

Chinmaya Smrithi



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

Volume 23, Number 1, January 18, 2013

Happy New Year! Happy Sankranti!

*May we be so fortunate to be blessed by
Gurudev's Grace, Love, Wisdom, and Peace in
2013 and forever...*

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Members and Friends

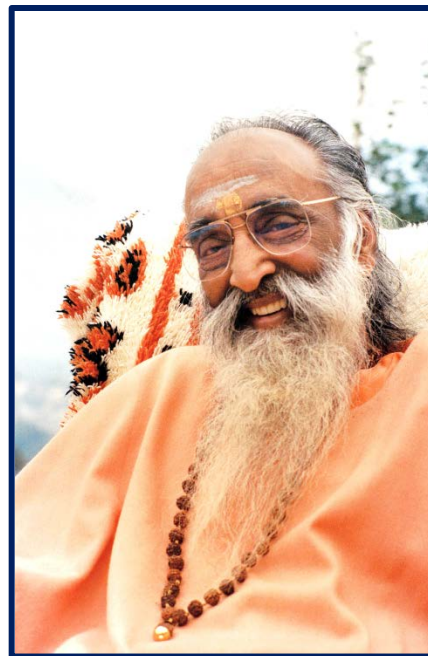
- Moving Towards Light – Aziza Meer

Vedantic Thoughts

- Series: Jnana Yoga and Self Realization – XI – Acharya K Sadananda

Smrithi Reprints

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"Since Consciousness alone is the Eternal Reality, and everything else is a projection upon it, the very essence in everything, as expressed in the Vedas also, is this Consciousness. The seeker who listens to the Vedas reflects upon their wisdom, and ultimately comes to experience the fulfillment of his life, is nothing other than the same Consciousness..." ---Swami Chinmayananda, from Holy Gita XV:15.

Calendar and Upcoming Events

- Sun Jan 20 – Martin Luther King Day Youth Seva at Chinmayam – Sandwich for the Homeless
- Sat Mar 9 – Sun Mar 10 – Maha Shivaratri ; Regular Bala Vihar Classes

- Sat Mar 30 – Sun Mar 31 – Spring Break: No Bala Vihar Classes

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 Bhagavad Gita with Sri Gurudev's commentary is online at www.myholygita.com

Next Issue

- Articles for the next regular bi-monthly issue - January 2013, are due by January 1st, 2013
- Email submissions to smrithi@chinmayadc.org. Submission instructions at www.chinmayadc.org.

Useful Links:

CMWRC – Washington Regional Center www.chinmayadc.org

Chinmaya Mission Trust www.chinmayamission.com

Chinmaya Mission West www.chinmayamission.org

Chinmaya International Foundation, E-Vedanta Course www.chinfo.org

Washington Region – Herndon VA Chapter website www.chinmayasomnath.org

Washington Region – Frederick MD Chapter website www.chinmayafrederick.org

Washington Region – Richmond VA Chapter website www.chinmayadc.org/ActivitiesRichmond.htm

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 – Nishant Carr, Siri Neerchal, Ananya Krishnan, Arthi Bala, Priya Tandon, Maya Ramani, Roushini Manjunath, Anvitha Kambham, Radhika Agrawal, Megha Karthikeyan, Alay Shah, Nitin Chetla, Srutha Srinivasan, Atman Panigrahi, Vishnu Dharmaraj, and Keshav Kowtha

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

News, Notes and Flyers

CMWRC Events Held

- Swami Chidatmananda, Head of Chinmaya Mission Andhra Pradesh, conducted Common Time and Adult Sessions at Chinmayam on November 17 and 18. The theme of Adult Session was the name of the Lord. Audio recording from a Sunday adult session is available on the Audio page at www.chinmayadc.org.
- Sri Raju Chidambaram presented themes from his book, “The Law of Love and the Mathematics of Spirituality” at Chinmayam on December 8th and 9th. The books are on sale and the proceeds benefit CMWRC Capital Projects, such as Chinmaya Somnath construction.
- Tapovan and Gita Jayanthi were observed at Chinmayam on December 23rd. See article on the topic. The day was also elaborately celebrated in Northern Virginia.
- Pujya Swami Dheeranandaji conducted Jnana Yajna on Gita Chapter 2, verses 19-36 in Northern Virginia during last week of December – 25-29th. The audio recordings and photographs from the event have been posted on the website (www.chinmayadc.org) under Audio and Picture Album navigation links, respectively.
- New Years Day Puja was performed in Northern Virginia under the guidance of Pujya Swami Dheeranandaji, and also at Chinmayam. Swamiji and others in Northern Virginia visited the construction site of Chinmaya Somnath. Photos of the trip are also posted on the website.

Announcements

- Chinmaya West Newsletter for January 2013 is available at Chinmaya West website: <http://www.chinmayamission.org/cmwnews>
- Friday Evening “Adult Vihar” Satsang at Chinmayam – next session on January 25th. The sessions are free and open to all members and friends. For further details, please contact: fridaysatsang@chinmayadc.org or visit Events Page at www.chinmayadc.org

Current/Upcoming Events

- Maha Shivaratri Observations. Details soon.



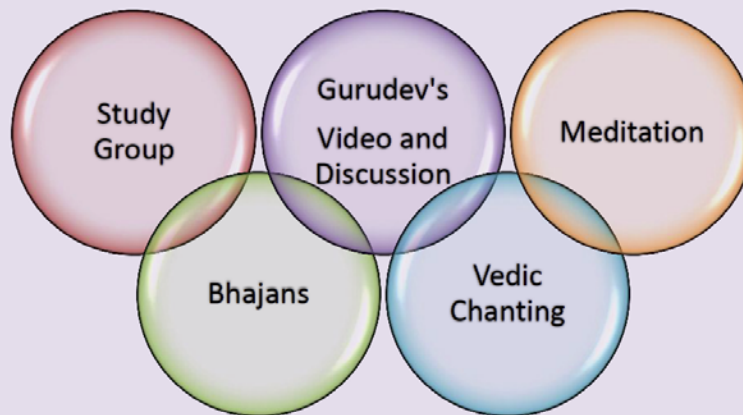
Invites You to

Friday Night Satsang

At Chinmayam Spiritual Center, 46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring MD 20905

December 14, January 11, and ongoing in 2013

7:30 pm



Chinmayam is becoming a vibrant Spiritual Center on Friday evenings! Offer your own ideas for additional spiritual activities for adults. Introduce your friends to Chinmaya Mission. Make Friday evenings the time to recharge your Sadhana, meet Chinmaya friends, and inspire your week! The Satsangs are offered at no cost and are open to all adults.

CURRENT PROGRAM:

7:30 – 9:00 pm - Choose among: Chinmaya Study Group *OR* Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda's Video and Discussion *OR* Meditation and Bhajans

9:00 – 10:00 pm - Choose among: Bhajans *OR* Meditation Session *OR* Garba

Please give your ideas and feedback at our online survey:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TKBC8HH> Or email: fridaysatsang@chinmayadc.org

Vedanta Camp 2013

Conducted by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Texts for Study: Advaita Makaranda

The well-balanced daily schedule allows ample time for study, reflection, service, and solitude, so that each student achieves internal integration and external harmony through the confluence of karma yoga, jnana yoga, and bhakti yoga. The secluded and serene ashram surroundings, in the midst of majestic Redwood trees and rolling hills, is a perfect and beautiful haven for sincere spiritual seekers.

During this 6 day camp, Pujya Guruji will take up the topic "*Advaita Makaranda*". This short 28-verse composition by Sri Lakshmidhara Kavi brings out the entire essence of the teachings of the upanishads. This "Nectar of Advaita", uses logical reasoning processes to explain the nature of reality and clear any possible doubts. Also included in this book is a beautiful set of verses composed by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, titled *Kritagnyata*, in praise of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda.

June 18-23, 2013

Arrive Monday, June 17

Depart Monday, June 24

Registration includes lodging and boarding, and excludes transportation. This camp is for adults only, and is not a family camp. Space is limited. Register early.

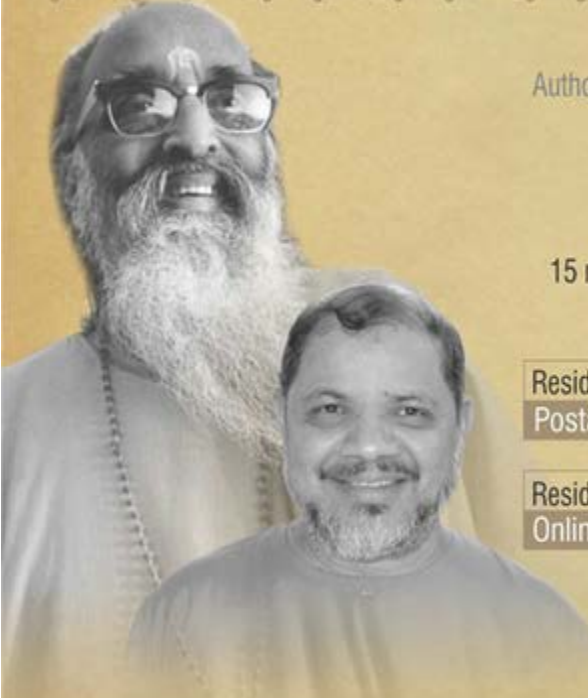
\$800 per person

Details and Registration: <http://www.krishnalaya.org/krishnalaya/index.php/vedanta2013>

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



WATCH UPANISHAD GANGA

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/upanishadganga>

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, the apex body of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide, is pleased to announce the televised airing of its new 52-episode Hindi series, Upanishad Ganga, from March 11, 2012 onward.

Watch the series weekly on India's Door Darshan (DD1/DD National) channel on Sundays, 10-10:30 a.m. IST. To view the series live online outside of India, synchronize your clock with IST time and go to <http://zengatv.com/home.zenga>. Scroll down and click on the logo of DD National. If live streaming gets disconnected, refresh the page. Also see episodes on YouTube and follow Upanishad Ganga on Facebook and Twitter.

The impact of televised media is tremendous, as seen by the success of the TV serials on Ramayana and Mahabharata. The theme of the Upanishads, however, is unique and has never been telecast as a serial to date. Chinmaya Mission conceived, developed, and produced this herculean project under its Chinmaya Creations banner. Conceived and inspired by His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda, Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide, the episode previews have received high acclaim from viewers worldwide.

Upanishad Ganga is dedicated to Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda, who began his spiritual work with teachings on the Upanishads. Each 30-minute episode explains main Upanishadic concepts through a captivating story presented in a blend of drama, music, and/or dance. Each episode depicts teachings with practical implications in daily life, inspiring inner transformation for all viewers, layman or scholar.

The series promotes the Upanishadic message that "All problems are due to lack of right thinking. Human life is rare and precious. Its main purpose is to inquire into and realize the supreme Truth, which is the support of this world and the Self of all beings. This Realization can be gained through purity of mind and the Upanishadic wisdom learned from an enlightened Master. The realized Master ever remains engaged in the welfare of all beings."

Dr. Chandraprakash Dvivedi (of 'Chanayka' and 'Pinjar' fame) directed the series. A core team of Chinmaya Mission acharyas and scholars researched and conceptualized each episode. Upanishad Ganga will also be made available in the future with subtitles/dubbing in various languages.

Hari Om!

Chinmaya Mission Ann Arbor cordially invites you for the
20th Anniversary Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Camp -2013
by His Holiness Swami Tejomayanandaji.

All activities will be around the theme of “**20/20 VISION**” for the 20th Anniversary Mahasamadhi Camp.

Come and gain the VISION OF TRUTH in this inspiring camp! The main discourse of the camp is:

Ramana Maharshi's "Saddarshanam – Vision of Truth” by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji.

Other features will include:

- Guided Meditation for Adults led by Swami Shanatanandaji
- “Mukunda Mala” – Vision in Devotion discourses by Swami Ishwaranandaji
- "Yoga" led by Swami Sharananandaji
 - Daily Satsangs led by Swamis, Swaminis, Brahmacharis and acharyas from around the US,
- Canada and Caribbean
- CHYK Camp for Young Adults on “Drg Drishya Vivek” by Acharya Vivekji
- Bala Vihar Programs for Children
- Field trips to the Motor City highlights!
- Recreational activities for the whole family!
-

Camp dates: July 29 - August 3 2013

Venue: Adoba Hotel (formerly the Hyatt Regency Hotel Dearborn)
600 Town Center Dr, Dearborn, MI 48126

Registration will be opening soon.

Please save the date!!!

With Prem and Om,
Acharya Sharada Kumar
Chinmaya Mission Ann Arbor

Jnana Yajna and New year Puja Event Report

Sri Gopalakrishna

Hari Om!

Greetings for New Year 2013.

CMWRC recently concluded a week long Jnana Yajna by Pujya Swami Dheerananda in Virginia during the last week of December. The text (Gita Ch 2 Verses 19-36) were the same verses selected for the Gita Chanting competition for this year; an integration of our premier programs. This was followed by the New Year Guru Paduka Puja and Vishnu Sahasranamavali Puja where we were fortunate to have Swamiji in VA with us. We were also fortunate to have a Stotra Parayanam by the Chinmaya Shloka children in Swamiji's presence on Dec25th evening at the residence of Vibha and Vinod Kulkarni.

A number of children participated daily in reciting the Gita Dhyanam and Gita Chapter Verses 1-36 each night before Yajna discourses. We concluded each evening with Sri Krishna Arati and Sri Gurudev's Arati.

The Yajna was well-received. We had between 80-100 adults and around 30 children attend during each day of the week long program, inspite of the really cold weather, wintry precipitation and vacation time. The first evening program was canceled due to a mistake by the Dulles South Management not informing their staff. Swamiji continued his talks to finish within four days, despite having fever on several days and a sore voice due to cold. Swamiji's presence always serves as an inspiration for the local sevaks, especially those new to Chinmaya Mission. We are grateful to Pujya Swamiji and we hope this tradition continues.

The January 1st Puja went well, and was attended by around 100 adults and 50 children. Swamiji led the Namavali Puja. Mahaprasad was

served to all who attended after the program. A group of members visited the Chinmaya Somnath site with Swamiji, thanks to the initiative and planning by Prakash ji. The holy water from the Paduka Puja was sprinkled on the land by the Acharyas and participants.

Vinod and Vibha did a splendid job hosting and taking care of Swamiji and our sincere thanks to them. Many thanks to Anant Somalwar who coordinated aspects of the Yajna, Darshana Somalwar to coordinate the bhikshas, and the numerous sevaks who worked each night to setup/breakup the facility. Our thanks to the Puja team led by Ramesh Golla and Karpagam Balan for the New Year Puja and Sunita Samavedam for coordinating the Mahaprasad. Our special thanks to Acharya Pramila ji for her presence and support during the Yajna and Puja.

The audio files of the discourses have been posted to the website. The pictures from the visit will be posted shortly and email will go to CMWRC.

We received offerings of \$10,077.00 in the form of Guru dakshina/bhiksha from the participants during Yajna and New Year Puja.

Hari Om!



Tapovan and Gita Jayanthi Celebration

Editor's Note: On Sunday, December 23rd, Chinmaya Mission Family members gathered together at Chinmayam to celebrate birthday of Srimad Bhagavad Gita and birthday of Swami Tapovan Maharaj, Guru of our Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda. Six adult members and CHYK members took turns to chant Tapovan Shatakam verses and recite the meanings. This was followed by Bala Vihar Students, CHYK members and adult members chanting their favorite verse in the Gita and explain why that verse inspires them. Here, we have included two Gita renditions from that day by Bala Vihar students.

Alec Beri, Chinmayam Class at Silver Spring

Chapter 18, Verse 49

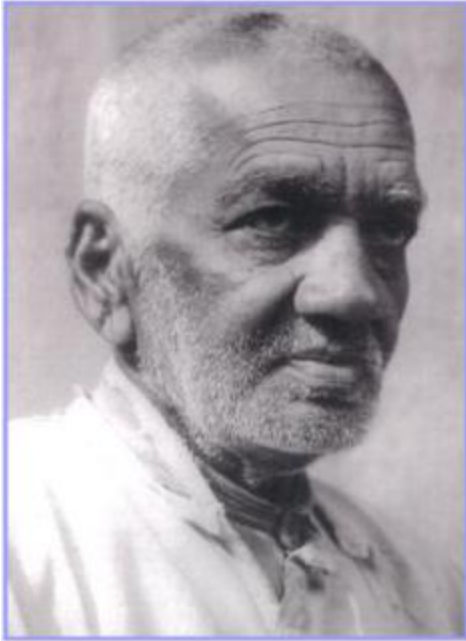
asakta-buddhiḥ sarvatra
jitātmā vigata-sprahā
naṣkarmya-siddhiṁ paramām
sannyāsenādhigacchati

"He whose intellect is unattached everywhere who has subdued his self, from whom desire has fled, he, through renunciation, attains the Supreme State of Freedom from action."

This was my favorite verse because of its applicability to everyday life and its potential to remain that way for all of time. It teaches that to attain freedom, one must first train the mind to denounce the basic, worldly, material possessions that one's value is based upon by the standards of many people. Ever since the status of people was determined by how much money he/she had, people have struggled to reach the top of the pyramid of wealth on which few can reside. In doing so, they sacrifice personal relationships and create a great deal of distress to those around them. On the other hand, those who determine they are not fit to climb the pyramid sulk and condemn the selfishness of the wealthy. In fact, to some extent, the possession of wealth has always been frowned

upon by people as a response produced by the agitated mind which has not fulfilled its desire. There is also a group of people that, regardless of financial status, are not associated with this game of trying to be the biggest guy on the block. They simply do what they do, enjoy what they do, cherish the people in their lives, and most importantly, do not appraise their own lives according to what kind of car or house they have. These people recognize that happiness, not being inherent in these material objects, simply will not come from the acquisition of wealth and material goods. When I picture the future, many times I dream of driving a Mercedes and living in an apartment overlooking a beautiful city, and how that will make me better than those around me. But then I realize a few things: First, this Mercedes will only be fulfilling until I've had it for a few weeks and my mind begins to realize that all it is doing is transporting me and regardless of what I am being transported in, I will reach my destination as long as the car functions. I will also begin to realize that no one is dwelling on the fact that I have a Mercedes, wishing they could be me because of it. I will also realize that convincing people that I am better than them and making people wish they could be me has absolutely no impact on my happiness. Therefore, if I work throughout my life to attain this dream, then once I reach it, I will have spent so much time and energy on something that meant nothing to begin with. I will have lost years of invaluable time and energy. I will finally realize that I am a fool playing a game that I was drawn into when I saw others reach the top of the pyramid and mistook their states of mind for happy ones. Thus, the desire to attain a higher "standard of living" after one has already reached a standard that satisfies most needs and wants is fruitless. After a reasonable standard of living has been obtained, the mind must shift to the pursuits of higher goals such as knowledge, love, and service.

* * *



“Whatever that is glorious, prosperous or powerful in any being, that knows you to be a manifestation of a part of My splendor.”

This year I am taking AP Biology. Over the past few months, I have learned about many different concepts, such as enzymes, cell parts, and photosynthesis. I realized just how complex the human body is. The cell undergoes many processes and an amazing amount of things happen at once within the cell, like protein formation and cellular respiration. Also, there are many different types of cells and altogether there are trillions of cells in the body. There are 7 billion people on this planet, not to mention all the rest of the plants, animals, and other living things. For all its complexity, the Earth is just one planet; there is also the rest of the ever-expanding space. Like Chapter 10, Verse 41 says, our bodies are glorious manifestations and they are just an infinitesimally small part of this even more magnificent universe and God. From the smallest cell to the largest planet, all of that glory belongs to the Supreme Self.

* * *



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Keshav Kowtha, Chinmayam Class at Silver Spring

Chapter 10, Verse 41

yad yad vibhutimat sattvam

srimad urjitam eva va

tat tad eva vagaccha tvam

mama tejo-'msa-sambhavam



Jnana Yajna by Pujya Swami Dheerananda

Topic: Gita Chapter 2, Verses 19-36

Ramya Joshi,

Bala Vihar Student, Shivanandam Class, Chinmaya Somnath

Hello Readers! Being a Californian with Indian heritage, I was familiar with some of the Hindu spiritual and historical stories from family, grandparents, Bal Vihar, and my bharatanatyam (Indian Classical dance) performances. But what I am about to share is very unique experience for me in my entire life. As a middle schooler, I had planned to spend my winter break with my cousins, while my mom had a surprise for me. She mentioned that I would be spending couple of hours a day for four days attending a Gita Jnana Yajna. As usual, I pictured a fire, homam, and some chanting when I heard the word yajna. What I could not figure out was why it was being done for so many days. After my inquiry, my mom mentioned that it was different and that I would understand when I attend. My mom grew up under the guidance of Guru Swami Dheerananda ji and his parents. What a coincidence now that I get to grow under the same Guru! I surprised myself that I was enjoying the lectures and was able to understand what our Guru was sharing with us. Well, I realized later that it was his art of breaking down the information into bits that help us understand difficult concepts. Yes, it was different experience all together and a memorable one. In spite of inclement weather, it was great to see other children and many adults attend the yajna. I will try to share what my noggin registered or retained. Here I go.

We as Hindus always wonder why God made us take this form for this life. When we are upset, we complain saying “Why God? Why me? Why this

life with these problems?” But when we are happy, we praise the Lord saying, “Thank you Lord for hearing my prayers! Now can you help me with this and that?” Well, in the 4 days of the Gita Jnana Yajna lectures conducted by our beloved Swamiji, all these questions were answered. The Yajna lectures were based on Chapter 2 of the Bhagavad Gita.

Most of us are aware of the BMI chart (The Body, Mind, and Intellect Chart), which was used by Swamiji to explain the usage of the body, mind, and intellect in the exhaustion of our vaasanas, or desires. Swamiji pointed out that the body, mind, and intellect are unreal, meaning that they are all dependent on **the self** (Om), which is located at the top of the BMI chart. This is why the B, M, and I all derive from Om.

Understanding the true meaning of life through these lectures really changed the way I looked at the hardships and opportunities thrown at me every day of my life. “That which is unavoidable should not be grieved upon,” as Swamiji quoted. As true as this statement will get, its powerful message opened our minds and our souls to our everyday lives. We have lemons (challenges) in life, it is now our turn to make the lemonade to our liking. We can either make it sweet or sour, but it all depends on the ingredients added in effort to get the desired result.

We all fear death whether we are aware of it or not. We think of death as “the end” or “our final breath”. But we consider sleep as “blessed personal

space” and “heaven”. But the way Swamiji explained it was one way that normal people would never consider fact or fiction. “Sleep is temporary death.” Then he paused to see our reaction. Shocking! Everyone was pondering on the statement. Then he said, “Death is permanent sleep.” Then we understood. “But what is dreaming?” questioned one disciple. “Your supreme state!” Swamiji said. Death is like changing clothes. When you wear out one, you’re gifted or given a new one to wear out. In the same way, when you wear out one body, God simply takes the old body to switch it out for a new one to wear out the soul’s desired desires.

Is my body real? Or am I real? Now, you may be wondering, “What is the difference?” There is a major difference that changes the prescription of the eyeglasses we look through, to see our lives. I refers to the aathma, the conscious, the self, and the infinite space that we are created in. **My body** refers to the skin and flesh that covers our soul. This is why we say that the body is materialistic, which is why we claim it for ourselves. Furthermore, is it true that **I, as a person**, have accomplished something? Or is it true that **I, as the self**, have accomplished something? Since we take this form as humans to exhaust our vaasanas, every time we have accomplished one desire, we “check it off the list”, so to speak. Our goal is to have a very short check list to realize GOD.

It was very strange to know that we all are from the same universal space. The great example of Katori (the hindi word for a soup bowl) was simple to understand. Scientifically, we can trace our history as far back as the dinosaurs. But then we stop there. Why not go farther? Because we forget what we are made from and who made us, we draw a blank. The Katori is made by a potter. But its true creator is space. The space in the pot is no different from the space surrounding that same

pot. It is not the pot that introduces a new kind of space into the katori, but it is the space that gives birth to the Katori. The universal space is our mother. Katori can be made and destroyed but the space remains unchanged.

Every day of the Yagna concluded with Chinmaya Aarati and Krishna Aarati. I also looked forward to the yummy chocolate that Swamiji distributed after the Aarti. Three chocolates, one each for healthy body, pure mind, and brilliant intellect. Kids and youth were ahead of adults in the line to receive his blessings. On the way back home, it was interesting to hear my elders discuss about what they understood in the Yagna.

Having shared my “new knowledge” with all of you, I hope that you too find the true meaning of this life and soon realize that the body isn’t real, yet I am real. These lectures have not only helped me, but all those who attended. Being enlightened by the spirituality of the Bhagavad Gita really has an impact on our lives and will forever be embedded in our soul.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts and experience with every reader.

Thank you and Hari OM.

Chinmaya Somnath New Year Puja

Ramya Joshi

Bala Vihar Student, Shivanandam Class

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2013! This year, we kicked off the year by attending the New Year Pooja held at Chinmaya Somnath, Herndon, Virginia. It was ideal for us to purify ourselves to start anew with our new life here in Virginia. Early morning was busy with activities like head bath followed by dressing up in new clothes while our parents made the items for Prasad. The excitement of starting a new year with family, grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles with Guruji's blessing was boundless. Yes, we reached the destination on time in the early morning chaos.

The altar was decorated beautifully with Lord pictures and idols. Swamiji led the Guru Paduka Stothram and Chinmaya Ashtotram. I have never heard anyone chant the ashtotram with such an emotion as Swamiji had done it. It actually made me think about the energy and focus it brought to the environment and our minds. Later Vishnu Sahasranamam and Lakshmi Ashtotram were chanted at a faster pace. I tried my best to chant as many as possible with the help of the English transcripts of the chants. It ended with Chinmaya Aarati and invoking blessings for everyone in the universe. It was then followed by Swami Dheerananda ji's short and yet powerful words about how we alone are responsible for our inner happiness in this outer world. This was followed by Acharya Pramila ji's encouraging words about removing negativity and promoting a healthy and positive mind and attitude. The line for blessing was very long with every young and adult excited about the new year. Swamiji sprinkled holy water from Gurudev's Paduka pooja on our heads with a beautiful rose. Acharya Pramila ji gave us a rose petal as memento of the pooja.

By the time the activity was done, we were ready for the Prasad. It was very kind of the volunteers to box up the yummy food for us. It was nice to see Swamiji and Acharayaji to have biksha with the rest of

us. Although it sounds like a lot of chanting, patience, energy, and effort, it is worth it to purify our minds to ensure a great future. Sarve Jana sukino bavantu! As we pray at our Bal Vihar every Sunday:

May everybody be happy

May everybody be free from disease

May everybody have good luck

May none fall on evil days!

Thank you and Hari OM.

Bhutanese Service Project – A Seva Initiative

Meena Radhakrishnan

*Washington DC Chapter of “Chinmaya Organization for Rural Development”
(CORD USA)*

The youth of Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center, waited expectantly at a community in Riverdale Maryland, huddling themselves in their warm coats, bracing themselves against the sharp winds brought in by that beautiful but crispy October afternoon. This was to be their first of several meetings with children of the Bhutanese Refugee community in Maryland, as part of a seva initiative to mentor and tutor the less-privileged kids living in the Bhutanese community. The kids came first, initially in trickles, joining in the many fun and games organized by the CHYKS, but as the infectious spirit of the gathering spread like a wild fire, it began to attract more and more kids to join us in droves. With hesitant smiles and gentle steps, few of the youth in the community eventually joined what was now a motley group consisting of an adult (yours truly); a number of youth (consisting of CHYKS); and a dozen sweet little kids who joined with much joy and gay abandon as only young children can. Together we played many games that afternoon, that served to help us break the ‘ice’ and get to know a little of one another.

This initiative, known as the Bhutanese Service Project began as part of a follow-up on the White House Dharmic Conference held on April 20th, 2012, where the plight of the nearly 3 million Bhutanese Hindus refugees who escaped their painful past to be settled in United States was highlighted. From leading a simple life of farming the mountainous land and living in mud homes, the refugees were thrust into a cauldron of big cities and states, such as New York ; Washington D.C. and Texas, each many times the size of Bhutan and with a significant cultural difference from their own. The refugees from Bhutan continued to face manifold hardships adapting to the new ways, culture and language barriers in their adopted country, their hopes for a bright future slowly fading and replaced by a sense of utter hopelessness, eventually resulting in an alarming

increase in the number of suicides in their community across the U.S.

Following this conference, an action plan evolved, approved by the board of CORD USA and CMWRC; in partnership with HASC (Hindu American Seva Communities) to have the youth, primarily the CHYKS (Chinmaya Mission Yuva Kendra) of our mission help the children and youth of the Bhutanese community in the Maryland settlement in a mentoring and tutoring program that involves:

- (1) Taking English lessons for the kids and youth on a fortnightly basis: The biggest barrier faced by the community is that of learning and understanding English-the doorway for a better future. Many of the younger kids in the settlement faced bullying and self-esteem issues due to not knowing the language. This barrier further prevents the kids from being fully integrated at school, and in the community, resulting in isolating the community at large.
- (2) Mentoring at-risk youth and providing a peer-support program: While the younger kids risked being bullied at school, the older kids were giving in to bad influences; losing respect for their culture and spending less time on education and more on, unproductive pastimes, some undergoing depression and low self-esteem. Hence this programs help reach out to mentor the kids at risk, while at the same time providing a better role-model through the involvement of our youth.
- (3) Tutoring: Education being the cornerstone of economic upliftment, no effort is complete without addressing the educational and academic needs of the children in the resettlement.

One of the challenges faced in this endeavor is the painful lack of awareness on the part of the parents, who having not received any formal education of

any sort, are not only unaware of the importance of education, but also have absolutely no idea of how their kid are faring at school. Upon having a conversation with some of the parents, it was obvious that they were not aware of what the grades stood for, or how little of English was spoken and understood by their children. To this effect, our project has continued to stress the importance of raising awareness on the importance of education to the parents as holding a passport for a better future for their children.

The CHYKS have continued to give their considerable time and energy to this budding project. We continue to meet with the children and youth every month, at the Sri Siva Vishnu Temple at Lanham, Maryland in the months since. The kids bring in their home works and books. Two of our CHYKS, Lekha Menon and Monica Sindwani, who have experience teaching, as part of TEACH AMERICA have developed an initial lesson-plan/curriculum, which combines a mix of games and lessons, to help the kids ease in and get comfortable in the initial period. Slowly but surely, this project has continued to gain momentum. During our last meeting in December, I was deeply touched to see the turnout in the number of kids from the settlement who wanted to participate and be part of this program. In fact, I had to turn away a few of the kids, having to forcefully pull out a kicking and screaming 6 year old from my car! The youth from the settlement have also warmed up to us after their initial tepid response, as was evinced by the few teenagers with tentative but sure smiles, who joined us this December to just 'hang out' with our youth.

As we gain further footing into this program, the challenges we face are many- the availability of the CHYKS on whom this program primarily depends upon and who continue to juggle an impossible schedule to commit to this project; treating the vagaries in the curriculum according to the age-groups of the kids attending; the ongoing efforts to raise awareness amongst the significant adults on the importance of education; the language barriers that we face in communicating with the people,

amongst others. But the joys and rewards of serving have been way too many- the smiles of joy on the faces of the children that light you from within; the laughter alighting from a hitherto despondent young girl, who earlier could not even make an eye contact strikes a chord deep within; the knowing that the connections made in those few moments mean a lot to the kids starved for friendship and social belonging brings a sense of richness within that no money on earth can buy- bringing us to a simple realization that the language of the heart needs no words, it needs little grammar; the language of love spoken from the heart can reach the corners of this barren earth turning them into fields of vibrant green.



The Bhutanese Service Project is more than a tutoring program, it is more than a mentoring project, it is a program that leads kids in hopeless conditions, to hope and aspire for more, beyond the reach of their circumstances, to reach higher and to believe further in themselves; and be inspired by the

very presence of the young men and women who came to serve them. This program is but a humble endeavor in reaching out to serve the needy in our community. It is my fervent hope and prayer that with His grace, the Bhutanese service program will realize the very potential that it has set out to fulfill.

Unto Sri Gurudev,

Meena Radhakrishnan

Seva coordinator

Chinmaya Somnath & CORD USA Washington D.C
Chapter



A College Student's 10 Questions on Hinduism

Vandana Bapna

Editor's Note: Paul Romesser, a college student taking a course on World Religions, recently approached Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center requesting assistance with ten questions so that he can write his final paper. Vandana Bapna answered the questions. What follows are the 10 questions with answers from Vandana.

1. What are the important holidays and traditions of Hinduism?

There are several holiday traditions. Some of the most prominent that are celebrated throughout being Diwali, Mahashivaratri, Hanuman Jayanti, Navaratri, Holi, Makara Sankranti, Ganesha Chaturthi, Sri Krishna Janmashtami and Rama Navami.

2. How has religion shaped your life?

Religious scriptures have guided me and my family in developing attitudes and making choices that would enhance peace, within and without.

3. What are the challenges, if any, to practicing this particular religion?

It takes practice, patience, perseverance, faith and commitment to realize any positive changes in and around us. Perhaps the same principles would apply in order to progress either in the secular world or in the spiritual world.

4. What size is the congregation at the Rochester Temple?

Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center in the Washington DC metropolitan area has three chapters: Silver Spring MD, Dulles VA and Frederick. Over 700 families including 1000 children participate in the program. (Please note that this is a different congregation. It is not Rochester temple as mentioned in your question)

5. Are there any practices that you find difficult to follow?

There are different paths for different people having different aptitudes and interests. They involve three paths including selfless service, love & devotion and knowledge & understanding. All of them lead to the same goal. So, one can choose any path or a combination of paths based on the personality and stage in spiritual evolution.

6. Are men and women treated equally?

Yes, men and women are treated equally, with respect and understanding at Chinmaya Mission.

7. If someone wanted to convert to Hinduism, is it a difficult process?

Hinduism as a religion focuses on the choices for a contented way of life, a philosophy, an attitude and once one grasps that concept, there is no need for any formal conversion. At the core, Hinduism encourages freedom to choose the individual path.

8. Are there many Hindu temples in this area?

Yes, we have about 15 Hindu temples in this Washington DC Metro area serving the large Indian population and offering a variety of programs, discourses, cultural events and service opportunities.

9. Is the Hindu religion in America still based on the caste system?

Caste system was originally founded based on the innate aptitude and mental makeup that is unique to each individual. Based on this principle, four caste systems were carved. People belonging to each caste gravitated to similar socio-economic values, professions, attitudes etc. and a culture and community built around it. All the four caste systems were considered equally important, like the

four wheels of a car. And, a person was allowed to change the caste based on the aptitude traits. Over time, this system was misinterpreted and abused with power struggle for dominance; and resulted in the form of injustice and inequality.

10. Are Hindus allowed to marry outside their religion?

Historically and traditionally, marrying within the religion and caste was for reasons of socio-economic and mental compatibility. That ensured a smooth marriage & family life and eventually strong communities. So, even now there is a mental resistance to marriages outside the religion for the concerns of religious, cultural and other challenges that may develop over time. It is a practical viewpoint. However, the religion does not specifically forbid a marriage outside the religion.

Moving Towards Light

Aziza Meer

I'm trying to leave working for the Devil and move to working for the light angel. Sometimes the Devil catches me by the collar, sometimes he drags me by my hair, and sometimes he lures me with sweet talk. When he has my collar, I know that I'm going to get dragged by my hair next and need to hold my ground, I need to stay above waters, and hang tight to my ropes of strength and knowledge (bala and budhi). Sometimes I manage to swim, aided by strength and knowledge, and sometimes I sink and get dragged by my hair. The times I'm lured by sweet talk, I don't even realize that I'm totally submerged and hence don't see the light of the day.

I thought I knew what the light of the day was. I thought it was the Nothing--the sweet nothing, where no good or bad existed, no right or wrong lived, no parameters and no concepts. Then I started to see concepts, beauty, a physical heaven, and physical heavenly bodies. They talked to me, started to live with me, or rather, I started to live with them, and went to them every night to sleep. What about the "Nothing"? The first thing that the Nothing should have is nothing. But here is a physical heaven to begin with.

Now I see the evaporation, the opulence, the heaven, the heavenly bodies, the spirits that I live with, and the I--all a vapor. This vapor exists and is real. When I did anything, I did it with my heart and soul, every step of the way, with dedication that did not look sideways. This dedication came from the richness of heaven, a window to the opulence. I was carrying a ray of light from the window of heaven. Those who caught the ray through me, thought it was sweetness and tried to use it. At times they thought it was a weakness and a lack of style because they needed to see to understand. Seeing a vapor form, they tried to manipulate and abuse it. While that is the way the world used the light, this is what I did with the light for a long time--I tried to hold this

light within my body. When I did this, I submerged into the abuse that came from a few who received this light, and felt the pain of their abuse. This light continued, in its own accord and strength, and did not bend irrespective of use or abuse.

For those who may be harboring this light and for those who are receiving this light through others--there are times when you trust that light, and then there are times you will downright insult it as madness. For those who don't have the eye, God seems like a mad man, his light seems like a path to trample, and yet the light lives on its own accord, an angel moves in the path of light.

I'm trying to leave the path of the Devil, and move to the path of light. I have come a long way. Every second is a struggle now. The Devil is doing all three--holding my collar, dragging me by my hair, and luring with sweet talk. The sweet talk has lost its charm; my eyes are set on the opulent light. I get many dark clouds that block the light even as I'm standing now facing the light--clearly in my mind choosing the light against the shackles of the Devil.

I spend some nights staring at the ceiling, shocked at the devil, held down by my hair. Those nights, I sleep with a sure hold over the light, but wake up in the middle of the night, having lost my clarity in my sleepy forgetfulness. Catching me in my sleep the Devil pins me to the floor and I wake up staring. It takes me a while to remember to fight back and it takes me longer to get back on my feet, and even longer to pass into a vapor where the devil does not know how to catch me any more.

Many days I pass with him holding me back from the light, by my collar. As he holds me back, I still look at the light; when he puts the dark clouds, I know that they are a silly screen and past the clouds is the light. My back is to the Devil; he does not give up, nor do I. I choose the light.

Jnana Yoga and Self Realization - XI

Acharya Sadananda

In the last post we have applied **bhaaga tyaaga lakshaNa** to **ahankaara** that involves 'I am = this', where - **this** - is predominately identified with the mind. Mind by itself is inert. Being subtle and, as though, in close proximity with consciousness, it reflects the light of consciousness and becomes sentient. This reflected consciousness is called **chidaabhaasa**. This reflected light from the mind, as though, illumines the thoughts that arise in the mind, when the mind comes in contact with objects of knowledge via pramANa or means of knowledge. Thus, inert mind takes the role of a pramaataa or knower of the thoughts. Actually, it is the 'I' that enlivens the mind, and this enlivened mind takes the role of pramaataa. This is the same as saying the little -i- the ego or ahankaara, which is same as **chidaabhaasa** taking the role of pramaataa. Since mind keeps changing its attributes, we can say the attributive ahankaara also changes. This is reflected in the changes in our Bio-data, which is based on the changes of ahankaara or changes in - who am I. The present cognized ahankaara is the pramaataa or knower of subsequent cognitions in the mind, and what is being known by the process of **jnaana prakriya** or knowing process is subsequently stored in the memory. It is true that when I recollect or remember the past knowledge, I am identifying, as though, with the past ahankaara. Thus, we have past ahankaara or remembered ahankaara and the present ahankaara or cognized ahankaara. Now when I say, I am the same -I- with the remembered ahankaara which has different attributes and the same -I- with the present cognized ahankaara with new attributes, I am essentially discarding the attributive contents of the two pramaatas but only identifying or equating the one pervasive consciousness that I am. I am- is the enlivening factor and is present continuously in the past and in the present, but without any attributes of its own. The re-cognition of the ever existent and attributeless consciousness is the

recognition of myself as I am. This is technically called **pratyabhijna** or **saakshii** or witnessing consciousness.

The tricky part here is even the re-cognition of the **saakshii** is done not by **saakshii**, but by ahankaara only. The **saakshii** witnesses even this recognition process. We still call this as **jnaanam**, and one who has this understanding as **jnaani**, because this knowledge destroys the previous notions in the ahankaara that I am only a limited ahankaara with identifications with the changing BMIs. It is like looking at different images of mine in different mirrors and re-cognizing in spite of differences in the apparent images I am the original I, realizing that images only look different due to differences in mirrors. Thus, clear understanding by the ahankaara in jnaani is that I am the unchanging ever illuming or ever present consciousness that I am, beyond this changing BMIs. Ahankaara is nothing but **chidaabhaasa** or reflected consciousness but identifying with this, this being BMI. Reflecting medium is required for reflection. **Saakshii** or witnessing consciousness cannot re-cognize itself, or to put it correctly, need not have to re-cognize itself or realize itself. It is the all-pervading consciousness ever present, one without a second; and therefore re-cognition has no meaning from the saakshii's point. In fact, the **saakshii**-role was, as though, assigned to -I am- only to explain the duality of perceiver and perceived or pramaataa and prameya. Thus with reference to **saakshyam**, I become a **saakshii**; otherwise I am pure all-pervading consciousness that I am, one without a second. We will note later that when I recognize that I am **saakshyam** too in the understanding of the true meaning of -**tat tvam asi**- statement, then the relative roles of **sakshii-sakshayam** (binary format) or triangular format or triad or tripuTi involving **pramaataa-prameya-pramANa** - will remain only as relative, as long as the formatting upaadhis remain. However, in spite of these relative roles, understanding

will be - I am pure sat-chit-ananda swaruupam and- all are in Me, but I am not in them. To be clear, this understanding takes place in the reflected consciousness or chidaabhaasa only or ahankaara only since saakshii by itself is even beyond any reflections too. Without the reflecting medium the re-cognition of myself or realization of myself or self-realization does not takes place. To put it succinctly, ahankaara has to recognize that I am the all-pervading consciousness and not the limited ahankaara that I used to think that I am, while still enclosed within the upaadhis of BMI. This is what is referred to as **upahita chaitanya**. The pot-space analogy is used to explain this, as discussed before, where the pot-space, while remaining within the walls of the pot, recognizes that I am indeed the all-pervading space, in spite of the apparent limitations, and recognition that even the pot-walls are in me, but I am not in the pot. Even the apparent pot walls also will be recognized as Me only, without breaking the pot-walls, when I understand the full implication of the **tat tvam asi** statement. Thus to say that jnaani does not have ahankaara is true only from the point of what we **ajnaanii-s** understand what ahankaara means; but he - does utilize- the BMI equipments that involve **chidaabhaasa** or ahankaara to transact with the world, with clear understanding he is not limited by the limitations of the BMI, as he is indeed the all-pervading consciousness that is one without a second. The BMI will continue to have their problems as destined even for a jnaani. However, for a jnaani there is no confusion in terms of the understanding level and the transactional level, just as a scientist understands that all materials are the same as they are made up of the same particles – electrons, protons and neutrons. Yet, he has no problem to transact differently with garbage vs. food or KCl (potassium chloride) vs. KCN (potassium cyanide). We accept dvaita is at transactional level and negate it at paaramaarthika level since from the absolute point the truth pure advaita, one without a second – **advaitam, chaturtham manyante, sa aatma, sa vijneyaH** – says Mandukya Upanishad. The self that I am is advaitam, one without a second; and that truth has to be realized by inquiry within. Thus using **bhaaga tyaga lakshaNa** one understands that - I am - in the - I am that - statement stands for **saakshi swaruupam**.

Up to the understanding of **tvam** in the **tat tvam asi** statement, we do not really need scriptures and one can enquire using tarka or logic to recognize I am the knowing principle or conscious entity and not the known objects which are inert. Thus everyone can realize that they are the witnessing consciousness that are different from witnessed objects. This is where –**Who am I** – enquiry can also lead to. This is direct and immediate and where all the so-called ‘Direct-Paths’ end up. That leaves multiple consciousness(es), each as eternal, (some even say they are finite, yet all pervading, sarva gataH) different from prakRiti, the world of matter. Some subscribe to Iswara as creator and some are not. The Nyaaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, puurva miimaamsa, dvaita, all come up to this point and claim that aatmaas are many and different from jagat and Iswara. VishiShTaadvaita goes one step further and says that they are indeed many souls (each of atomic size, **anupramaana**), yet they are part of one all-pervading paramaatma who is indweller (**antaryaamin**) of all. Souls and the inert universe are connected to Him like organs of His body (organic relationship). They are dependent on Him while He is independent of them – **sheSha-sheShii bhaava**. Many souls remain even moksha, although finite, but yet each can enjoy infinite happiness that Iswara enjoys, while, of course, serving Him. Thus even in moksha for all of them – there are **jiiva-jiiva, jiiva-jagat, jagat-Iswara** and **jiiva-Iswara bhinnatvam** or differences exist, while the scriptures say any speck of difference of any kind causes fear and samsaara – **udaramantaram kurute atha tasya bhayam bhavati** – says Tai. Up. None is afraid in deep sleep state since none of above differences exist. Hence scripture says that advaita alone is the fundamental truth, as one can experience in deep sleep state where all the problems are resolved, as there is no duality whatsoever, Mandukya Up. Therefore, only in advaita oneness of jiiva-jagat and Iswara is re-cognized through mahaavaakya statement of the scriptures. For this, Scripture alone becomes a soul source of pramaNa – this cannot be established by logic – **naishaa tarkena matiraapaneya** – says Katha. A teacher who has realized this truth can teach that but ultimately he has to rely for his reference only Shastra as pramaNa. Hence

Shankara defines **shraddhaa** (loosely translated as faith) as **shaastrasya guruvaakyasa satyabudhyaavadhaaraNaa** – scriptural statements as explained by the teacher are indeed true – that conviction is shraddhaa. That is needed for self-realization, since there is no other way of knowing this oneness that is substantive of the jiiva-jagat and Iswara.

Understanding the tat tvam asi statement:

We have extensively analyzed the **tvam padaartha** or an entity when we say- I am – which is **saakshii** or witnessing consciousness in the proximity of which the mind gets enlivened and operate as an agent in all the transactions of the world – just the same way the Governments operate through their agents, starting from President, etc. Without the acting agents we cannot identify what the government or where the government is. We have also discussed what the meaning of **tat** or that is. First it refers to the entire universe of objects, and second by means of scriptures it refers to Iswara, the creator, sustainer and destroyer of this universe. We will now analyze how ‘that’ pronoun includes both the

existence and the consciousness aspects, which are the material and instrumental causes.

tat or **that** – refers to an object that we can point out, normally that which is outside the body. We say the object is, i.e. the object exists even without specifying any other attributes of the object that distinguishes that object from the rest of the objects in the universe. How can we say that the object is? For one thing, we are able to perceive it or know it by some means. Here is an important philosophical question – Is it that the object is, therefore we are able to perceive it, or we are able to perceive it, therefore the object is? Obviously it is the former, otherwise how can we perceive if it is not there. The later is said to be Vijnana vaadin’s position (it is one of four Buddhist philosophies that is criticized in Brahmasutras II-28-32). Since we do not create the object and then perceive it, the object must exist for us

to perceive – the object is part of **Iswara sRiShTi**. We will revise this statement little bit later, when we try to understand who that **Iswara** is. For the time being, let us assume that the object exists before we see it. We question now whether the existence of the object, specified by the word **-it is-**, is a part or a property of the object? To put it differently, where exactly the **existence** of the object is located in the object? If we look at the object which is on the table, the existence is outside the object too, since we say table **is**, and the existence should be there in the space surrounding the object and the table, as we say - space **is**. Obviously existence is there everywhere, in the object, in the table, in the space surrounding the two. Since space is everywhere or infinite and that infinite space **is** if we say, then existence must also be infinite. There is no boundary for space and also no boundary for existence. Swami Paramarthanandaji puts in a capsule form the essence of existence which can also be applied to consciousness. He presents this capsule as:

1. Existence principle is not a part, a product or a property of any object.
2. Existence principle is an independent entity and lends existence to the object.
3. Existence principle is not limited by the boundaries of the object.
4. Existence principle survives even after the end or demise of the object.
5. The surviving existence is imperceptible.

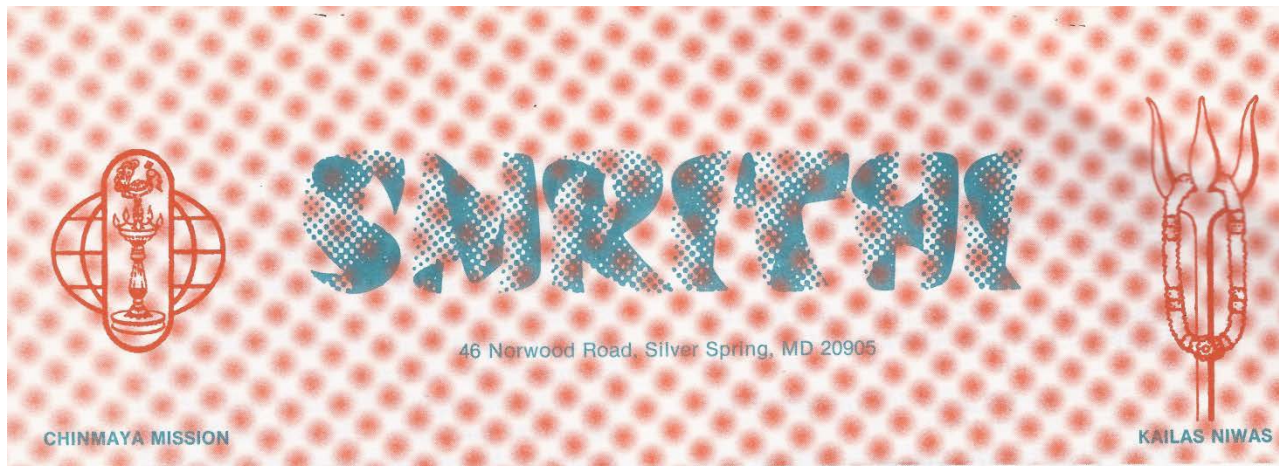
Thus without the **principle of existence** the experience of the existence of any object is not possible. Bhagavaan Ramana says this in the first line of invocation sloka in Sat Darshanam as – **sat pratyahaaH kinnu vihaaya santam** – without the principle of existence permeating the objects, there cannot be experience of any object. Without the gold there cannot be any experience of gold products such as ring, bangle or necklace; without the clay there is no experience of clay products and similarly without the existence there is no experience of any existent world of objects. Hence scripture says existence is a fundamental material cause for the universe (Ch. Up.

6th Chapter sat vidya). How can one know the existence? Pure existence is imperceptible just as empty space is imperceptible. Space itself exists because of existence. Nay, even I cannot exist without the principle of existence. In deep sleep state I alone am there, as existence without any perceptible objects including space and time etc. Thus even the infinite space comes and goes but the existence that I am there even in deep sleep state. If we are not going to exist in deep sleep state, then none of us would like to go to sleep. In fact every one of us looks forward for a good sleep where we can comfortably exist without any problems of the day. Some take sleeping pills and others drugs to get into this nirvikalpa state. Thus as the material cause of the universe, existence exists independent of any products but lends its existence to all objects in the universe. Thus the existence principle permeates both the subject I am as well as object that, where the pronoun –that- representing the entire universe of objects which exists. That existence principle that lends existence to myself the subject and the entire world of objects is an independent entity that survives even if the subject and object are removed. Just as gold permeates all its products and unaffected by the transformation of the products, so is the existence that permeates both the subject and the object. Just as the ring, bangle, bracelet are just attributes superimposed on the gold as in ringly gold, bangle gold, etc, every object in the universe is nothing but attributes of the objects superimposed on the existence itself, which itself is division-less. Thus we can say ringly-golden existence, red-potty-clay existence, small-nailcuttery-irony existence, etc. It sounds horrible, since we are not able to perceive the existence other than existence that permeates in the form of attributive products. We cannot transact with existence other than that we should be existent to transact with the existent products. Krishna says this existence principle is eternal and it has no beginning or an end – **naasato vidyate bhavo naabhaavo vidyate sataH** – that which does not exist cannot come into existence and that which exists cannot cease to exist; thus law of conservation applied to the fundamental material cause of the universe – the principle of existence.

Now looking from the point of existence which permeates or forms the substantive for jiiva-jagat and Iswara – the teacher Uddalaka says to his student – **Swetaketu – aitadaatmya idam sarvam, tat satyam, sa aatma; tat tvam asi**; the entire universe is permeated by that existence principle and that you are. Thus the identity of I am with the existence principle that permeates the entire world of objects without any exception, **idam sarvam**. Hence '**I am**' is that existent-conscious principle, that I am, and is in fact the substantive for all the universe of objects, says the scripture. In the **–I am** – the –I- stands for the conscious principle and the –am- stands for the existence principle. In Sanskrit the aham includes both principles as one. Thus from the point of existence itself which forms substantive material cause for the subject and the object, is indivisible and hence scriptures in the form of mahaavaakya says you are that or I am that. This existence principle is nothing but Brahman defined as **satyam, jnaanam, anantam** where the satyam stands for the principle of existence which is substantive for both the subject and the object – for both **saakshii** and **saakshyam**. It is one without a second since if there is a second that should exist, and therefore the existence should permeate the so-called second; leaving the second no more the second from the point of existence. Thus I am that establishes the oneness that permeates both the - **I am** and **that**, the substantive for both the subject and the predicate. That is essence of **tat tvam asi**, from the point of existence principle. We next address from the point of principle of consciousness.

Smrithi of Smrithi

Reprint of past print issues



Vol 4 A Retrospective Issue Jan/Feb 1993 No 1

THE YEAR THAT WAS- A REPORT TO THE MEMBERS

1992 was a good year for the Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center, a year which witnessed progress in many facets of the Mission activities, including its administration, programs, services, and finance. It was, therefore, only fitting that the year should also conclude on a very successful note with a visit by Gurudev to give three lectures at the University of Maryland on the Logic of Spirituality. It was gratifying to see a large number of our members among the 600 or more students and public attending each evening lecture.

MEMBERSHIP AND PROGRAMS

The calendar of the Center was busy throughout the year with the regularly scheduled adult and youth study classes, bhajans, festivals and special functions. The play "ADI SANKARA" no doubt was one of the more memorable events of 1992. Vasantiji and Sreedeviji, the directors of the play, have established a new standard for future stage productions of this kind by our Center. Similarly, the 1992 summer camp continued its tradition of success and was much appreciated by parents seeking quality education and reliable care for their children during the summer months.

Though we did not host any national camp this past summer, the "mini-camps" in September and October by Swami Tejomayananda and Swamini Sharadapriyananda filled the expectations of even the most experienced camp veterans amongst us. Both acharyas gave talks in N. Virginia and Baltimore, besides conducting the camp at Kailas Niwas. This was in acknowledgement of the growing geographical diversity of our membership, which now has active hubs in Baltimore, Salisbury, N. Virginia and Kailas Niwas. We owe our gratitude to the resident acharya, Br. Sudheerji, for this growth and for the enthusiasm and vigor with which he has been serving the spiritual needs of his widely-scattered flock.

This was the first full year of operation of the Burke Center and it has been one of unqualified success! The service to our members in the Northern Virginia has been enhanced and consolidated and there is a new vigor in the Bala Vihar, Yuva Kendra, and study group activities of this region. Perhaps Burke Center will serve as a model for other similar satellite centers in the coming years.

Continued on Page 3

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LABOR DAY WEEKEND - A FAMILY CAMP IN KAILAS NIWAS

..... by Srikumar V Gopalakrishna

It was after a long span of time that **Swami Tejomayanandaji** was re-visiting us at Washington D.C. A veritable treat was spread out in the form of a compact week of lectures and camps all over the Virginia and Maryland area. People waited eagerly for the occasion, more so to meet the architect of the week's programs, our beloved Swami himself. Of course, the much awaited Family Spiritual Camp was to serve as the main attraction. **Uncle Mani** flew in from Chicago and **Brni. Arpita** from Piercy. Of course our own **Br. Sudheerji** was there to add to the illustrious set of great teachers.

A new text, a fantastic array of speakers, a knowledge-craving audience and a salubrious atmosphere - what more could one request on a Labor Day Weekend? Swami Tejomayanandaji, in his characteristic style of direct enquiry and punctuated by an astonishing sense of humor, expounded *Pancha Dasi*, the text for the Camp. Written by **Swami Vidyaranya**, of Vijayanagar fame and a great saint of his time, the book *Panchadasi*, in each of the fifteen chapters re-iterates that the Sakshi or witness is manifest in everything, both formless and with form. The first five chapters illustrate the *Sat* aspect of this Sakshi, the next five the *Chit*, while the last section throws light on the *Ananda* aspect. Swamiji successfully kept a crowd of over 100 people 'awake' through some very intriguing logic squeezed into concentrated sessions over the three days. "*Remember your true nature as the Sakshi Atma, no matter whatever you*

do", he repeatedly emphasized. **Manana** (reflection) on this truth alone can cause the evolution of the true Sadhak. "*Peace of mind*", said Swamiji, "*is the most precious object in our lives. Yet, we in our ignorance, are willing to sell it so cheaply. Uncompromisingly hold onto it, and the rest will follow thereafter.*" He echoed that the nature of Maya was *Asat* (non-existence), *Jadatha* (inertness) and *Dukha* (sorrow). The *Sat* aspect of the Sakshi is manifest in all objects, inert and sentient. The *Chit* aspect is manifest only in sentient beings, while the '*Ananda*' aspect is manifest only in the *Shanti Vritti* or peaceful state of mind. This is the state of *Sattwik* existence. "Observe existence, consciousness and happiness around you and rejection of Maya follows automatically", was his message.

Swami Vidyaranya, in the chapter on *Vishayaananda* emphasizes that happiness from worldly objects is also a reflection of the *Brahmananda* alone, except that it is interspersed with sorrow. Swamiji jovially commented that the great author had brought *Brahmananda* down to the level of *Vishayaananda* to enable the average person to identify with the infinite bliss. In other words, the Muni had "brought Vedanta downtown".

Uncle Mani gave the youth his usual 'shock treatment'. He spent a lot of time with them, discussing bilaterally the need for moral values in this day and age. He also addressed the parents and Yuvakendra teachers on the last day on issues concerning the youth.

The cultural programs were a big success. Under the guidance of Arpitaji and Sudheerji, the various sections of the Balavihar and youth group put up a variety of programs from Bhajans to a set of excellent plays. Bhiksha, organized at

various homes, saw big crowds gather to get Swamiji's acquaintance. A sizable number of outstation delegates arrived from all over the East Coast and were very ably accommodated in the houses of hospitable host families around the Washington area.

The large, attentive audience, the depth of a totally different text, and Swamiji's characteristic rendition contributed to an excellent Camp, one that would be remembered for a long time by the attendees and would serve as an aid to the development of our personalities in the vision of our Gurudev.

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REPORT TO MEMBERS

Continued from Page 1

During the year, the Center served more than 200 families in one capacity or another. This includes families of some 100 members who participated in adult, youth and/or children's classes in the different centers in Maryland and Virginia. The number of children and youth attending the Balavihar and Yuvakendra classes was about 120 at the year end.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE MISSION

The growth in membership as well as in the Mission programs in the last two years has underscored the necessity to streamline and modernize the administration of the Center. A major overhaul of the sub-committees reporting to the President and the Executive Committee was implemented in the Fall, largely owing to the initiative of S.Balan. The sub-committees were more clearly defined and consolidated in terms of their functions leading to a reduction in their number; further each sub-committee was put under the responsibility of a senior

sevak of the Mission. So far, the results have been encouraging and we expect the decision making and executive functions of the Center to benefit from this new streamlined structure.

Another milestone achieved during the year was the introduction of automation in the maintenance of membership and contributions database. The Center has purchased a specialized database management software widely used by non-profit organizations like our own, and which was recommended by the Chinmaya Mission West. We hope that this will help us to deliver improved service to all our members.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT

The year also saw significant physical improvement to Kailas Niwas. The lighting of the driveway and parking lot was completed at a cost of nearly \$6,000. Narain Sharaf and Ravi Saxena put in long hours to finish this project within budget. The Krishna idol has been installed on a spot along the driveway chosen by Gurudev. Gurudev, who visited the Kailas Niwas in December to see these additions, has even more ideas for the enhancement of the ashram, including planting of tall evergreen trees on both sides of the driveway. We intend to take up and complete these projects in 1993.

ON THE FINANCIAL SIDE

Thanks to the support of our members and donors, on whose regular contributions and donations the viability of the Center depends, CMWRC is in sound financial health. The proceeds from the 1991 International Camp, as well as those from Swami Tejomayanandaji's camps during 1991 and 1992, also helped to increase the funds available to the Center. Further, Gurudev also blessed us

financially by contributing several thousands of dollars from the money received during other camps and yagnas in the United States, Canada and Europe.

Taking advantage of this fortunate financial position, we have retired a substantial part of the mortgage during the year. With the remaining balance of the funds, we could still meet the 1992 operating expenses, amounting to some \$3,500 per month, as well as undertake the capital projects mentioned earlier. The reduced mortgage should further improve the financial situation in 1993 by lowering our interest payments. It is our goal to payoff, if possible, the remaining mortgage balance of \$75,000 during 1993 itself. If accomplished, this will let us use all contribution dollars received from our members solely to provide service to them, rather than to pay interest on loans. The Center is committed to a responsible and conservative approach to financial matters, with always an eye on controlling costs and maximizing the service to the members.

While wishing all our readers a Happy New Year, let us hope that the activities of the Center during 1993 will be as productive and satisfying to our members as 1992 has been!

Hari Om!

- Raju Chidambaram

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A WEEKEND WITH SWAMINI SHARADAPRIYANANDAJI

..... by Srikumar V Gopalakrishna

A whole week of Satsang with an illustrious soul is no ordinary treat.

However, the Washington Regional Center received just that and more in the presence of Swamini Sharadapriyanandaji, better known as AMMA, to the many who have had the good fortune of close association with her. Her dynamic lectures motivated a whole week of Vedantic oriented lectures and Mini Camps across Northern Virginia, Washington DC and Baltimore, reaching out to the many attendees, both Mission members and others, who gathered at the various centers to hear her poignant discourses on the many texts covered during the course of this one week of spiritual Sadhana.

The Family Camp at Kailas Niwas was a prominent part of this whirlwind series. Held in the cool glades of the Mission Center in Silver Spring, Maryland, the Camp featured a two day intensive study on the Akshyopanishad by Amma. She spoke over the weekend to a large crowd, in a very relaxed and informal atmosphere.

The Akshyopanishad features the knowledge of the Brahman, given by Lord Surya to Shri Sankruti Bhagwan the son of Sage Vishwamitra, along with the famous "Chakshushmathi Stotram" given by the Lord to him in Aditya Loka (the home of the Sun God Surya). In the most fascinating manner, Amma elaborated on this Upanishad, as expounded by Surya Bhagwan, in the most simple and clear language. She carried the audience through the various "Bhumikas" or stages of evolution of a Sadhak, who through Sadhana, evolves to the State of Realization where one abides in the true knowledge. The identification of the various stages helped many listeners evaluate their own personal Sadhana, to appraise themselves of where they stood and learn of the effort required to reach the well defined goal. "The natural

dissolution of the mind is true Yoga", she echoed. "A man of realization is established in non-duality, and has broken the three knots of *Avidya* (Ignorance), *Kama* (Desire), and *Karma* (Action). He alone is a true Jeevan Mukta (Liberated individual). Yoga is both the final state of non-dualism, as well as the process of reaching that final stage. Perform all action, firm in the spirit of Yoga", was her advice to true Sadhaks. Her own life, of course, is a great example, an incredible combination of *Karma*, *Bhakthi* and *Gnana*, all rolled into one integrated person.

In spite of a heavy schedule with four sessions each day, Amma managed to carry the audience through this great Upanishad with her. She expounded the fourfold qualities required of the Sadhak, the obstacles from the *Adi Daivik*, *Adi Bautik* and *Adyatmik* sources and the manner of handling them. The audience were left to introspect on the nature of that Supreme State and their own personal effort to achieve that state.

A part of time was spent educating ourselves on the work done by Amma and her able workers in Chinmayaranyam in Andhra Pradesh. Videos were shown and discussions were held on encouraging people to help with this big effort.

The **Saraswati Puja** was celebrated in between the Camp, with scores of children reciting mantras under the guidance of Br. Sudheer Chaitanya. Amma gave a stirring talk to the children in the form an enthralling fable. A few cultural programs were presented by the children, under the guidance of Vilasini Balakrishnan.

Of course, all good things have to end, and so did this Camp. It was with a heavy heart that the Washingtonians had

to bid adieu to Amma but the memory of this camp will always be with us.

CMWRC NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The time lapsed since the publication of the previous issue of this newsletter has been such that *Smrithi* was in some danger of becoming just that.... a mere memory!. As will be seen from the following long column on news and announcements, the lack of news has not been for the lack of activity in the Mission.

THIRD SUMMER CAMP

The third summer camp, like its two predecessors, was a success, thanks once again to the able directorship of Mrs Vasanthi Athawale and the guidance of Nanik Lahori and Br.Sudheerji. Some 60 children attended various sessions of the camp from June through August 1992. Sreedevi Kumar also assisted in the program.

Clearly, the Kailas Niwas Summer program serves a real need of the community and there is little doubt that the community would expect to see this offered in coming years also. The concept, originally envisioned by Nanik Lahori, has been so successful that other area institutions are now emulating it. The 1993 summer camp 1993 is scheduled for June 21 - September 3, 1993.

PROGRAMS FOR 1993

The calendar of CMWRC programs for 1993 has been finalized by Sreedevi Kumar and Br.Sudheerji. A special insert in this issue gives all the details for your advance information. Information on regularly scheduled classes, study groups, and other activities is also given in that supplement. Please, save this insert for your future reference. Also, if you have not picked up your copy of the 1993 VHP Calendar, please do so soon; there are only a few copies left.

SPIRITUAL CAMPS BY TEJOMAYANANDAJI, AND SHARADAPRIYANANDAJI

Elsewhere in this issue you will find detailed accounts by Srikumar Gopalakrishna of the spiritual camps at Kailas Niwas by Swami Tejomayananda and Swamini Sharadapriyananda. Though both Swami and Swamini have given camps in past years, a special feature this year was the separate *yagnas* at Virginia and Baltimore for the benefit of the growing Chinmaya Mission family in

those areas. The response at these yagnas was heart warming, though Amma remarked in good humor that she felt like a gypsy having to pack and move every two nights to be hosted by a different group.

KAILAS NIWAS PROJECTS

After having widened and paved the driveway and parking lot, the outdoor lighting in these areas has now been improved. As reported earlier in these columns, money was donated by several of our well wishers especially for the purpose of installing the outdoor lights, thanks to the efforts by Dr. Vijayalakshmi Nimmagadda. The new system is now in place and working well. Narain Sharaf and Ravi Saxena of the Kailas Niwas committee spent countless hours chasing contractors, obtaining permits, and selecting the hardware. We owe much to them as well as to the donors who generously came forward with the money needed.

Dr. Nimmagadda has also recently donated the Center the money required to buy a current generation PC. The new computer has been installed and will serve both Br. Sudheerji's needs and the administrative needs using the newly acquired database management system.

The Kailas Niwas committee, under the chairmanship of Sreekumar, has its hands full with many small and large projects as they keep the 3.5 acre property fit for the varied activities it sees throughout the year.

NEW STRUCTURE

It did not make the Washington Post headlines, but the Kailas Niwas had its own *prestroika* this year when the structure of its government was changed following a detailed study and recommendations by S. Balan. While not quite as revolutionary as Mr. Gorbachev's plans for the former Soviet Union, we can claim that Mr. Balan's plans for CMWRC have been in fact more effective.

The major change has been the reduction in the number of subcommittees from an unwieldy eight or nine that we previously had to a more manageable five. We also accepted Mr. Balan's pointed suggestion to refer to these committees as *Action Committees*, as a sort of hint to the members of the Committees that they are there to act. Further, to ensure the efficient functioning of these committees, each would have generally three or four

members only. Each would be chaired by a senior volunteer of the Mission- in most cases, a trustee - who has experience relevant to the activities of that committee. Of course, the success of the action committees continues to depend on the availability of a large, dedicated corps of volunteers for actual execution of the Mission programs.

The Executive Committee, in its October 1992 meeting, approved the formation of six Action Committees and nominated the Chairperson and members of each Action Committee, based on suggestions received from a survey among the members of the Mission. The following are the six Committees and a brief description of their functions.

1. Kailas Niwas Committee:

- Sree Kumar (Chairperson)
- Narain Sharaf
- Ravi Saxena
- Anant Sarma

This committee will oversee and manage the maintenance and improvement of all physical facilities at the Kailas Niwas, including building, equipment and plant. They will also arrange for the Bhiksha, transportation and other needs of the resident acharya.

2. Program Committee:

- Sreedevi Kumar (Chairperson)
- Vilasini Balakrishnan
- Padmini Sarma
- Carolyn Naidu

The Program Committee will plan and oversee yagnas, camps, festivals, cultural events etc. They would also be responsible for coordinating and guiding adult study groups.

3. Finance Committee

- Suresh Balakrishnan (Chairperson)
- Prakash Soman
- Shobha Chidambaram
- Anant Sarma

This committee is responsible for all finance related activities including accounts, tax and legal matters, and fund-raising.

4. Membership and Publicity

- Nanik Lahori (Chairperson)
- J.K. Naidu
- Dr. Balakrishnan

Membership development and public relations, publicity for regular and special Mission events, books and publications will be under the purview of this Committee.

5. Balavihar and Yuvakendra Committee

- K. Sadananda (Chairperson)
- Nanik Lahori
- Nilkanth Bhatt
- Anant Sarma

This committee will oversee and coordinate area Balavihar and Yuvakendra classes in order to promote quality and standards, and facilitate development of syllabus, code of conduct, teachers training etc.

6. Coordination Committee

- Raju Chidambaram (Chairperson)
- S. Balan
- A. Vijaykumar

This Committee will have the responsibility to coordinate and monitor the activities of the five action committees and facilitate the implementation of their programs by providing necessary resources and help.

The action committees will report to the Executive Committee on their ongoing and planned programs and seek budget and other resources appropriate for their needs.

The Board of Trustees continues to be the entity responsible for the overall policies and objectives of CMWRC under which the Executive Committee and its action committees function.

Should you have any questions or suggestions for improvement of the Center administration, please contact the President or any one in the appropriate committees.

MEERA TO FOLLOW ADI SANKARA

The play on Adi Sankara enacted by our Balavihar and Yuvakendra members in the summer of 1992 at the Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring, was well received by a large appreciative crowd. Buoyed by this success, the team that produced Adi Sankara is now busy planning a play on MEERA to be staged in Spring/Summer 1993. The script has been written and is being reviewed by several members. Sreedevi is now looking for youth and children for the cast. If you have any suggestions, or would like to

participate in this production, please contact Sreedevi Kumar (301-921-6570)

GURUDEV'S 1993 SPIRITUAL CAMP

Vilasini Balakrishnan, under whose directorship we have organized several successful spiritual camps in past years, is once again at her favorite pastime and, as usual, she is planning something unusual. This time Gurudev's Camp will be in the beautiful Shenandoah valley at Massanetta Springs, Virginia from July 18 - 25, 1993. The rural setting of this camp should be reminiscent of the 1991 International Camp in Frostburg, MD and should provide a glorious opportunity to spend a week in the satsang of Gurudev, Swami Tejomayananda, and other acharyas.

Massanetta is popular as a summer camp site and has facilities for boating, tennis, swimming, hiking, and other sports. Thus the 1993 summer camp should be particularly appealing to the youth and children.

This year, there will be greater emphasis on the youth programs. This camp has been designated as the "featured event" of the year by the Washington metropolitan coalition of Hindu religious organizations. As such, we expect participation by youth belonging to several other area groups.

More details on the summer camp will be forthcoming soon; but please mark your calendar in advance!

GURUDEV ADDRESSES UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Gurudev gave three talks on Logic of Spirituality at the College Park campus of the University of Maryland on Dec 7, 8 and 9, 1992. The talks were part of Gurudev's 1992 University Tour during which he addressed the students and faculty at twelve major universities in the U.S. One purpose of this special tour was to acquaint the faculty and scholars in Religion and Philosophy of opportunities available for research at the Chinmaya International Foundation at Cochin, India. With this in mind, Gurudev met with several of the faculty members on December 8, 1992 at the Rossborough Inn of the University of Maryland. His Excellency Siddharth Shankar Ray, the Indian Ambassador to the U.S and Mrs. Ray were also present at this meeting.

The talks, though primarily addressed to students, was open to the public. A large, attentive audience, estimated at more than 600, attended each evening's lectures. Gurudev, though bothered by a cold and mild fever during the last talk, was his usual animated, witty self, regaling the audience with humor and at the same time effectively imparting to everyone the most abstract of the Vedanta concepts. According to Shashi Veer, who accompanied Gurudev on the entire university tour, the one in Maryland was the best! Gurudev himself appeared quite pleased with the audience and the overall arrangements.

GITA CHANTING COMPETITION

CMWRC hosted nearly fifty participants from the states of New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia in the National Gita Chanting Competition held in summer 1992. The winners in chanting the Chapter 12 verses were Gokhale and Vineet Bhagawat and, in the Chapter 15 competition, Anup Kumar and Sheela Dharmarajan. The winners had the honor of representing the East in the National Competition held in the presence of Gurudev at Allendale, Michigan in July 1992.

The competition, especially in the younger group, was very keen. On the recommendation of the judges, plaques were awarded to all participants in recognition of their effort and outstanding performance.

SUDHEERJI'S VISA

Last summer, many of you cooperated and signed a petition in support of Br. Sudheer Chaitanya's application for permanent visa in the U.S. On the advice of the consulting lawyer, the application was submitted in the California district of the INS in August 1992. With two of the three key steps in the process successfully completed already, it is now expected that the visa would be granted in the near future. Your support has been very vital in achieving this goal; Vilasini, who has been handling this effort, and the trustees of CMWRC, thank all members who helped with the petition.

LABOR DAY CAMP PARTICIPANTS RAISE \$2,000 FOR FLORIDA HURRICANE RELIEF

Based on an appeal from Swami Tejomayanandaji, participants in the Labor Day camp raised \$2,000 in relief to the victims of the Hurricane Andrews in Florida. A check was sent by CMWRC treasurer in October 1992, to Chinmaya Mission West, for forwarding to the proper relief organization authorities. As reported in the Dec/Jan 93 issue of *CMW News*, the amount has been sent to the American Red Cross.

Shobha Chidambaram, who organized the fund-raising effort, would like to thank all contributors for their generous gesture.

BINA PATEL

Bina and Jaideep Patel are the proud and blessed parents of their first child. Born on Vijayadashami day, the boy was named, quite appropriately, as Jairam at the suggestion of our Gurudev.

Owing to her added but pleasant responsibilities as a mother, Bina requested the Executive Committee to be relieved of her position as Secretary. This was agreed to, albeit reluctantly, with S. Balan stepping in to fill the vacancy. We will miss Bina at the Committee meetings, but are sure she will continue to actively participate in the Mission programs. Members of the Center join in congratulating Bina and Jaideep.

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I AM THAT I AM

What is the U ltimate R eality?

U R .

You are that U R

You are That

Tat Twam Asi

Q.E.D.

Smrithi is a news letter published by Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center. Editor: Raju Chidambaram (703-461-3785). Editorial Board: Vilasini Balakrishnan, Br.Sudheer Chaitanya, Nanik Lahori, K. Sadananda, Sree Kumar, and Carolyn Naidu. All articles, letters to be sent to Editor (Smrithi), CMWRC, 46 Norwood Rd, Silver Spring, Md 20905.

CHINMAYA MISSION WASHINGTON REGIONAL CENTER
 46 Norwood Rd. Silver Spring, MD 20905 Tel.#(301)-384-5009

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 1993

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| February 20 Saturday | Sivarathri 4:00 am to 12:00 mn | Padmini Sarma 410-922-4029 |
| April 4 Sunday | Ramanavami Balavihar time | Janaki Balakrishnan 410-527-0740 Carolyn Naidu 703-273-8311 Sreedevi Kumar 301-921-0570 |
| May 9 Sunday | Chinmaya Jayanti Balavihar time | Vijayakumar 703-803-7446 |
| June 21 to Sept 3 | Chinmaya Summer Camp- for children of age 6 & above | Nanik Lahori 301-652-9474 |
| July 19-25 | Gurudev's Camp | S. Balan/ Vilasini Balakrishnan 703-845-0524/301-593-6553 |
| August 14 Saturday | Janmashtami Evening | Veena Gupta 703-437-3144 |
| August 15 Sunday | Independence Day Balavihar time | Carolyn Naidu Sree Kumar 301-921-0570 |
| September 19 Sunday | Ganesh Chathurthi Balavihar time | Janaki Balakrishnan Carolyn Naidu Medha Bhagwat 301-422-8430 |
| October 31 Sunday | Vijayadashami & Mathrupooja Balavihar time | Janaki Balakrishnan Carolyn Naidu Aravind Bhagwat 301-422-8430 |
| November 13 Saturday | Deepavali Evening | Vijayalaksmi Nimmagadda 410-461-1763 |
| November 25 Thursday | Gita Chanting Competition | Prakash Soman 703-532-6829 |
| December 18 Saturday | Tapovan & Gita Jayanti | Sunita Saxena 301-384-4547 |

**CHINMAYA MISSION WASHINGTON REGIONAL CENTER
KAILAS NIWAS**

46 NORWOOD ROAD, SILVER SPRING, MD. 20905 (Ph: 301-384-5009)
(RESIDENT ACHARYA: BRAHMACHARI SUDHEER CHAITANYA)

ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

A. STUDY GROUPS, BALAVIHAR, AND YUVAKENDRA CLASSES

| Contact Person | Place | Day & Time | Program |
|--|--|---|---|
| 1. Nanik Lahori 301-652-9474 | Kailas Niwas | Sundays: 8:00 - 12 Noon | Study Group, Balavihar, Yuvakendra Dance, Sanskrit classes, Summer Hindi classes for children |
| 2. Suresh Balakrishnan 301-593-6553 | University of Maryland College Park, MD. | Fridays: 6:00 - 7:00 PM | University Students Study Group |
| 3. Janaki Balakrishnan 410-527-0740 | Baltimore | 1st, 2nd & 3rd Sundays 11:00 - 1:00 PM | Study Group, Balavihar Yuvakendra |
| 4. Nilkanth Bhatt 703-503-9419 | Woods Comm. Center 10100 Wards Grove Burke, VA 22015 | Sundays: 10:00 - 12 Noon | Study Group, Bala Vihar, Yuva Kendra |
| 5. K. Sadananda 803-451-5909 | 2937 Mockernut Ct Herndon, Va 22071 | Fridays: 8:00 - 9:30 PM | Study Group |
| 6. Nilkanth Bhatt 703-503-9419 | 3025 Sylvan Dr. Fall Church VA. | Alternate Fridays 8:00 - 9:30 PM | Study Group |
| 8. Meena Bhatt 703-503-9419 | 10618 Allison Dr Burke, Va, 22016 | First Saturdays 3:30-5:00 PM | Devi Study Group for Women |

B. Br. SUDHEER CHAITANYA'S SCHEDULE

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| 9. Sreedevi Kumar 301-921-0570 | Kailas Niwas | Mondays: 7:00 - 9:00 PM | Upanishads |
| 10. Shobha Chidambaram 703-461-3785 | 1406 Greenwood Ct. Alexandria, VA 22304 | Tuesdays: 7:30 - 9:30 PM | Upanishads |
| 11. Padmini Sarma 410-922-4029 | 7 Beasman Court Randallstown, MD 20854 | Wednesdays: 7:30 - 9:00 PM | Upanishads |
| 12. Sreedevi Kumar 301-921-0570 Nanik Lahori/Sheela Garg 301-652-9474 | Kailas Niwas | Fridays Every Friday: 6:45 - 8:00 PM 1st Friday: 8:30 - 10:00 PM 2nd Friday: 8:30 - 10:00 PM | Upanishads Holy Geeta Holy Geeta for youth |
| 13. Sreedevi Kumar 301-921-0570 | Kailas Niwas | Sundays: 9:00 - 10:00 AM | Holy Geeta |
| 14. Geeta Raja 410-825-6414 | 10 Summer Fields Ct. | Last Sundays: 10:15 - 12 Noon First Sundays: 11:00 - 1:00 PM | Tulasi Ramayana Holy Geeta |
| 15. Nilkanth Bhatt 703-503-9419 | Burke Center | Second Sundays: 10:00 - 1:30 PM | Holy Geeta |
| 16. Saroja Barhan 410-968-1896 | Salisbury, MD | Last Saturdays 10:00 - 2:00 PM | Holy Geeta (3 sessions) |

Monthly Bhajans on Saturday Evenings with Potluck Dinner:

Contact: Shashi Shrivastav, 301-762-4261; Northern Virginia: Indira Poduval, 703-425-3513

NOTE: For Library Books, Audio and Video Tapes contact K.Narayanan 301-890-7252.

Programs, classes and Swamiji's discourses are open to all interested. For further information please call 301-384-5009.

BR. SUDHEER CHAITANYA ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SHIVARATRI:

THE GREAT AUSPICIOUS NIGHT
(Mahaa Shiva Raatri)

Soul meeting THE SOUL is THE GREAT AUSPICIOUS NIGHT. In fact Soul merging into THE SOUL, like a river meeting THE OCEAN or merging into THE OCEAN, is THE GREAT AUSPICIOUS NIGHT.

Language is the vehicle for communicating any vision or experience. But the language has limited power to explain your vision or your experience to another person whose background is different from your own. Another person cannot visualise your vision, nor can enjoy your experience even vicariously until that person "aligns" with your background. If this is so for mundane visions and mundane experiences, what to speak of a spiritual vision or spiritual experience?

In Kathopanishad, the Teacher gives the clearest exposition of his experience and vision:

*Yadaa panchaavatishtante jnaanaani manasaa saha
buddhischa na vichestate taamaahuh paramaam gatim*

"When the five organs of knowledge are at rest together with the mind, and when the intellect ceases functioning (becomes calm) that they call the highest state."

When the five sense-organs are perfectly controlled, closed like the gates of the White House under total security, then the mind, which generally drains out through the gates of the sense-organs, is almost devoid of any exertion. At this stage the mind is under house arrest, yet has enough room to roam in its past memories and future imaginations causing stress and agitations. When even these disturbances are controlled, we reach the state revealed in the mantra, the state wherein the sense-organs are at rest along with the mind. Even this is not enough. For, at this state the intellect will be vibrating with its own ideas and ideals. The Rishi wants us to reach the state where the sense-organs, the mind *and* the intellect are at rest. The Rishi calls this as the highest state when the soul meets with THE SOUL (SAMAADHI).

To the uninitiated skeptics lacking sufficient background, this state may sound like the deep sleep state wherein the senses along with the mind and the intellect are at rest. However, there is a lot of difference between sleep state and the State of Eternal Auspiciousness. There is an Indian ocean in between them.

The one in sleep temporarily folds the mind and the intellect and finds oneself in the land of darkness. The one in SAMAADHI transcends the mind and intellect and reaches the land of Effulgence. The one in sleep is drowned in the darkness of ignorance, but the one in SAMAADHI is in the radiant sunshine of Knowledge. It is not a negative experience of nothingness but a positive experience of ONENESS.

SIVARATRI CELEBRATIONS

SATURDAY, FEB. 20, 1993

4:00 A.M. - MIDNIGHT

AT

KAILAS NIWAS

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 4:00 - 5:30 AM | ABHISHEKAM |
| 5:30 - 6:00 AM | USHA POOJA |
| 6:00 - 12:00 NOON | PANCHAKSHARI |
| | AKHANDA NAAMA JAPA |
| 12:00 - 2:00 PM | STOTRAMS AND BHAJANS |
| 2:00 - 6:00 PM | SRI RUDRA ABHISHEKAM |
| 6:00 - 7:30 PM | AARATI AND PRASADAM |
| 7:30 - 9:00 PM | CULTURAL PROGRAM |
| 9:00 - 11:00 PM | BHAJANS |
| 11:00 - 12:00 PM | <u>BRA. SUDHEER CHAITANYA -</u> |
| | <u>TALK ON MEDITATION</u> |
| 12:00 - MIDNIGHT | MAHA AARATI |

ALL ARE WELCOME

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL: PADMINI SARMA (410)-922-4029, SREEDEVI KUMAR (301) 926-7278, J.K. NAIDU (703) 273-8311.