

Chinmaya Smrithi



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

Volume 22, Number 2, March 16, 2012



The crystal Shiva Linga was decorated and prepared for worship and meditation for Mahashivaratri at Chinmayam.

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- Series: Smrithi of Smrithi

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

- Sat Mar 31st and Sunday Apr 1st – Sri Rama Navami observation
- 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
- Saturday, April 21st - “FUSION” music performance and CORD fund raiser by Chinmayam (10-12 grade) Bala Vihar students
- Saturday, April 28th – Adi Shankara Jayanthi observation and Maharudram festival at Sri Siva Vishnu Temple. Swamiji's pravachan and CM children shloka chanting are scheduled for the afternoon
- Sat, May 5th – Sun, 6th - 1st of Bala Vihar Annual Day Performances
- Sat, May 5th @ 5:00 PM – Tabla Annual Performance at Chinmayam
- Sat, May 12th – Chinmaya Jayanthi Celebration and Mother's Day observation
- Sat, May 12th – Spring Carniva at Chinmayam
- Sat, May 19th at 3:00 PM– Bala Vihar Annual Day at Chinmayam
- Sun, May 20th @ 5:00 PM – Bala Vihar Language Annual Day at Chinmayam

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 – May 2012, are due by May 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 – Herndon VA Chapter website
Washington Region – Frederick MD Chapter website

www.chinmayadc.org
www.chinmayamission.com
www.chinmayamission.org
www.chinfo.org
www.chinmayasomnath.org
www.chinmayafrederick.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

- Mahashivaratri was observed at Chinmayam on February 19th. Read the Mahashivaratri event summary.
- Mr. Rajeev Malhotra addressed children and adults on March 2nd and 3rd at Chinmayam. He spoke about his spiritual grounding - Gita discourse by Pujya Gurudev in New Delhi at the age of 10. Today, a retired professional, he devotes his time in documenting and clarifying the diversity and richness of the Indian culture. He discussed his book, "Being Different", and encouraged everyone to honor and respect diversity.
- On February 11, the annual BV teachers' retreat was held for half a day at Chinmayam. It was attended by about 70 Bala Vihar, Language and Arts Teachers and Coordinators across Maryland, Virginia and Frederick chapters. Swamiji's address on the Glory of Teachers, and Vilasiniji's presentation on the importance of teachers to the BV program were very inspiring. D.C. Rao's presentation on "Mind" and breathing techniques was a mind opener to many. There was also a yoga session. There were discussions between coordinators and some teachers on ideas for continuing to improve the quality of teaching at Bala Vihar. Everyone left the retreat inspired and refreshed.
- On Jan 15th 2012, CMWRC observed Martin Luther Day by making and delivering more than 500 peanut butter sandwiches to The Shephard's Table, a shelter located in downtown Silver Spring, MD. About 50 children, from the three different sessions of Bala Vihar, participated in this annual observation held at Chinmayam. Participant children earned social service hours to their respective schools.

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.

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.

Current/Upcoming Events

- Jnana Yajna with Acharya Vivekji in Frederick
- Hanuman Jayanthi on April 6th, Friday at Chinmayam
- Gita Chanting Competition on April 21st at Chinmayam
- FUSION 2012 on April 21st at Chinmayam
- Swamiji and Virginia Bala Vihar participate in Maha Rudram at Siva Vishnu Temple, April 28

CMW Newsletter



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

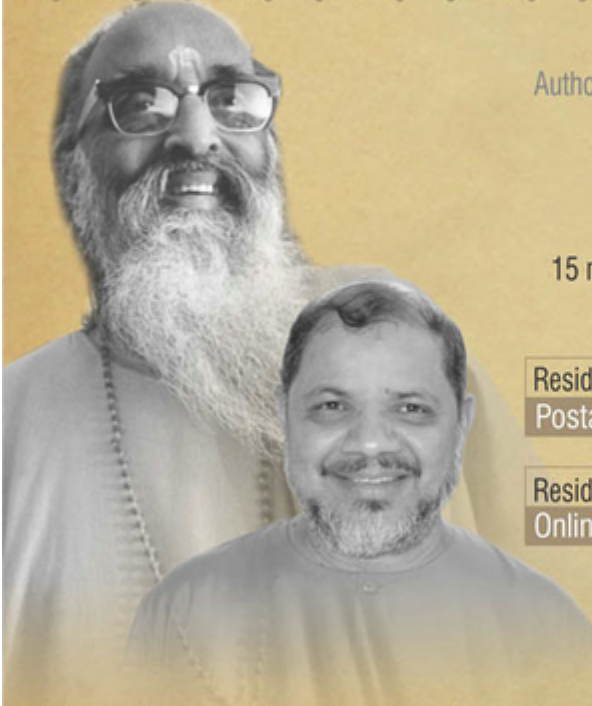
cif Chinmaya International Foundation

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

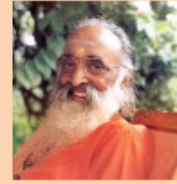


Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center

Invites you to

Tulsi Ramayan Mahotsav

June 24-30, 2012 at Herndon High School, 700 Bennett St, Herndon, Virginia 20170



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

During Upanishad: Grades 1-10

During Ramayan: Grades 1-6



**UNDER GUIDANCE OF
ACHARYA VIVEK GUPTA**

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

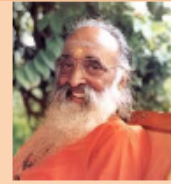
YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION MAY BE MADE OUT TO: "CMWRC", 46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring MD 20905



Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center

Invites you to

Tulsi Ramayan Mahotsav



June 24-30, 2012 at Herndon High School, 700 Bennett St, Herndon, Virginia 20170

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 – Details on the website: www.chinmayadc.org

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

Your Generous Support is greatly appreciated

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.HIHerdon.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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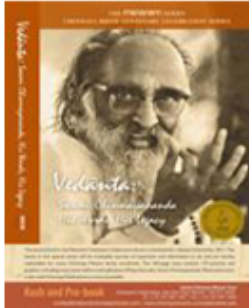


| 5-Day Family Camp Rates Per Person | Per By March 31 | After March 31 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Quad Occupancy | \$440 | \$475 |
| Triple Occupancy | \$535 | \$585 |
| Double Occupancy | \$650 | \$725 |
| Single Occupancy | \$1,000 | \$1,100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

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

Chinmaya Publications

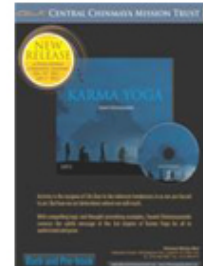
New Releases



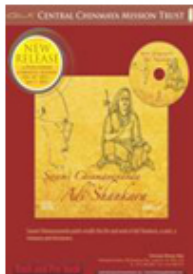
**Vedanta: Swami Chinmayananda,
His Words, His Legacy**
(Mananam, Chinmaya Birth Centenary Series)
\$15



**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>**



CHINMAYA MISSION
Washington Regional Center
(A nonprofit religious organization registered in Maryland)
46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905



Presents a
JNANA YAJNA
FREE Evening Discourses
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM
Sunday March 18th - Wednesday March 21st 2012

By
Acharya Vivekji
At

Urbana Elementary School, 3554 Urbana Pike, Frederick, MD, 21704
(Sun March 18th 2012 to Tue March 20th 2012)
Urbana Middle School, 3511 Pontius Court, Ijamsville, MD 21754
(Wed March 21st 2012 ONLY)

On

Significance of our Samskaras

(Explaining the purpose of our 16 samskaras)

"Joy is our Nature! Yet, how many of us are joyous? Why??? We are unable to 'see' who we truly are. More than a dying body and a distracted mind, we are the dynamic Spirit! To help us 'see', our Vedic Seers prescribed purificatory celebrations called samskaras. All the important events in our lives, from conception to cremation, are given an ambiance of spirituality through our samskaras. Explore the philosophy and practice of these ancient teachings in a modern tone."



In 2005, Acharya Vivekji was accepted to the intensive two year Vedanta Course at Chinmaya Mission's Sandeepany Sadhanalaya in Mumbai, India. Under the guidance of Pujya Gururji Swami Tejomayananda, he studied the Upanishads, Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Shri Ramacharitamamas, Sanskrit, Vedic Chanting and much more. Blessed to have joined the group of Sandeepany graduates, Acharya Vivekji says now his only purpose of life is to make others aware of what is the purpose of life: to be unconditionally happy.

Through his innovative and passionate style, Acharya Vivekji makes the ancient wisdom of Vedanta (vision of non-duality) relevant, reachable and applicable. Intrigued by the fact he is a young adult born and raised in Canada, Vivekji has been invited to share his insights, and conduct classes and camps, by Chinmaya Mission centers and other organizations throughout North America.

For details, send email to frederick.chinmayam@gmail.com or contact Shiva Vanam @ (240) 491-1140, Ram Palaniappan @ (301) 275-4065

Directions:

(270 Southbound: Take the MD-80 exit, Exit 26, toward URBANA/BUCKEYSTOWN. At the end of the ramp, enter the roundabout and take the 1st exit onto MD-80 E/FINGERBOARD RD. 1) At the traffic circle, take the 3rd exit onto Sugarloaf Pkwy. Turn left onto Urbana Pike Destination will be on the left is **UES**. 2) Continue on MD-80E approx. for a mile and at 4th light, turn right onto Pontius Ct for **UMS**)

270 Northbound: Take the MD-80 exit, Exit 26, toward URBANA/BUCKEYSTOWN. At the traffic light turn left onto MD-80 E/FINGERBOARD RD. 1) At the traffic circle, take the 3rd exit onto Sugarloaf Pkwy. Turn left onto Urbana Pike Destination will be on left is **UES**. 2) Continue on MD-80E approx. for a mile and at 4th light, turn right onto Pontius Ct for **UMS**)

Mahashivaratri Celebration

This year's glorious event

Submitted by Andrea Beri

Enhanced by Ananya Krishnan

This year, Mahashivaratri was a grand event at Chinmaya Mission. It started before sunrise at 5 am with a Shiva Manasa Puja in front of Lord Shiva's Altar. When the Balavihar program started a few hours later, Swamiji led the Sri Jagadeeshwara Puja for the kids from both the Saturday and Sunday sessions. The Balavihar students made their very own Shiva altars and offered bilwa leaves to their idol while praying. Over 75 kids sat on stage with their beautiful altars to perform the puja.

After classes ended early Sunday evening, Swamiji again guided us through the second Manasa Puja. This was a harmonious counterpoint to the Puja that had taken place earlier that day. This puja started in daylight and ended after sunset. The night was ushered in with powerful chanting by some of our Balavihar students from the Virginia chapter and a Shiva Bhajan. Again Swamiji led the Sri Jagadeeshwara Puja with a few extra additions of dances by the Fredrick Chapter and Bhajans by one of our Silver Spring students. The devotion of all the performers and the audience touched the Lord's heart.

The rest of the evening was spent singing the glories of the Lord as he was a guest in all of our hearts at that time. After the wonderful performances and prayers, a well-organized system allowed almost a couple of 100 devotees to be fed in an effortless fashion. Bhajans led by Anand and Hema Bhatt were sung after dinner and infused many devotees with inspiration. This wonderful day was brought to a heightened close with Swamiji blowing his divine conch. After midnight, many devotees broke the fast together.



We were pleased to see so many faithful supporters with so much enthusiasm and participation. Starting Friday evening many devotees showed up to help with the decorations and the setup for the Saturday Bala Vihar Puja. Saturday evening the Altar and foyer were lovingly adorned for the Lord with the help of our devotees. The show of devotion continued through the day on Sunday. The acharyas and member talks were amazing and inspiring, and the dances and Bhajans uplifting. It was a blessing to have families from all three Chinmaya chapters- Springfield, Virginia, and Fredrick. Swamiji's presence and guidance for the Pujas itself was a blessing. Being touched by the help of the unseen hand we felt the grace of Gurudev throughout the day and continued to bask in thoughts of the wonderful celebration for days beyond.



Holi Celebration at Walter Reade

Submitted by Chaplain (CPT) Pratima Dharm

First Holi celebration was held on 9th March, 2012 at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, MD. The program began with an invocation given by Chaplain (CPT) Pratima Dharm. She recited a Sanskrit verse in homage to the deity of Ganesha:

वक्रतुण्ड महाकाय सूर्यकोटि समप्रभा ।
निर्विघ्नम् कुरुमेदेव सर्वकार्येषु सर्वदा ॥

vakratunda mahaakaaya

suryakoti samaprabhaa

nirvighnam kurumedeva

sarvakaaryeshu sarvadaa

This ancient verse translates in English as: "We offer salutations to the supreme Lord Ganesha, whose curved trunk and massive body shines like a million suns and showers his blessings on everyone. Oh my Lord of Lords Ganesha, kindly remove all obstacles, always and forever from all our activities and endeavors."

Chaplain Dharm prayed further in English for all present, the patients, family members and the staff at the hospital. After which the Command Chaplain at Walter Reed, Chaplain (CAPT, US Navy) Roosevelt Brown addressed and welcomed the gathering.

Chaplain Dharm educated the audience about the Hindu festival of colors by elaborating that Holi is called the Spring Festival – as it marks the arrival of Spring the season of hope and joy. The most vibrant Hindu Festival it is celebrated by throwing colored powder and colored water at each other. The colors are traditionally made of Neem, Kumkum, Haldi, Bilva, and other medicinal herbs prescribed by Ayurvedic doctors. Wet colors are made with flowers of Palash which produces yellow colored water having medicinal properties after the winter season. On the eve of this festival Holika Dahan or burning of Holika is accomplished through bonfires lit in memory of the miraculous escape of young Prahlad. When Demoness Holika, sister of King Hiranyakashipu, carried him into the fire, Holika was burnt but Prahlad a staunch devotee of God escaped without any injuries.

Soon the crowd was regaled by a Kuchipudi dance performance on metal plates by a group from Germantown, Maryland. The enthralling performance captured the mood of Holi around the theme of Lord Krishna, the incarnation of God within the Hindu tradition and his female devotees: the Gopikas. LTC Ravi Chaudhary, US Airforce, Commander of the 317th Recruiting Squadron in Washington DC was our guest speaker for the festival of Holi. He spoke emotionally about his own experiences of serving in the US Military as a second generation American Indian. The lessons taught by his father of the victory of light over darkness formed the basis for his own understanding of the festival of Holi. The audience seemed to connect well with his words and his vibrant personality seasoned in the heart of the Indian Temple culture in Minnesota and the US Military across the globe.

Chaplain Dharm encouraged the youngest member in the audience; a US Army Soldier to come forward to begin the 'exchange of color'. The Soldier followed the Hindu Chaplain's instructions and threw blue 'abeer' or 'gulal' (dry colored powder) in the air with gusto and shouts of 'Holi hai' standing on a tarp covered area in the Main Chapel demarcated for playing Holi. This commenced the participation of many service members and civilian staff who came forward to play with color powder and silly strings. Chaplain Dharm also urged the gathering to participate in 'Holika Dahan' where a symbolic fire was lit in the peace garden outside the chapel. Many people present took the opportunity to write on blank pieces of paper their thoughts and prayers and burn it in the sacred fire of Holi. This seemed to be very cathartic for many. Soon people began to join the food line at the back of the chapel to enjoy a spread of spicy Indian delicacies and desserts.

The Indian meal consisted of both vegetarian and non vegetarian dishes and was sponsored by the Chinmaya Mission (vegetarian dishes) in Silver Spring, Maryland and the Telugu Association from Washington DC (Meat dishes). Chinmaya Mission long time members: Manikya Linga and Bhagyalakshmi Emani (who run the Annapurna stall at Chinmaya Mission) volunteered their precious time and energy in preparing a full course Indian meal for all the guests at the celebration. Also many staff from the hospital brought various other Indian and American dishes and a variety of desserts that filled the hearts and bodies of all present at the festival! The guests left with the message of Holi celebration writ large on their brightly colored 'gulal' faces, their minds and spirits as well that unity amidst diversity was a true possibility for the broader American culture in the US Military that had indeed experienced something new in the colors of Holi!

Memorial Service on 10th Anniversary of September 11

Madhulika Nallani
Silver Spring Chapter

September 11, 2001, was the day when terrorists struck and caused havoc in American lives. It was when the World Trade Centers in New York City and part of the Pentagon collapsed by airplanes used as missiles by terrorists. Thousands of innocent people were killed, and many families lost beloved family members.

Each year on September 11, Americans everywhere remember the lives lost on that devastating day. Memorial ceremonies are held in every city. During the services, there are prayers, music, words of peace and love, and moments of silence in honor of the people that died.

As the capital of our nation, Washington D.C. held the honor of hosting the 10th anniversary memorial service on September 11, 2011. The original plan was to conduct this service at the Washington National Cathedral. However, after the earthquake in August, and another construction mishap, the event was moved to the Washington Hebrew Congregation in Washington D.C.

The program was called 'A Call to Compassion'. As part of the event, an inter-faith vigil was held where representatives from various faiths came together to pray and chant for peace. Hindu community members, such as Sri. Suresh Ji, Dr. DC Rao Ji represented our community in the event. By the grace of God, I was fortunate to get an opportunity to participate.

I chanted the peace prayer "Asathoma sadgamaya" that day at the Washington Hebrew Congregation in Washington D.C. The service began at 8:30 am. Speeches and chants from interfaith members were timed to mark the moments when the airplanes hit the World Trade Centers, Pentagon, and crashed in Pennsylvania. I felt proud of chanting such a prayer and humbled to represent the Hindu community under the guidance of Swamiji and D.C Rao Ji.

I would like to thank Swamiji and D.C Rao for giving me this wonderful opportunity, my family for supporting me, and my father for being there for me while I was chanting. Thank You.

Prayer for Peace śāntiḥ mantra

ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय । om asato mā sadgamaya ।
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ॥ tama-so mā jyotir-gamaya ।
मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय । mṛt-yor-maa-amṛtaṁ gamaya ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ om śāntiḥ । śāntiḥ । śāntiḥ ।

॥ हरिः ॐ श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः हरिः ॐ ॥

॥ hariḥ om śrī gurubhyo namaḥ hariḥ om ॥

I invoke God's Grace to lead me from untruth to Truth!
Lead me from darkness to Light! Lead me from death to Eternal Life.
May Peace Be! May Peace Be! May Peace Be!
Salutations unto the Great Teachers!

Hari Om

Winter Youth Camp 2011

*Nirav Shah,
Chinmayam, Silver Spring Chapter*

If you haven't heard of Swami Sarveshananda, you're missing out on a lot. During the past (December 2011) winter holidays, several of us stressed teenagers decided to spend four days with Swami Sarveshananda, and it was worth it.



Swamiji's humor, "chillness", and eloquence combined to make the best out of the four days. We started things out by discussing the essence of "Ctrl-Alt-Delete" You're thinking of the task manager right? Actually, this pertains to controlling our emotions, changing our bad qualities, and deleting these tamasic, or bad, lazy, and irresponsible qualities in our life. Swamiji asked us to write out things we can control, what we can change, and what we want to delete in our lives in order to become an ideal person. Swamiji gave a humorous example of how he had trouble controlling his anger when his peers would bother him during the Vedanta Course. Later Swamiji talked to us about the "Delete" part of the acronym by letting us know how majority of the foods we eat in our daily lives are tamasic. For example, he told us cinnamon rolls are tamasic because they include pieces of actual human hair imported from India.

Among many other fun activities, we watched (and analyzed) Batman Begins and played the hopping game and mafia with Swamiji! The camp ended with amazing improvised speeches, a tasty bhiksha, and a small teaser from Swamiji about coming back for next year's winter camp.

Overall, I thought this year's Winter Camp was a blast, and I encourage every high school student to attend it every winter break!

Truth Becomes Sweet

Aziza Meer

When the heavenly bodies appeared before me, a thrill passed my spine.

I want to be a heavenly body

Yes I can be

Living here and now, and yet dying here and now

Light and pleasant

Joy like breeze, flows from them

And you catch the whiff and it never goes away

Once you catch the breeze from a heavenly body

You are set in your path

Like drawn by some invisible threads

You glue your eyes on the heavenly one

And you see nothing but the heavenly one

The heavenly one is now your universe

Your point of adoration

Your attraction

Your love for life

Your passion

Your only one

Drawn, fully taken in,

Life is a pleasure

Life is a joy

Life is nothing

Life is a journey you are in and yet left behind.

Like a vapor you pass

and those who pass you catch the breeze

Once caught, never leaving

Their course will change

Ready or not.

Truth becomes sweet.

Gurudev – A Scribble

Kaushik Shastri



Editor's Note: The author was attending a memorial day spiritual camp at Chinmayam in 2010, when he scribbled this picture of Sri Gurudev.

Kedarnath Maanasa Teertha Yatra

Sitaram Kowtha

The thought of visiting Kedarnath captured my mind as my family and Deepa Krishnan family started to finalize a trip to India which included a theen dham yatra in Uttarakhand. The idea of trekking up fourteen kilometers, deep in the Himalayas to visit the abode of Lord Siva, and one of the jyothirlingas, was tantalizing.

However, as we discussed our travel plans with those who had already been there, we began to learn about landslides, and the difficulty in trekking to Kedarnath. Landslides were common, especially during monsoon season, and the roads are often closed for days at a time, stranding yatris. Our itinerary put us right at the beginning of the monsoon in Himalayas. We also learned that a fourteen kilometer climb is demanding not only because of the distance, but also the higher elevation and thinning air. Kedarnath is at 11000 feet, and the start of the trek is around 8000 to 9000 feet.

We had planned on going on long walks in the morning and evening to build stamina to do the climb, but due to busy schedules in May and June, we never had the time to do them. So, when we started our journey to India, we were totally out of shape. Two questions were lurking in my mind – would we make it to Gouri Kund to start our trek? Would we be able to make the climb, or have to opt for a pony ride or palki? All of the arrangements were made, but anything can go wrong.

It is said that if we take one step towards the Lord, he takes ten steps towards us. Our journey to Kedarnath became proof of that.

When we arrived in Delhi, the monsoons had already arrived in North India, and that meant landslides in the Himalayas were to be expected. After visiting Haridwar and Rishikesh, we made our way to Uttar Kashi. When we arrived there, rains began in earnest. All night it rained. Sure enough, the next day morning, the road to Gangotri was closed. Luckily, two to three hours later, the road was reopened and we were able to complete our yatra to Gangotri. If the road closure had lasted longer, we would not have made it to Gangotri that day. As we were returning from Gangotri, the rain again became heavy and poured for a very long time. We made it back to Uttar Kashi that night without any event. We could hear the rain all night. (We learned later that the road to Gangotri was closed for two days after that.)

The next day, after visiting Tapovan Kutir and Kashi Vishwanath temple, we started on our journey to a town close to Gauri Kund (the starting point of trek to Kedarnath), but due to travel delays caused by landslides, we had to stay the night in Rudra Prayag. We reached Gauri Kund the next day around 11AM. So far our journey remained on schedule and the landslides only delayed us a little bit. We were now ready to start the trek to Kedarnath. With God's grace we made it that far.

“Sheethoshna Sukhadukhesu Samah Sanga Vivarjithaha”, this line from the Gita, Chapter 12, has just come to mind as I am about to describe the trek. (Sheetha is cold, ushna is heat, sukha is joy, dukkha is unhappiness, samah is equanimity, sanga vivarjitha is free from attachment).

It was quite warm as we started on the trek. In fact, I was actually sweating. Then we came to the area when one can rent ponies. Any sensibilities with respect to the sense of smell and what one was stepping on had to fall by the wayside. One cannot avoid the smell of the droppings or take a step to avoid them. I recalled one of the names of Lord Siva is Pasupathi. He was dwelling in them and around them. I took it as a message to my mind to get down from its high horse of western hygiene sensibilities. The first kilometer was not difficult, and we did it quickly. Only thirteen more to go! Gradually, the climb became harder and harder. We started taking frequent breaks. Then it started to rain and it only got heavier. We could even hear thunder. Despite wearing ponchos, we were drenched, head to toe. Water had also seeped into our shoes. **The Lord was doing our abhishekam, before we could perform one for him!** Before we could drown ourselves in self-pity, we were presented with a series of spectacular waterfalls. The water in those falls were crystal clear. There were wider falls and narrower falls. Some smaller ones were merging into larger ones. Many falls had steep drops. All the falls were merging into river Mandakini. We were experiencing the wetness and drag of climbing, and at the same time, the joy and exhilaration of being in the nature, trekking up a holy mountain. We could see river Mandakini at each turn of the climb. With the rain, the temperatures started to drop, and our fingers soon became numb. Thus, we faced pain and joy, heat and cold, dryness and wetness, unavoidable smell of pony poo and sights of spectacular nature. In midst of all this, our journey upward continued.

As the pace of our climb slowed further, it was fascinating to see bare foot sanyasis, elderly and palki carriers overtake us. Many elderly and those on palkis were chanting 'Om Namah Sivaya'. That gave us much needed encouragement to continue to make progress. At one point the rains stopped, and the rain clouds moved to lower elevations, and it brightened up where we were. I joked that we were above the clouds – in heaven!

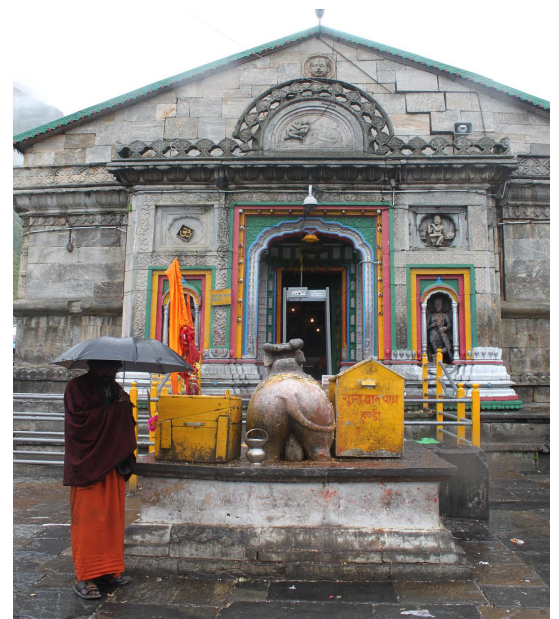
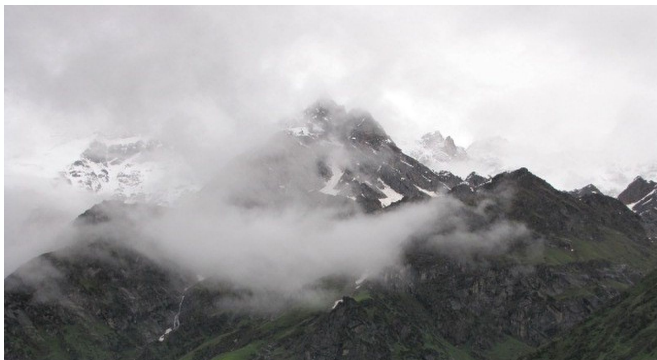
Then we saw fog rolling in from the valley below, and covered all the views. After the fog had lifted, we could see snow peaks at a distance. We had now reach high enough elevation that we saw our first glacier on the mountain across from us. The greenery at Kedarnath was incredibly lush. I had imagined that at these heights, we would have barren mountain sides, but the valley around us was lush and green.

The last leg of the climb was the hardest. We were tired, and the town of Kedarnath, though near, seemed far away. We seemed to be out of breath quite often. A lady was kind enough to share camphor with us and urged to smell it to ease breathing. It was as though mother Parvathi was giving us more encouragement. Smelling the camphor seems to have helped – at least I think it did.

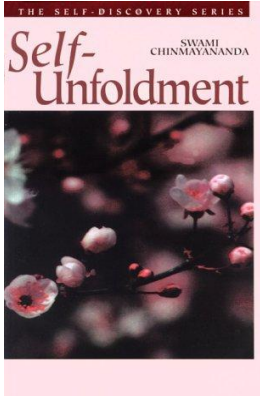
It became dark by the time we reached Kedarnath. We had missed the evening aarati at the temple. There was no street lighting, and visibility was poor. We just blindly followed those in front of us. From a distance we saw a man coming our way carrying a plate with a lamp. The man was bringing the aarati to the yatris! **What compassion of the Lord!** We felt very lucky that we could partake the aarati. By the time we reached our room for the night we were wet, exhausted and cold. It took us eight hours to make the climb. It was 10 PM by the time we finished dinner and were ready to go sleep. Our guide asked us to wake up at 2 AM, take shower and be ready by 3 AM at the temple for mahabhishekam. Our minds immediately rebelled. We were so exhausted, there was no possible way for us to get up at 2. We may have to forgo the puja! Our guide assured us that because of Ishwara mahima, we will be ready.

Indeed, we were up at 2AM, and at the temple by 3 AM. **No sign of weariness, drowsiness or aches and pain!** We were fully awake and excitedly anticipated the puja. We sat right in front of the Sivalinga, shaped in the form of mountain peak. There was a pitcher hanging above the Linga with a hole for water to drip through. It reminded me of the meditation (with Siva Manasa Puja) that Swamiji guides us at Chinmayam on Sivaratri day. The priest chanted Maharudram, and encouraged us to touch the Linga, and when the puja was over to bow our head against it! We had performed the abhishekam with Ganga water from Gangotri and Bilva leaves we brought from Kashi Vishwanath temple in Uttar Kashi. I recollected at that moment that we were blessed to be at one of twelve jyothirlingas, deep in the Himalayas, sitting before the Lord. **This was possible only because Lord took the ten steps towards us.**

The compassionate lord gave us the energy and forbearance to make the climb, and while treating us with the beautiful sights of lush green valleys, river, waterfalls, and encouraged us to complete the journey. He magically wiped away our tiresomeness, and gave us front row seats to perform his abhishekam. This was a lot more than I had imagined a trip to Kedarnath to be. I will cherish this for many years to come.



“Self-Unfoldment” Summaries



{Editor's Note: This series will provide short summaries of each chapter of the foundational introduction to Vedanta by Pujya Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda, “Self Unfoldment”. This book is part of the curriculum for Chinamaym (10th - 12th grade) Bala Vihar class. It is also the recommended starting book for newly formed youth and adult study groups. These summaries are from one such recently formed study group.}

Chapter 1: Freedom

In this day and age, we enjoy many comforts of life, even luxuries. The comforts we enjoy are almost heavenly, and we have become used to indulging in them without the least restraint.

Yet, most of us are not happy – at least not fully so or all of the time. We sit amid our wealth and comforts and live lives of worry, anxiety and dissatisfaction. In fact, satisfying every desire can, in time, lead to much unhappiness [Examples: ice cream cone or laddu – after we enjoy the first one, we may want to eat more. But eating more does not make us happier. Actually, it will make us sick].

Our essential nature is freedom. True freedom is built on intelligent self-restraint. [Chaos on the road if rules of the road are not followed.]

The Art of Right Contact and Freedom

The laws of a country protect the freedom of its people but prevent them from being reckless and irresponsible in their activities. In a similar way, religious books prescribe a code of conduct for life that gives us a means for developing and maintaining the right contact with the world. If we learn to follow such code intelligently, we can lead a healthy and dynamic life. [Example of electricity – it is a blessing and it is also dangerous. With the right contact, we can reap the benefits of electricity.]

Peace and happiness do not exist in the external world, but are generated within ourselves when we maintain proper contact with the world.

Problems in life are a blessing in disguise, since they help perfect our personality – if we apply the right art of contact. [Example of knife and proper sharpening, and how problems sharpen our personality if we deal with the problems with the right attitude]

The world is a mixture of good and bad, but we can learn the knack of using the rough edges of experience to perfect our personality. Our unhappy state of mind is a result of our own view of the world. [Example – glass half filled with milk. Optimist vs. Pessimist]

One key aspect of the art of right contact is the attitude of gratitude. We must first learn to be grateful for what we have. Such an attitude brings about mental tranquility. In contrast, when our minds are agitated with desires to get something we do not have, we lose not only our peace of mind, but also our concentration and efficiency in action. [Example - despair of a man in a wheelchair, seeing one with healthy legs, who walks by briskly. But that walker is jealous of the driver in a passing car, and so on].

Heritage

Independence is the very essence of being a human. The person who is free from his slave-like dependence upon the world is truly free.

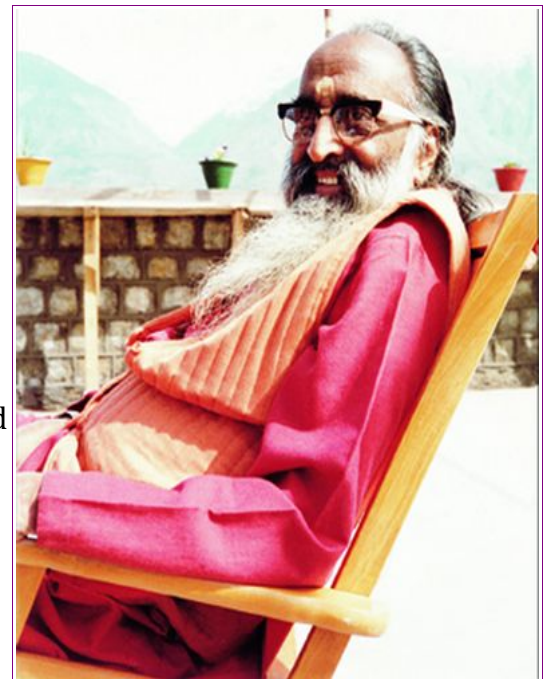
Vedanta, the science of Self-unfoldment, teaches us how to regain our divine heritage, to become beings who are free of dependence on the world, having rediscovered the unchanging, blissful nature of their true Self. [Example – ocean and waves]

Today we tend to live on the surface of our existence. We are busy with the changing objects and events. We identify with these changes, becoming joyous one moment, and unhappy the next. We are slaves to those changes. If, however, we identify with the unchanging Reality behind those changes, we would rise above those ups and downs of daily living and would learn to enjoy lasting happiness.

An enlightened being is one who has gained mastery over his own mind, who is always at peace no matter what changes may be taking place in the world around him. Such a person is not indifferent as people often assume. Such a person has emotion, but does not become the emotion; he does not become emotional.

The human being consists of body, mind and intellect equipment. The body functions in the realm of sensory perceptions and actions. The mind functions in the realm of emotions. The intellect functions in the realm of thoughts and ideas.

There is nothing wrong in our using the body and the senses to perceive and act; there is no problem in feeling emotions; and there is no problem with entertaining thoughts and ideas. If we learn to stand apart from the influence of perceptions, emotions and thoughts, we become truly independent in life. Such freedom is our heritage as human beings.



Jnana Yoga and Self Realization – Part VI

Acharya K. Sadanandaji

The self-knowledge alone removes the self-ignorance. The self-ignorance is ignorance of myself. This is the first and fundamental problem and sometimes referred to as *muula avidya*, primordial ignorance, in order to distinguish the ignorance of say objective sciences, such as ignorance of chemistry, physics, etc. This fundamental ignorance causes secondary problems; and there lies the *samasaara*. The classical example is the ignorance of a rope lying in the alley. However, that ignorance of an object result in mistaking the object as a snake due to similarities in the attributes gathered. This is a secondary effect of ignorance. This further cascades into other problems; fear, anxiety, insecurity, and increase in blood pressure, and action in terms of running away from the perceived snake to protect oneself, etc. Innocent rope has nothing to do with any of these. This error is called subjective projection (technically called *praatibhaasika*). Although the snake perception is subjective, the actions that result as a result of subjective notion are objectively experienced including running away from the scene. In contrast to this there are also objective errors or *vyaavahaarika* errors. Typical examples are mirage water or clear crystal appearing as red when placed on or near a red cloth, appearance of sunrise and sunset, etc. The appearance of mirage water where there is only dry sand arises due to objective factors which are nothing to do with the perceiver, the subject. It arises due to the reflection of sunrays at a glancing angle. The two errors can be stated as – I see it, therefore it is (as in the subjective error case) – It is, therefore I see it (as in the objective error case). Both errors involve taking something other than what they are, *atasmin tat budhiH*, and they are called by Shankara as *adhyasaH*. In the subjective errors, once I learned by subsequent operation that it is rope and not a snake, there will be no further perception of snake of that rope. Hence all the secondary reactions will also be removed, not necessarily immediately, but slowly. The rapid palpitations of the heart that occurred on the vision of snake may die down slowly after recognizing that it is not a snake but a rope. On the other hand, the objective errors will continue as appearances even after knowing the truth behind the appearances. We can differentiate the two errors – subjective error as *jiiva sRiShTi* or created by the human mind, and objective errors as *Iswara sRiShTi* or created by the global mind. Hence, the objective errors, which remain even after knowing the truth behind the appearances, will be admired as part of *Iswara vibhuuti* or glory of *Iswara*. Both subjective and objective errors play a role in the self-realization – one sublimated as result of knowledge, while the other admired as *Iswara sRiShTi* or *liila*.

Similarly, the ignorance of one's own self or self-ignorance can lead to secondary problems. Since I do not know myself (or know just enough about myself), I take myself what I am not as myself and then suffer the consequence of that mistaken identity. . This is called misapprehension. Ignorance of myself is non-apprehension, and taking myself 'what I am not' as myself is misapprehension. These are normally referred to as *aavaraNa* and *vikshepa*; ignorance 'as though' covering the knowledge of myself is *aavaraNa* and identifying with the plurality as 'I am this' is *vikshepa*.

How does this identification of myself, the subject, with what I see, the object, occur? A simple example illustrates our normal experience. I was lying down on a lazy-boy chair in an air conditioned room after scrumptious meals, and for entertainment started watching a movie on TV. The movie became interesting as I watched. As in a typical Indian movie, after the hero and heroin performed all their duets and all that, they got separated by fate, and they were running in a hot sun, in a desert, without food or drink for days to save their lives from the gangsters surrounding them from all directions. I am puffing, panting and sweating, with tears running down my eyes, watching desperately whether the hero and heroin are going to make it or not. I forgot completely where I am and who I am, and forgot even that I am watching an Indian movie where hero and heroin have to live happily ever after, and I identify myself intensely with the two characters in the story, who are running in a desert in a hot sun. Their limitations have become my limitations. I forgot that it is just the shades of light and darkness dancing on the TV screen. I am comfortably sitting in a lazy-boy chair in an air conditioned room after full meals. Neither I am in the hot sun in desert without food and drinks, nor the actors who played as hero and heroin are really suffering in the hot sun without food and drinks. Yet, in those moments, my suffering is real and a box full of wet tissue paper in the waste basket is a direct proof. Just by forgetting myself and identifying with the characters on the TV screen, I can undergo so much suffering, what to mention about the suffering one can go through by not knowing who I am, and taking myself to be this body, mind and intellect as myself.

The identification starts taking this physical body as I am, and subsequently the mind and the intellect as I am. The attributes of body, mind and intellect, BMI, became my attributes and their limitations as my limitations. At body level I take myself to be mortal, at mind level I take myself to be unhappy and at the intellect level I take myself to be ignorant of the rest of the world. I tried to solve these three fundamental limitations by pravRitti and nivRitti, acquiring things that are conducive for their happiness and getting rid of things that cause their discomforts. Thus attachments and aversions, raaga and dhveShas, start accumulating with resulting vaasanaas or tendencies accumulating life after life – all in the desperate attempt in making myself – immortal, knowledgeable and limitless – satyam, Jnaanam and anantam. Hence Vedanta comes to my rescue declaring I am trying to solve a problem where there is no problem- as we discussed earlier.

We are all familiar with the above scenario of how I got into this state that I am trying to get out. Most important to bear in mind is there are two aspects that are involved, and this should be clear. 1. The fundamental is the ignorance of myself, which is beginning-less like any other ignorance. 2. The next is the ignorance born vaasanaas that I have been accumulating life after life. Total account is sanchita, and the ones that I brought to exhaust in this life is praarabda and the new ones that I accumulate while living here is aagaami. Thus we have ignorance and the ignorance caused vaasanaas.

The nature of ignorance is, it is anaadi or beginning less, but with the knowledge, it gets eliminated. Knowledge and ignorance are like light and darkness. They are diagonally opposite to each other. Just as soon as the light is turned on, the darkness in the room is eliminated. It is direct and immediate. Similarly via inquiry along the lines specified by Vedanta,

the ignorance of myself goes away with the knowledge. It is also direct and immediate. Once the ignorance gone, IT CANNOT COMEBACK AGAIN – yat gatvaa na nivartante taddhama paramam mama. If it comes back, then it will have now aadi or beginning for ignorance again, which is not possible. Now let us carefully apply the discussion we had in the previous posts. Once I understand that I am pure light of consciousness that is all pervading and that these BMI are just upaadhis (like pot walls for pot), by analyzing and inquiring into the essence of mahaavaakya – tat tvam asi, I now know, who I am. I have UNDERSTOOD that I am not this body, not this mind and not this intellect but I am pure witnessing consciousness which is the same in all pervading consciousness, since scriptures says you are the THAT. As JK puts it - It is an understanding as an understanding as a fact not just as understanding as understanding as a thought. This understanding as soon as it rises, like darkness removed by a light instantaneously, it removes ignorance immediately and directly.

The mahaavaakya, tat tvam asi, understanding involves two aspects. 1. It is an understanding that I am is full and complete, satchidaananda, without any limitations; that is the full implication of the tat tvam asi –statement. 2. The second aspect of this understanding is to understand that nothing else is required for me to understand.

I am the light of consciousness reflecting even the thought of ‘I understood tat tvam asi’. This is beautifully expressed in Kena, when the student first screams out – I UNDERSTOOD, then he hesitates that the teacher may misinterpret his statement that he understood as conceptualized thought – NO, I UNDERSTAND IT NOT – then again he hesitates that the statement does not represent the truth – NOT THAT I DONOT UNDERSTAND IT – naaham manye, suvedeti, no na vedeti, veda ca| The problem is inherent with nature of this subjective knowledge of the subject itself– yato vaacho nivartante apraapya manasaa saha – says Vedanta – the words and mind cannot reach there – words and mind operate predominately in the objective world and cannot describe the subject which cannot be objectified nor that understanding of oneself by oneself using - aatmanaa atmaanam aatmaiva pasyati – oneself only sees oneself by oneself.

Now what happens after this understanding? No, there won't be any flash lights flashing all over my face or there will be some halo rising behind the head as you see in pictures. Only difference is, now I am all happy all by myself, since that is my nature. I will not be putting a face (in India it is called caster-oil face) as though I am carrying the whole world on my shoulders. Expression of inner joy becomes natural since it cannot contain itself. Other than that, I will be compassionate, where compassion is required; and I will be angry where anger is required; and ready to shed tears where they are required and sympathetic where sympathy is required. I may still get a pat here and kick there; some praising me and some criticizing me. That is all part of the drama of life. For others, I look just as before; perhaps they notice that I am less agitated or less worried or less angry, since they cannot differentiate real from acting real. No, I am not going to do any tom tom that I am a jnaani, since they do not believe it anyway, since, as I said, they do not see any halo after becoming a jnaani. Besides, why should I go and declare to anybody that I was stupid before, by taking the inert body as I am (ignoring the fact that everybody is in the same boat).

However, from the point of myself, I am full and complete, and nothing else I need for me to be happy . Things may still come on the way and those that come will go also . Blood pressure will

still be there, knee problems will still remain, and sugar problem still remain – and one can have throat cancer or hand that may have to be amputated, etc. Those are the natural problems of the matter, therefore it should not matter. They may cause some inconveniences at the BMI level. I will still feel pain and hunger at BMI level. But none of the BMI problem will affect me as I have understood that I am none of them. They are all in me but I am not in them. That is the clean understanding of my true nature. Hence Shankara says:

yogarato va bhogarato va sangarato va sangha vihiinaH |

yasyaH brahmani ramate chittam nandati nandati nadatyeva | |

One may be a yogi or one may be bhogi, a man in downtown, one may be associated with people or one may be in the caves of Himalayas all by himself. It is not where he is what he does where his mind is reveling. His mind is always tuned to aham brahmaasmi and reveling in that understanding in whatever he does or does not do.

With this understanding of what understanding is all about, now let us look at the common problems a sadhak faces in this realization. Major common problem as we discussed exhaustively is not appreciating the intended meaning of 'tvam' padaartham. I assume tvam stands for the egotistical 'I' rather than witnessing consciousness that I am. Hence questions, how can- I am- be that all pervading reality? That is blasphemy, some dvaitins even declare. Therefore a shift in understanding of the meaning of 'tvam' is required before the mahaavaakya can be understood in all its glory. Here doubts arise in not appreciating the correct meaning for tvam – padaartham. Hence Shravana and manana, constant listening to the scriptures and reflecting on them are the only means to solve this problem. Discussions about the issues are form major vehicles for reflection and for clarification of the thoughts. That understanding takes place by constant awareness of myself by using discriminative faculty by shifting my attention to the witnessing consciousness than witnessed or objectified ego. The viveka and vairaagya, both are involved in shifting my attention to the reflecting light of consciousness that I am from the contents of the thoughts that arise in the mind including the egotistical thoughts as I am this and this. That includes I am great spiritual seeker or I am great bhakta or even I am the humblest person in the world. All complexes, worries, anxieties, and assertions rest with the ego only that involves taking tvam as this BMI. Even if such thoughts arise, I have to be vigilant enough to keep shifting to the witness of even these thoughts. Then they will subside unceremoniously. That is the sadhana required to understand tvam padaartha and then to understand the mahaavaakya as I am that.

What is nidhidhyaasana then?

We discussed in the above two aspects involved with self ignorance. One is the ignorance of my true nature. Self-Knowledge and only the self-knowledge will remove that ignorance. We said that is immediate and direct once we understand that we are the witnessing consciousness. Ignorance once removed will not come back, EVER. Most of the Vedantins common complaint is that even though they understand the truth, once they go into the world of transactions, the knowledge does not seem to remain as they get carried away with the contents of the thoughts. This is a universal problem.

Hence we discussed in detail about the two problems – 1. One is ignorance and 2. The other is the ignorance generated vaasanaas. Ignorance is removed by knowledge – direct and immediate since they cannot coexist – that is what aparokshaanubhuuti – as in - You are the 10th man - story. Knowledge removes ignorance immediately but not the ignorance generated vaasanaas. This difference has to be understood. Shree Sureswaraachaarya says vaasanaas are not the ignorance but they are byproducts of the ignorance. They are avidyaa janita vaasanaas, that are the vaasanaas caused by ignorance that I had before I understood the facts. These vaasanaas are the habitual notions that formed life after life due to the beginning-less ignorance. Playing with the word HABIT, Swami Dheeranandaji says that HABITS die hard. Even if one removes H, a-bit still remains. If one removes A, bit still remains, if one remove b, it still remains, and only until the ego designated by little i is removed, the truth t will not be fully revealed. The knowledge removes the ignorance; the habitual notions do not go. They can only go by habitual or constant awareness that I am the light of consciousness that is reflecting the thoughts and not the thought contents. This constant awareness of myself until all the habitual notions get dissolved is, what is called, nidhidhyaasana. Now we can also appreciate the previous statements that one has to take up sanyaasa, even after knowledge, etc – all that means, in order to remove my habitual thinking due to prior vaasanaas, I have to seek a place where I can do that constant reflection of my true nature that I understood by Shravana and manana. Nidhydhyaasana is required as part of self-realization for shifting my attention continuously what Krishna calls as **abhyasena tu kounteya vairaagyana ca gRihNate**-detachment from the contents of the thoughts and practice of shifting my attention to the light of consciousness that I am. Vaasanaas caused by ignorance can be removed by knowledge generated counter vaasanaas that can neutralize them. Here is a verse from Naiskarmya siddhi by Sureswara:

baadhitatvaat avidyaayaa vidyaam saa neva baadhate |

tadvaasaanaa nimittatvam yaanti vidyaasmRiterdhruvam | | - I-38

Once the ignorance has been eliminated by knowledge by shravanam and mananam, it cannot again come back and eliminate the knowledge. If someone experiences again suffering or samsaara, after sharavanam and mananam, it is not because of ignorance which has already been eliminated but due to the vaasanaas that were formed as a result of ignorance that existed before the dawn of the knowledge. Vaasanaas form the habitual impressions left behind due to ignorance. The remedy therefore is not that I HAVE TO TAKE BHOUTIKA SANYAASA. One can take if that is helpful. The truth is, I need to bring back into my memory, again and again, what I have understood before, namely, I am the pure consciousness because of which I am conscious of this world of plurality. They are all in me but I am not in them. None of them can affect me, the ever present light of consciousness. They rise in me subsist in me and go back in to me. I am eternal, while they come and go. This constant shifting in awareness into my true nature and looking at the world as nothing but as my own vibhhuti is the nidhidhyaasana. This shift becomes natural, as I shift more and more, until I firmly abide in the knowledge that is gained already. Initially, I get lost in the worldly thoughts; even though I understood that I am the light of consciousness. However, as the habits die down, I am back to myself more and more and until I firmly abide in myself. That is what **dRiDaiva niShTaa** or **brahma niShTaa** or firm abidance in the knowledge that I am – I am – I am, free from any of this – this and this.

That jnaana vaasanaas or more correctly called jnaana smRiti will remove the habitual notions formed by ignorance. Shree Sureswara says when I get firmly established in the jnaana niShTa or constant awareness of myself, the knowledge of awareness of myself raises continuously, and spontaneously, rather than sporadically only during the class. This is also what Bhagavan Ramana says in terms of '**aham aham tayaa spurati hRit swayam**' - I am – I am – etc spontaneously raises in the core of my personality. Thus as even as the avidyaa vaasanaas raise jnaana vaasanaas will also be automatically invoked. This tug of war goes on through out the life as one lives through the life. Abiding in the knowledge becomes natural as the vaasanaas become weaker. Hence, avidyaa vaasanaas can be handled by jnaana smRiti which is called nidhidhyaasanam. That Jnaana smRiti becomes natural for an evolved Vedantin. This is what abhyaasa and vairaagya or constant practice and renunciation involved. There are no short cuts here.

How long it takes? It depends on how strong the habits are, how disciplined my mind is and how intensely or how frequently I bring back into my sphuraNa or memory the realization that I am pure light of consciousness, and that all this and this and this are mithyaa only. The more and the more I live in that understanding the less and less the habitual vaasanaas have distractive role. Hence right living, whether taking sanyaasa or not, will be helpful to keep the mind in that understanding. It is not for jnnana but for jnaana niShTaa- firm abidance in that knowledge or what swami Paramarthanandaji calls as internalizing the teaching. One can say that one who has understood is jnaani, and one who abides in that understanding is jiivanmukta – recognizing that these are artificial designations and it better to dispense them; for one very good reason, we can never know others state of understanding. Any further differentiations in jiivanamukta status are also unnecessary complications of the simple truths. Once one has understood, then how far he abides in that knowledge depends on how strong his vaasana-pulls are. Only the individual will know and others can never know for grading another person as jnaanai but not jiivanmukta, etc. It depends on how far he understands the truth of himself and abides in that truth and does not depend on aashrama, birth, caste, creed, or place of origin, since all these pertain to BMI, which one is trying to recognize as I am not that. Hence Shankara says in VivekachuuDaamaNi:

jaati niiti kula gotra duuragam, naama ruupa guNa doSha varjitam |

desha kaala vishayaati varti yet, brahma tatvam asi bhaava yaatmani | |

One is free from jaati, niiti, kulam, gotram, naamam, ruupam, guNam, space, and time and objects – since all of them belong to physical body. While the understanding is that I am not the physical body. Infiniteness is my essential nature where none of these are real.

Now let us look at the statements:

1. I have understanding, but I have no knowledge, or jnaanam.
2. I have understanding, but I have no realization, I am not a jiivan mukta
3. I have understanding, but I have no experience or Brahma anubhava.
4. I have understanding, but I am not liberated or I have no moksha.


All the above are four-fold powerful confusions that we get into. First the understanding has to be clear, since it requires the understanding that I am pure witnessing consciousness that is different from the BMI – that is the nature of the tvam padaartham. Once I understood, then the identity implied in the mahavaakyam or aphoristic statement has to be understood without any doubts. That understanding is knowledge. And If I have that knowledge I am jnaani since I know who I am now, and that jnaanam eliminates the self-centered ignorance. Since in this understanding I am identifying myself as the totality, Brahman, There is nothing more to be done after this understanding. That fact has to be understood as part of understanding that I am Brahman. Since Brahman is infinite, understanding of the mahaavaakya – tat tvam asi – is understanding that I am Brahman, therefore free from any limitations. I am jiivan mukta. That abiding knowledge that I am Brahman will not remain due to the pressure of vaasanaas that were accumulated before the dawn of knowledge. These vaasanaas can only be eliminated by constant reflection of the fact – or jnaana smaraNa – of aham brahmaasmi and therefore everything else is only mithyaa. The more I recapture of true nature, the more I get firmly established in that knowledge until I become brahma niShTaa. That is same as jiivanmukta. There is no other Brahman anubhava – I am longing for experience of Brahman, then that Brahman that I experience is not Brahman since any experienced Brahman is only an object of experience. On the same token I cannot meditate on Brahman since the Brahman that I meditate upon become non-Brahman, since it is an object of meditation.

We have so far concentrated from the point of tvam and arriving at the knowledge. For completeness we will analyze the tat padaartham and the validity of the identity relation.

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Series: Smrithi of Smrithi

A reprint of past issues of Smrithi



46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905

CHINMAYA MISSION

KAILAS NIWAS

Vol 1 Sri Gurudev's Birthday, May 90 No 2

Hari Om!

The second issue of Smrithi is being published to coincide with the celebration of Sri Gurudev's Birthday by the Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center. Although Gurudev repeatedly chides his disciples for celebrating the birth of that which has never been born, we in our limited vision cannot help but offer our gratitude to the One who brought Swami Chinmayananda to earth in the physical form. Though we know that the divine spirit is not bound by a human body, we offer our profound thanks for His presence in our midst.

The following excerpt, taken from an article by S. Ramakrishnan, originally written in the mid-80's and reappearing in the Jan 1990 issue of Mananam, sings praises of but a few of our Gurudev's glories.

THE DIVINE INTEGRATOR

Swami Chinmayananda is one of the luminous gems that came from the mighty flood of modern Indian Renaissance, a multifaceted Renaissance, of which the first phase culminated in Indian Independence on August 15, 1947.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna

made a standing proclamation, "I come forth age after age, to protect, preserve, and foster *dharma* (righteousness)."

In fulfillment of this standing proclamation, India has been blessed with a perennial procession of saints, sages, and high-souled men and women from all segments of life. They sprang up and continue to spring up in different regions of the country. The language of each is different, but the essence of their message is one and indivisible. The traditions and legacies they bequeath are the cementing elements of unity in diversity. These minstrels of God are the real architects and builders of India from the past, the present, and the future.

Swami Chinmayananda is among India's finest additions to the galaxy of stalwarts and selfless nation builders. Young Balakrishnan, as Swami Chinmayananda was known in his early years, was a fiery youth, witnessing the unfoldment of the first phase of modern Indian Renaissance. A questing soul, it was the religious and spiritual aspect of this Renaissance that gripped his imagination. This eventually brought about an inner transformation in him, a

Continued on Col 1, page 3

Principles of Vedanta

VEDANTA WELCOMES

We are ever active and dynamic. As there is action, it is implied that there is some motivation behind our actions; for, as the *Manusmriti* states, whatever man does is motivated by desire alone.

Unfortunately, what we crave for today has no value tomorrow and life thus becomes an endless pursuit of transient joys. A youngster attending college is going to classes not for the sake of gaining knowledge only, but in fact is driven by the desire for a certificate. The certificate is not desired for its own sake, but for the white-collar job it is expected to fetch. The job is not an end in itself either, but is desired for the money it earns for the youngster. The money is earned not just to save in a bank but is to be used to purchase a house, car and a number of other objects and also to support a married life that the youngster dreams of. If asked why he or she desires all these, the youngster would say "To enjoy them". So ultimately what the youngster wants is to enjoy; to be happy.

Our real search is indeed only for "Happiness". All of us desire and search for that one Happiness. When desire is the same, the action must also be the same- but is it so? Although we have one common desire, we undertake very many variegated ventures - in fact acrobatics- to acquire Happiness.

It is also the common experience that when a group of people endeavor to achieve one common thing, they achieve it because of their effort. We see all of us sweating and striving to secure

happiness. But yet....! Why? Why? Why? This is so because there is a contradiction between our desire and our action. It is like this: I desire to go to Delhi; but I board the train bound for Bombay. How will I reach Delhi? Similarly, our desire is for Happiness but we seek it through objects. Hence this sad situation. It is very difficult to accept that objects do not give happiness. Yet, that is the plain truth. Imagine how many objects of our desire we have already gained. Did we gain the true Happiness? The eternal Happiness?

One may possess all the objects of this mundane existence, yet feel most miserable and unhappy - like that wretched King who did nothing but complain of chronic sickness and sorrow and neglected his duty to attend to the needs of his people. No doctor in the land could diagnose his condition, for in fact he had no *physical* ailment. One intelligent doctor wanted the King to realize how widespread unhappiness was among the populace. So he prescribed a unique remedy for the King's condition: the King should obtain and don the coat of a truly happy man in his Kingdom. The King's men searched the breadth and length of the country for the truly happy man, but alas in vain! At last when they did find their man, he turned out to be an indigent without any possession, not even a coat! See the paradox? Think! Think!!

Can objects give us happiness at all times and under all circumstances, even as sugar gives its sweet taste at any time, in any place? Although we be in a bitter mood, yet sugar will not be sour. So we say that 'sweetness' is the nature of sugar. In the same way, is happiness the nature of objects? Moreover, it is amusing to observe that an object which gives joy to one, creates sorrow for another. A smoker puffs with pleasure and at the very sight of it, the non-smoker rebuffs! Examples

can be multiplied.

We crave for happiness; the desire for happiness is an uncultivated, inborn urge within all living creatures. Only a practical man dares raise the question "Where does Happiness really lie?". The True Seeker seeks to fulfil the One Desire. He craves to know. How to attain it?

VEDANTA WELCOMES such a seeker.

-Br. Sudheer Chaitanya

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THE DIVINE INTEGRATOR *cont'd from col 2, page 1*

spiritual rebirth.

Just as the earthbound, crawling caterpillar ultimately emerges as the many-hued butterfly and wings its way into the wide expanse, free and untrammelled, the birth of a saint is preceded by the extinction of his lower self. This is an eternal truth tested and attested to, time and again.

When Buddha, the emperor of the realm of the Spirit, came into being, Gautama, the prince of the tiny Kingdom of Kapilavastu, died. Swami Vivekananda came into being when Narendra, the university educated modern skeptic, died.

Likewise, Balakrishnan, brilliant, handsome, witty and with a string of degrees in literature and law suffixed to his name, was transformed into Swami Chinmayananda, thanks to the two alchemists of modern India, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, and Swami Tapovan Maharaj of Uttarkasi.

Swami Chinmayananda can be

appropriately compared to a spiritual Ganga, flowing placidly at times and tumultuously at other times, but cleansing, purifying and inspiring at all times. He is a divine integrator, minstrel of divine glory, and an inexhaustible reservoir of inspiration.

Some three decades ago on that blessed day in 1951 when Swami Chinmayananda descended to the plains from the heights of Gangotri to share his spiritual inheritance with the rest of the mankind, he ceased to be an individual, and a movement, at first very small, began to take shape. A mighty oak grows out of a tiny acorn. The phenomenal growth of the Chinmaya Mission in just thirty-three years is yet another instance of this age-old truth.

The chariot of the Chinmaya movement, with Swami Chinmayananda as its charioteer, father, mother and guru, is one of the powerful forces of our times, leading the divinely ordained, continuing procession of Indian Renaissance. This is the trumpet call signalling the second phase of modern India: to restore the majesty of the moral law.

-S. Ramakrishnan

---ooOOoo--

CHINMAYA UVACA

*As long as we have not realised
that the whole creation is nothing
but our own Self,
which is divine and omnipotent
as the Lord of Dwaraka Himself,
so long we cannot afford
to leave our complete dependence
on our preceptor.*

FOCUS ON....

THE GREENBELT STUDY GROUP

Every Sunday evening, when most people are gearing their minds back to the workaday world, a group of Vedanta aspirants meets to discuss the impermanent nature of the world and reaffirm the changeless essence of our true being. For ninety minutes, the pressing demands of life seem to evaporate under the scrutiny of Vedantic logic. The scriptural texts and inspiring commentaries of Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda usher the discussions to realms beyond the world of senses.

This study group has been meeting since Fall 1988. Like other Chinmaya study groups, this one had its origin in the magical discourses of Sri Gurudev, who brings the bliss of enlightened rishis to our midst. Having experienced a taste of that, it is but natural to wish to inquire further: What is that state? Is it our real essence? Is it available to me or only to a few great souls?

Chinmaya Study Groups form a launch pad for such inquiry. The Greenbelt group is a remarkable mix of inquiring seekers. Never content to accept on belief but desiring full conviction, they grapple with the tenets of Vedanta. Not wanting the study to be solely academic, members have initiated several practices to ensure that the principles are applied to daily life. Members alternate in leading guided meditation; at the end of passages that emphasize the Goal (*sadhya*), the group tries to articulate specific methods (*sadhanas*) that will take us to the Goal; and to further strengthen the commitment to practice the teachings, we have started a 'thought for the week' to reflect on at home. The group has completed the first two texts of the Chinmaya Scheme of

Study, Manual of Self-Unfoldment and Bhaja Govindam, and is now studying Sankara's Atma Bodha. Soon we will be taking up the essence of Bhagavad Gita in the book Art of Man Making.

Many of the members of the Greenbelt Study Group are known to the rest of the Chinmaya Mission. Arvind Bhagwat, occasionally accompanied by his wife Medha, known to many as the parents of Vineet (who from age four has been regularly attending our chanting and meditation!), is a scientist at the National Agricultural Research Center. Mrs Amita Mani, known also as mother of Gayatri, is becoming very active in teaching Bala Vihar at Kailas Niwas on Sunday mornings and will be coordinating a day-camp at the Center this summer (*see separate news item*). K.A. Narayanan of Silver Spring is a consulting engineer for NASA and active in Shiva Vishnu Temple as well. Dr. Amarjit Singh, former director of National Laboratory at Pilani, is at the Plasma Research Center of University of Maryland. Dr Ramesh Chandra Saxena is also a scientist at the University of Maryland. And last but not least are our former host and our present host-- Sai Nellore, and sometimes his wife Ranjani, with the World Bank, and Chandra Pathak, a software engineer who used to attend the Vienna Study Group until last Fall.

Occasional attendees include Bina Patel, a longtime Mission worker from Philadelphia who is now in Greenbelt working as a consulting engineer, Prasant Shah, a computer scientist and former roommate of Sai, and Chandrashekhar Ranade, who is largely on missions around the world for the World Bank. The group still misses Dr. Moorthy Cheruvu who had regularly attended the classes until his move to New Jersey last year.

The Greenbelt Study Group welcomes visits from anyone wishing to join uplifting spiritual discussions on Sunday evenings at 5:00 p.m. For information please call Vilasini or Suresh at 301-593-6553.

Editor's Note: *FOCUS ON* is a column that Smrithi intends to feature regularly to acquaint CMWRC members of the activities of all Study Groups. The coordinators of various Study Groups are requested to send in articles similar to the one above for publication in future issues of Smrithi.

YOUTH CORNER...

AHIMSA (NON-INJURY)

because no person is faultless. Ahimsa ties into all of this, for it demands that "mentally we don't injure anyone". Notice the key underlined word "mentally". You may physically appear to harm someone but if there are good intentions behind your actions, it is considered Ahimsa. An example may be a person who turns in a man that has committed mass murders. Even though this is hurting physically the homicidal maniac- for he will probably get capital punishment- it is for the good of everyone else in the community. Ahimsa is an honorable quality for everyone to have. That is why the Hindu culture is based on Ahimsa, Brahmacharya and Sathyam. These values apply at every level, be it national or communal. Without self-control (Brahmacharya) the society would be one big chaos. Without non-injury (Ahimsa) there would be no peace whatsoever anywhere. And, without ideas, ideals and values (Sathyam) there would be no togetherness within the society. These three values will help all generations live through struggles and troubles in total tranquillity and "withinness".

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THE DELIGHT SONG

I am the sun at dawn
I am the purple haze of the sky at dusk
I am the waves of a warm sea
I am the blue, silver of the sky
I am the rays of the moon

I am the earth beneath my feet
I am me
I am you
and, I am the world.

- Niraj Bhatt

---ooOOoo--

BALA VIHAR

The Maha Shivaratri celebration at Kailas Niwas was, by all accounts, truly successful. The inspired mood showed in the devotion with which the Akhanda Nama Japa was performed throughout the morning, afternoon and evening hours. It showed again in the upbeat performance of the Yuva Kendra Band under Brni. Arpita Chaitanya and in the remarkable plays by the Bala Vihar children. Anoop, who reports on the days' events below, was himself a key participant in many of the activities, including his role as Yama in Markandeya.

MAHA SHIVARATRI

It was 4:00 a.m., Feb 24th. We assembled in front of Sri Jagadeeswara at Kailas Niwas. One by one, each of us took turns doing the Abhishekam to the chanting of Rudram. Soon, more people started to arrive. They joined us in the Abhishekam of the Shivalinga which was kept under the hood of a serpent. The Akhanda Nama Japa started at 6:00 a.m.

We did the Usha Pooja at 6:15 a.m. At 9:00 a.m., we started the Shiva Sahasranama Archana. This was when we chanted the 1008 names of Lord Shiva and offered flowers unto Him. This lasted until 11:00 a.m.

From 11:00 a.m. till 12:00 p.m. we chanted Shiva Stotrams. At 2:00 p.m., the Maha Rudrabhishekam began. This was

an elaborate pooja performed to propitiate Lord Shiva. The children also participated in this by repeatedly chanting "Om Namashivaya". This pooja ended at 7:00 p.m.

The pooja was followed by Maha Aarati. I had the good fortune to chant the Aarati in the presence of a big crowd of devotees. After the Aarati, the Kailas Niwas senior Bala Vihar presented a play called "Markandeya". This was followed by the performance of the Chinmaya Yuva Kendra "Bhajan Band". The third program was presented by the Fairfax Bala Vihar. It was a humorous play showing the consequence of Nandi's indifference to his Master's commands. The fourth item was Bharata Natyam by Sharada Chidambaram showing Lord Shiva's Cosmic Dance. This was followed by a play by the Herndon Bala Vihar on the Descent of Ganga. All these cultural programs were over at 9:30 p.m. Then Anjali Kumar of the Chinmaya Yuva Kendra gave a talk on the significance of Shivaratri, which was very informative. After this, Br. Sudheerji explained Shiva Manasa Pooja. The Akhanda Nama Japa was started again. Then at 12:00 midnight, my Bala Vihar friend, Veena Rao, performed the Sampurna Aarati after which prasada was distributed to everyone.

- Anoop Kumar, Age 11

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ADI SANKARA'S ANCESTRAL HOME NOW UNDER THE CHINMAYA UMBRELLA

An international center for spiritual studies would soon start functioning in the long forgotten maternal home of Sree Sankara in Melpazhur, Kerala, India. In a function held on Feb 18, 90, Swami Chinmayananda inaugurated the center.

Sri Sankaran Namboodiri, the present link in Sree Sankara's *parampara* (lineage), has transferred to the Chinmaya International Foundation, Cochin the Melpazhur *Mana* (mansion) where Sree Sankara's mother Aryamba was born. After the death of Sankara's father, Aryamba is said to have lived here for some time with Sankara. It is at this time Sree Sankara wrote his commentaries on *Brahmasutra*, *Bhagavad Geeta* and *Upanishads*.

This ancient *illom* (estate) with its impressive large house, courtyards and temples is situated on 8 acres of land, near Cochin in South India. There is no doubt that under the tender care of Swami Chinmayananda, the historic house will be well protected and preserved for posterity.

Ashlesha Tamboli, a member of CMWRC, was present at the inauguration during her recent visit to India.

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CMWRC

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR VOLUNTEER HELP

Much volunteer work is required in the maintenance of the Kailas Niwas building and premises. If you can help with lawn mowing, gardening, house cleaning and similar chores, please call the Center (301-384-5009) or Dr or Mrs Naidu (703- 273-8311).

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JOIN THE KAILAS BHAJAN BAND!

Every Sunday at 12 noon, members of the Fairfax Yuva Kendra are meeting after their Study session at Dr. Naidu's house, to practice and enjoy performance of Eastern and Western spiritual music.

Regular musicians so far include Niraj Bhatt on electric keyboard and piano, Ajay Gupta on drums, Ravi Gupta on baritone, Aditi and

Mallika Seth on Violin, Bharati Soman, Sharada Chidambaram, and Renu Poduval with percussion and vocals, and Brni. Arpita on guitar. Mr. Neelkanth Bhatt is also helping with direction and vocals.

The Kailas Bhajan Band gave its first performance on Shivaratri night itself at 'Kailas Niwas' and plans to play at other functions and schools around the City.

Any teenager who likes to sing or can play an instrument, either eastern or western, would be a welcome addition to the group. If you are interested please call Brni. Arpita at 301-384-5009, or Niraj Bhatt at 703-503-9419.

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KAILAS NIWAS OUTREACH PROGRAM EXTENDED TO PHILADELPHIA, BALTIMORE, MARTINSBURG, AND NOW HARRISBURG

As noted in the first issue of Smrithi, a major goal of the Center for 1990 is to serve communities in nearby cities. By Gurudev's grace, much progress is being made towards this goal. We are glad to report that Br. Sudheer Chaitanya is now conducting a day-long Yajna once every month in Philadelphia. Similar programs are now under way also at Harrisburg, Pa and Martinsburg, W.Va.

Baltimore has made its commitment too with the opening of a Bala Vihar class and an adult Study Group in March. Brni. Arpitaji, Br. Sudheerji and Mrs Sridevi Kumar are helping with the classes which meet alternate Saturdays.

We take great pleasure in extending a joyous welcome to our fellow Mission members in Philadelphia, Baltimore, Harrisburg and Martinsburg.

CHINMAYA SUMMER CAMP AT KAILAS NIWAS

Are you one of those countless parents who must worry this summer about providing adequate care and useful learning opportunities for their children staying home off from school? If so, there is good news for you! This year you don't have to send the children half the way around the world in search of that reliable, TLC you want for them. A summer camp is being organized at Kailas Niwas this summer which will provide a stimulating environment to learn Hindu values. Please call Mrs Amita Mani at (301) 552-0493 or (301) 384-5009, for further details.

CORRECTION

Please note that the Atma Bodh class conducted by Br. Sudheer Chaitanya every Tuesday, is at Shobha and Raju Chidambaram's residence (703-461-3785). The phone number given in the Feb 90 issue was incorrect.

CHARTERED BUS TOURS

We intend to organize one or more chartered bus tours to areas of likely interest to our members. The first one planned is a trip on May 27, 90 to the Sri Venkateswara Temple and Hindu-Jain Temple in Pittsburgh. The cost of the trip in a luxury, Greyhound-size bus (equipped with VCR etc.) is expected to be in the \$25-\$30 range per person. Please call 703-461-3785 or 703-273-8311 if you are interested to make your reservation.

CENTER RECEIVES TAX EXEMPT STATUS FROM IRS

It was never in doubt. Yet it was with relief that Nanik Lahori received the eagerly awaited letter from the IRS granting CMWRC the tax exempt status. With this favorable ruling, CMWRC now enjoys all the privileges of a non-profit religious organization. For you, members of the Mission, it means that your donations and membership contributions will continue to be tax deductible.

The Center needs the generous financial support of its members. If you are not a member already, we urge you to enroll yourself and benefit from the many free spiritual and cultural programs offered for adults, teenagers and children alike by the Mission in Washington, Philadelphia, Baltimore and nearby areas. Members receive free subscription to *Mananam*, a high quality magazine devoted to Vedantic Philosophy published from San Jose, Ca by Chinmaya Mission (West). They also receive the CMW Newsletter.

Please call Center (301) 384-5009 or Nanik Lahori (301) 652-9474 for further details and enroll yourself and your family as members today!

KAILAS NIWAS' RAMAYANA SERIES TO BE AIRED ON TV Ch.56.

Watch out, Ramanand Sagarji!

The youth and children of Kailas Niwas have created a most entertaining yet spiritually moving rendition of the immortal epic Ramayana for the television screen! To be broadcast as a mini-series by Darshan (Channel 56) in the Washington area, this production was ably directed by Mrs Mrinalini Sadananda who also wrote the script along with Neelkanth and Niraj Bhatt.

Do not miss viewing this series! You will laugh, cry and be moved and, most of all, admire the abundant talent of these youngsters!

2-DAY VEDANTA RETREAT ANNOUNCED BY RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA SOCIETY OF MARYLAND

Sarada Devi Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of Maryland announces its Third 2-Day Vedanta Retreat, May 26-27, 90 at New Windsor, Md. Conducted by Swami Brahmarupananda of Vivekananda Vedantic Society of Chicago, participants would use Swami Chinmayananda's "Ram Gita" as the text. Registration fee of \$45 per person includes overnight stay and four meals. For further information please call Mr. Sood (301) 249-2509 if in the Washington, D.C. area or Mr Jyotin Choksey (301) 529-0043 in the Baltimore area.

CONGRATULATIONS TO....

Keerthana Sadananda who won Supercomputer competition - a quarter million dollars- for her school Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. She along with three members of her team will be going for three weeks in summer to Cornell University for an all expense paid super computer training sponsored by IBM, NSF and Cornell. Her project on "Chaotic Cardiac Arrhythmias" also won Grand Prize at Virginia State Science Fair.

Smrithi is a newsletter published by Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center. Editor: Raju Chidambaram (703-461-3785). Editorial Board: Vilasini Balakrishnan, Brni. Arpita Chaitanya, Br. Sudheer Chaitanya, Nanik Lahori, K. Sadananda, and G. Sreekumar. All articles, letters are to be sent to the Editor (Smrithi), Kailas Niwas, 46 Norwood Rd, Silver Spring, Md 20905. Last date for receiving articles for next issue: June 10, 90.