the clouds, then I see the sun all the time. I cannot see the sun directly anyway, but I can recognize the sun by the reflection of the sunlight by the objects, objects include the clouds that are covering the sun. This discriminative faculty to differentiate the eternal from ephemeral can develop only if the attachments to the ephemerals are given up. Hence, vairaagya or dispassion is extremely important in order to shift my attention from the objects to the subject.

The following provides a glimpse of the process of self-realization. If bright light is all over the room I cannot see that light. In the middle of a room-space even though there is light all over, I can not recognize it. However if I place an object, then I can see the object, since there is light falling on the object for me to see the object, and I say there is an object out there. Interestingly, the truth is I can never see the object. What do I see? I see the reflected light that falls on the object. The IMAGE of the object based on the light of reflection, forms as vRitti or thought in the mind. The content of the vRitti is the attributive content of the object (starting from form, which is based on reflected image of the original). Extending the analogy further, it is again not the vRitti that I ‘see’. The vRitti is like an object that forms in the mind, but as it raises it reflects the light of consciousness that is all pervading and ever shining. The reflected light of consciousness is the knowledge of the vRitti – just as the reflected light from object makes the object known.

I cannot see the all pervading sun light if there are no objects reflecting that light. In the same way I cannot 'see' the all pervading light of consciousness without the vRitti or thought reflecting the light of consciousness. In the outside light case, even though it is the reflected light from the object that I am actually seeing, my attention is not on the reflected light but on the form-attribute or attributive content of the object that is reflecting. I do not even recognize the light but recognize that this is the object different from the other object purely based on the images formed based on reflected lights. In the same way, I do not pay attention to the reflected light of consciousness from the vRitti or thought but get carried away with the contents of the thought. The discrimination or viveka or meditation is to shift my attention from the contents of the thoughts to the light of consciousness reflected by the thought. The thought content is the object 'this'. Meditation therefore is to shift my attention from the contents of the thought to the light of reflection by the thought, because of which I have the knowledge of the thought. Without the thought, there is no reflection; yet it is not the contents of the thought that I must pay my attention, but to the reflected light of consciousness by the thought.

Now, here is what true renunciation or sanyaasa involves. True renunciation, in simple terms, is renouncing my attention from the contents of the thoughts without getting carried away by them, and then shifting my attention to the light of consciousness that is reflecting the thoughts. This is the essential meaning of the statement- 'tyaagenaike amRitatvamanasuH'. The thought-contents are the attributes of the world of objects. Thus renouncing the world is renouncing the world of objects. When I say I am attached to the sense objects means that I am getting attached to the sense-contents of those thoughts. Sanyaasa yoga involves, then, renouncing my attention from the thought-contents (sanyaasa) and attaching my attention (yoga) to the light of consciousness reflecting from the thoughts. This process is easier, if the contents of the thoughts are centered on the thought of the Lord, than on the sense objects, because of the possibility of getting hijacked by the sensuous thoughts. This, in the essence, is japa-yoga. If thoughts are not there, then we have a mind without the thoughts. That is pure reflecting pool of mind which forms the basis for the thoughts. Thoughts are natural for the mind. If there are no thoughts the mind goes to sleep. When the mind is free from thoughts, it is 'as though' non-functioning as in the deep-sleep state. Light of consciousness also gets reflected by the mind-pool as the background reflection and is called chidaabhaasa or just saakshii or more correctly upahita chaitanya. If the thoughts are there in the mind, besides the background mind reflection, the localized thoughts also get reflected by the all-pervading light of consciousness. Thus if thoughts are there, I am conscious of the thoughts and if thoughts are not there I am conscious of the absence of the thoughts. That is the silent mind, in say nirvikalpaka samaadhi. This is our normal outlook, since we are looking at the contents and the absence of the contents of the thoughts. It is like looking at a bag, full or empty. In either case, we are not paying attention to the light of consciousness because of which I have the knowledge of the thoughts and knowledge of the absence of the thoughts. As long as there are upaadhi-s, the mind and intellect, the light of consciousness will be getting reflected as the thoughts rise or subside. If thoughts are not there, in the silent mind, I am aware of the silent mind. That means the light of consciousness getting reflected by the silent mind and I am aware of the absence of the thoughts. Thus awareness involves the reflecting light of consciousness either of the thoughts or of the absence of the thoughts. I am not the silent mind or the mind with the thoughts.

Meditation is shifting my attention all the time to the reflecting consciousness and recognizing or realizing from the reflected light of consciousness that I am the light of consciousness that is getting reflected. That is the essence of self-realization. Firmly abiding in the knowledge that I am pure knowledge or pure light of consciousness in whose light the reflections are taking place in the mind with the thoughts or without the thoughts. Looking at the reflections, I have to be conscious of myself since it is my light that is getting reflected. This is similar to looking at the reflected image in the mirror, I recognize my original face since it is my face that is getting reflected. Now, the scriptures come and teach me that I am, in fact, the all pervading the eternal light of consciousness that is ever existing, and it is that light alone that is getting reflected in multitude of BMI and all the distortions and abrasions in the reflections are due to the nature of the reflecting media.

***Chinmayam vyaapi yat sarvam trilokyam sa charaacharam |
tat patham darshitam yena, tasmī shree gurave namaH | |***

The light of consciousness pervades everything, in all three fields of experiences, the waking, dream and deep-sleep states. To that teacher who is pointing to that reality, my prostrations.

In essence, the all-pervading self by itself cannot realize and need not realize. The inert mind cannot realize, being inert. The one who needs to realize is the intermediate pseudo 'I', who is confused between the subject and the object, and identifies himself with the inert object as, I am this; the essence of my ego. Because of this confusion, I am taking myself what I am not as I am and suffering as a consequence of that misunderstanding.

It is to that confused I, Vedanta teaches through a teacher and it is that confused I that needs to realize by seeing the truth clearly. The self-realization is then shifting my attention first to the reflection of the light of consciousness from the mind or from the thoughts that rise in the mind and see myself as myself using the reflected light of consciousness as I am the light that is getting reflected. Thus self-realization is possible ONLY when there is light of consciousness (which is always there), and there is the mind and there is reflection by the light of consciousness by the mind, that is the knowledge of the mind, with or without thoughts. I, the upahita chaitanya, currently identifying myself with the contents of the mind or thoughts in the mind as I am this – now pay more attention to my light of consciousness that is getting reflected by the mind with the thoughts or without the thoughts that is involved in all jnaana prakriyas. By recognizing that I am that light of consciousness that is getting reflected by the mind with or without thoughts, I recognize or realize that I am in fact the pure all pervading eternal light of consciousness that Vedanta is teaching in the statement – tat tvam asi.

This is similar to recognize or realize the beauty of my face by looking at the reflected image of my face in the mirror. I am not the image in the mirror but I am the original but I cannot see the face without the mirror. I cannot see the light of consciousness that I am without any reflecting medium present – that medium can be either the silent mind or the mind with the thoughts. This is what Vedanta calls as upahita chaitanya – that is upaadhi sahita chaitanya, consciousness that is reflected by the localized equipments, the mind. Constant awareness of the reflecting light of consciousness – is the knowledge of the consciousness or constant awareness of I am – I am – what Ramana calls as – aham aham tayaa sphurati hRit swayam, spontaneously rising in the very core of my personality as I am – I am – I am.

This constant 'I am' or 'aham spuraNa' realization is termed also as akhanDaakaara vRitti or continuous reflections by the mind with thoughts or without thoughts. The aham sphuraNa or I am thought again and again rises in the mind only, since saakshii is akarthaa, abhoktaa, and ajnaata too. Hence realization is only in the waking state, where the mind is active. It is not the absence of the mind, but the mind that is dynamically involved in the inquiry, with the help of conscious entity behind, but now in the direction provided by Vedanta shravana and manana. What is absent or gets dissolved is the mind that is extrovert. The introvert mind, which is now called pure mind, is turned inwards to enquire within, and is now able to shift its attention from the thought to the reflected light of consciousness from the thoughts that arise, and then realize that saakshii the witnessing consciousness or the upahita chaitanya that I am is, in fact, is pure infinite absolute consciousness, that I am as Brahman. This understanding is clearly expressed by the example of –pot space. Pot space is Upahita Akaasha – or space enclosed by the pot walls, the upaadhi of the pot. As long as pot is there, pot-space is there. Self realization for pot-space is to recognize that I am not the pot, but I am the space in the pot. Up to this part is tvam padaartha jnaanam –i.e., understanding of 'who that I am' is. Now, Vedanta further teaches the pot that the pot-space, that you think you are, is in fact the total space, that is eternal, indivisible and immaculately pure in spite of the apparent limitations due to enclosure of the pot walls, sometimes even stinking due to something other than the space put in there – that is the tat tvam asi- statement. For pot-space to realize that I am the total space, it has to do understand the mahaavaakya - tat tvam asi statement. Similarly via anvaya-vyatireka I understand that I am the upahita chaitanya. To that student, Vedanta teaches that - You, the upahita chaitanya is, in fact, – tat asi - that all pervading Brahman which is satyam, jnaanam and anantam. Pot-space does not have to break the walls of the pot to recognize that I am the all pervading space. It recognizes that even the pot-walls are in me and not that I am in the pot. They are in me but I am not in them- look at my glory, Arjuna.

All these examples – reflected consciousness – or pot-space, etc, are meant for only 1) to recognize that I am that light of consciousness that is constantly getting reflected by the mind with or without the objective thoughts and 2) and as long as upaadhis are there as in the case of pot-space, the consciousness 'as though' is limited as the upahita chaitanya. Hence the scriptures says – yo veda nihitam guhaayaa parmevyoman – recognize that param brahma in the very core of one's own individuality – the heart or the essence of the individual – the hero of ones individual's autobiography. Therefore, Upaadhi-s are required for reflecting the light of consciousness. Recognition of myself is only via reflecting medium of the upaadhi-s. As long as the upaadhi-s are there upahita chaitanya is being recognized as I am that. It is direct and immediate since it is the recognition of ever present and ever evident fact. The ignorance of I am this and this will go away immediately once I understand that I am that because of which the knowledge of this and this can arise. yan manasaa na manute, yenaahurmano matam | tadeva brahma tvam viddhi, nedam yadidam upaasate | - that which you cannot think of but because of which you are able to think of, that alone is Brahman, not this that you worship – says Kena.

We will address in the next post the four ways of getting confused by a Vedantic student mentioned above as this write-up is getting too long.

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