

# Chinmaya Smrithi



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

**Volume 23, Number 2, March 22, 2013**

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**Chinmayam was aglow**

**with festivities on Maha Shivaratri Day**

## Calendar and Upcoming Events

- Sat Mar 30 & Sun Mar 31 – Spring Break – No Bala Vihar Classes
- Sat April 20 – Sri Rama Navami and Carnival at Chinmayam
- Sat April 20 – 7 Sopranos Concert in Northern VA
- Sat April 20 and Sun April 21 – Annual Day Performances I

- Thu April 25 – Hanuman Jayanthi Puja at Chinmayam
- Sat April 27 – Gita Chanting Competition
- Sat May 4 and Sun May 5 – Chinmaya Seva Days
- Sat May 11 & Sun May 12 – Chinmaya Aradhana and Mother's Day
- Sat May 18 – Bala Vihar Tilak Graduation Ceremony

### Study Groups

- Please contact Sri Vijay Kumar ji by email at [vijaykumar@rocketmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:publications@chinmayadc.org) to order any books, CDs, DVDs, etc.. Browse online at [www.chinmayapublications.com](http://www.chinmayapublications.com)
- Srimad Bhagavad Gita with Sri Gurudev's commentary is online at [www.myholygita.com](http://www.myholygita.com)

### Next Issue

- Articles for the next regular bi-monthly issue - May 2013, are due by May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013
- Email submissions to [smrithi@chinmayadc.org](mailto:smrithi@chinmayadc.org). Submission instructions at [www.chinmayadc.org](http://www.chinmayadc.org).

### Useful Links:

CMWRC – Washington Regional Center [www.chinmayadc.org](http://www.chinmayadc.org)

Chinmaya Mission Trust [www.chinmayamission.com](http://www.chinmayamission.com)

Chinmaya Mission West [www.chinmayamission.org](http://www.chinmayamission.org)

Chinmaya International Foundation, E-Vedanta Course [www.chinfo.org](http://www.chinfo.org)

Washington Region – Northern VA Chapter website [www.chinmayasomnath.org](http://www.chinmayasomnath.org)

Washington Region – Frederick MD Chapter website [www.chinmayafrederick.org](http://www.chinmayafrederick.org)

Washington Region – Richmond VA Chapter website [www.chinmayadc.org/ActivitiesRichmond.htm](http://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, 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

- CMWRC Bala Vihar Teacher's Retreat 2013 was held at Chinmayam on Saturday February 16<sup>th</sup>. (See article by Devi Ramaseshan)
- Hanuman Chalisa-Thon was conducted by CHYK DC youth on Saturday March 2<sup>nd</sup> at Chinmayam. (See article by Rasshmi Shankar)
- Maha Shivaratri was observed locally at all chapters with a grand celebration at Chinmayam. (See article by Ananya Krishnan)

### Announcements

- Chinmaya West Newsletter for March 2013 is available at Chinmaya West website: <http://www.chinmayamission.org/cmwnews>
- Friday Evening "Adult Vihar" Satsang at Chinmayam – next session on April 5<sup>th</sup>. The sessions are free and open to all members and friends. For further details, please contact: [fridaysatsang@chinmayadc.org](mailto:fridaysatsang@chinmayadc.org) or visit Events Page at [www.chinmayadc.org](http://www.chinmayadc.org)

### Current/Upcoming Events

- Sri Rama Navami and Carnival at Silver Spring on Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>
- Hanuman Jayanthi Puja at Silver Spring on Thursday April 25<sup>th</sup>
- Jnana Yajna by Acharya Vivekji at Fredeick MD, April 25-28, on "Sambandha: Freedom through Relationships". (See flyer in the following pages)
- 2013 Gita Chanting Competition, locally at all chapters, Saturday, April 27 & Sunday April 28<sup>th</sup>
- Chinmaya Seva Day -Saturday May 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday May 5<sup>th</sup>
- Chinmaya Jayanthi Observation and Mother's Day – Saturday May 11<sup>th</sup> and Sunday May 12<sup>th</sup>
- CMWRC Bala Vihar Graduation Tilak Ceremony at Silver Spring – Saturday May 18<sup>th</sup>
- Memorial Day Spiritual Camp, "Maitreyii Brahmana of Brihadaranyka Upanishad", by Acharya K. Sadananda on Saturday May 25 and Sunday May 26<sup>th</sup>. In this Upanishad, Maharishi Yajnavalkya teaches the highest knowledge to his wife Maitreyi.
- Devi Retreat June 14-16, with Acharya Vivek Gupta

NEWS



**Sanyasa Deeksha on Maha Shivaratri Day 2013**

Br Anshuman - Swami Prameyananda; Br Ravi - Swami Sakshiroopananda; Br Vinayak - Swami Prathameshananda

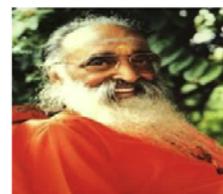
Br Kedar - Swami Sughoshananda; Br Varada - Swami Someshananda; Br Vijith - Swami Jitatmananda

Br Prayag - Swami Medhajananda; Br Ritesh - Swami Sarvapriyananda; Br Vasudev - Swami Govindananda

Br Rishi - Swami Anukoolananda; Br Sampurna - Swami Aksharananda; Br Aniruddha - Swami Anuttamananda

Brni Namita - Swamini Samhitananda; Brni Aparna - Swamini Akhilananda; Brni Nishita - Swamini Supriyananda

Brni Vana - Swamini Sugeetananda; Brni Vibhooti - Swamini Svaprabhananda



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By  
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At

Urbana Middle School, 3511 Pontius Court, Ijamsville, MD 21754

On

## **Sambandha: Freedom through Relationships**

**(Studying values from Bhagavad Gita Chapter 13)**

The greatest source of joy in our lives is people. The greatest source of sorrow in our lives is people. Why the irony? Ignorance. When we do not know who we are (identity crisis), then we do not know what to do (responsibility crisis). Naturally we project our confusions (inner) onto our relationships (outer) and are lost on a ride of agitation with only glimpses of ananda. To transform our sambandha-s to sadhana-s, Bhagavan Krishna shares 20 secrets. Join us as we explore how that which bound us can become that which beautifies us.



In 2005, **Vivekji** was accepted to the intensive two year Vedanta Course at Chinmaya Mission's **Sandeepany Sadhanalaya** in Mumbai, India. Under the guidance of Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, he studied the Upanishads, **Srimad Bhagavad Gita**, Shri Ramacharitrmanas, Sanskrit, Vedic Chanting and much more. Blessed to have joined the group of Sandeepany graduates, **Vivekji** says now his only purpose of life is to make others aware of what is the purpose of life: to be unconditionally happy. Through his innovative and passionate style, **Vivekji** makes the ancient wisdom of Vedanta (**vision of non-duality**) relevant, reachable and applicable. Intrigued by the fact he is a young adult born and raised in Canada, Vivekji has been invited to share his insights, and conduct classes and camps, by **Chinmaya Mission** centers and other organizations throughout around **North America**.

For details, send email to [campfrederick@chinmayadulles.org](mailto:campfrederick@chinmayadulles.org) or contact  
**Shiva Vanam @ 240-491-1140, Hariprakasha Humcha @ 301-668-3521 and Balaji Ramakrishnan @ 301-326-6574**

### **Directions:**

**(270 Southbound:** Take the MD-80 exit, Exit 26, toward URBANA/BUCKEYSTOWN. At the end of the ramp make a right turn, continue on MD-80E, at the roundabout and take the 1st exit onto MD-80 E/FINGERBOARD RD. Continue on MD-80E approx. for a mile and at 5th light, turn right onto Pontius Ct for **UMS**)

**270 Northbound:** Take the MD-80 exit, Exit 26, toward URBANA/BUCKEYSTOWN. At the traffic light turn left onto MD-80 E/FINGERBOARD RD. Continue on MD-80E approx. for a mile and at 4th light, turn right onto Pontius Ct for **UMS**)



**Chinmaya Mission West**  
*welcomes you to*

## **VEDANTA CAMP 2013**

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*Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide*



**June 18-23, 2013**

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**Study Text: *Advaita Makaranda***

**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: \$800 per person.

This camp fills quickly and space is limited, so early registration is recommended. For more information or to register, visit:

[krishnalaya.org/krishnalaya/index.php/vedanta2013](http://krishnalaya.org/krishnalaya/index.php/vedanta2013).

[krishnalaya.org](http://krishnalaya.org)

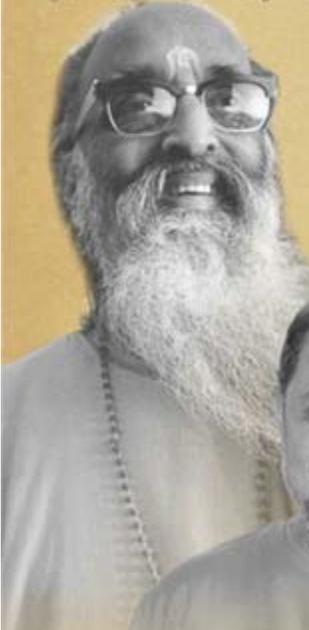
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Author: **His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda**  
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Phone: +91-484-2749676, 2747307 Fax: +91-484-2749729  
Email: [gitacourse@chinfo.org](mailto:gitacourse@chinfo.org)



## 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.

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## Maha Shivaratri Celebration at Chinmayam

*Ananya Krishnan,  
Shivanandam Student & Smrithi Editorial Team*

When we walked into Chinmayam Hall on Saturday and Sunday morning, we saw a welcoming sight. It was Mahashivaratri! The stage was bustling with Bala-Vihar children setting up altars that they had created themselves, and Shiva's Altar was decorated with flowers and candles. The whole scene looked so divine. In front of the altar was a Shivalinga with water dripping down onto it. Chinmaya devotees were able to perform serene Shiva Manasa Puja by pouring water into a Kalash (a pot) above the Shiva Linga, then sitting before the Shiva Linga and meditating. Water dripped from the pot onto the Linga. As Swamiji explained, there was a symbolic meaning behind this. It symbolized that your thoughts were a mirror and reflected on everything and everyone around you. This was described in the following text written near the Shiva Linga.

I pour the water  
That represents my thoughts  
Unto the sacred Shiva Linga  
That represents the  
Light of Consciousness!

I watch the flow of water  
That represents the flow of  
My thoughts unto  
The Auspicious Lord Shiva!  
The Light of Consciousness!

As the families started trickling in, Swamiji started the session with the Hanuman Chalisa. After singing the Chalisa, the Mahashivaratri service began. Swamiji started by blowing the Divine Conch three times and chanting OM NAMA SHIVAYA each time to symbolize the Body, Mind, and Intellect. Then, he rang a bell to invite all the good qualities to our heart and cleanse our bad thoughts, actions, words, and ego. After repeating what Swamiji chanted, the children on stage offered bilwa leaves to the Lord from their Altar, while the others chanted along as well. At the same time, the main Puja, right in front of the Altar offered Madhuparkham to the Lord. Madhuparkham is the tastiest, sweetest drink, and is God's favorite drink. After this, we invoked the Lord's grace and blessings while offering Prasad (thirtham).

Then came the Bhajans! The first shlokas we recited was the Shiva Panchaksharam Stotram, which we chanted along with Swamiji. Up next, we were singing the Sri Marga-Bhandu Stotram. As a preface, Swamiji gave us some background information on the Bhajan. He explained the meaning was that God is your best friend at all and times in life, and supports and leads you when you most need it. After singing this song, we offered neivadyam, which was bananas. Each family was asked to come after class to get some Prasadam.

The celebration wasn't over yet! The family leading the Puja led the crowd in Aarti's to Lord Shiva and Shri Gurudev. Finally, the heavenly occasion was coming to an end. While the crowd chanted OM NAMA SHIVAYA continuously, the Bala-Vihar classes were dismissed. However, the students who

had made altars left them there for all to admire. After the session ended, families came to get Swamiji's blessing and some Prasad and neivadyam.

In the evening, a soothing and divine atmosphere was created with Veda and Stotra parayanams by AVG – Ananth's Veda Group and the Shloka Chanting by Bala Vihar students from all three chapters that vibrated through the building. It was followed by wonderful performances of dance, stotrams, bhajans, and instrumental music by Balavihar students offering their praise to Lord Shiva! After Maha Prasad (light dinner), there were Bhajans by Hema Bhatt's group and Chinmaya members until midnight when Swamiji blew the conch again. Throughout the day, more than 300 devotees attended the Mahashivaratri celebrations. What a blissful feeling in the air at Chinmaya Mission that Sunday!



*{Editor's Note: Andrea Beri was the lead organizer of this celebration and worship, and she contributed to this article.}*

## Friday Night Satsang:

### Spiritual Sadhana for Rejuvenation, Joy and Peace

*Vandana Bapna*

On November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012, the alternate Friday evening adult satsang has been launched with spiritual offerings for anyone age 18 and above. Non-member family and friends are also welcome at no charge. The objective has been to facilitate the practice of spiritual sadhana for inspiration as well as for recharging the emotional and intellectual energies in the stress ridden times. Traditional wisdom and modern research both point to the fact that this type of satsang leads to productive, joyful, and harmonious individuals and communities.

#### Why?

Over the years, as their children graduated from Bala Vihar, more than 200 families who had been registered for three years or more, slowly stopped coming to the weekend satsang and other activities. Although the weekend program offered a wonderful one hour discourse by our Pujya Swamiji and visiting Acharyas, all the other activities were primarily geared towards Bala Vihar children. Our Acharyas perceived that the needs of these growing numbers of adults were not being adequately fulfilled. We needed to begin a program dedicated to Adult and CHYK members (age 18 and above).

We have been blessed with a large pool of learned and eloquent Acharyas and veteran members with deep knowledge and skills who are willing to share their wisdom and love readily. In addition, we have a beautiful facility at Chinmayam that is available on Friday evenings. So, what were we waiting for?

Acharya Vilasiniji was utterly convinced that this had to be done. She conceived and developed the program. She received the blessings and support from our Swami Dheerananda, the Executive Committee, as well as the full commitment of CMWRC teachers Dr. D.C. Rao and Sri Vijay Kumar for spiritual offerings on Friday evenings. Arvind Bhagwat with support of Medha Bhagwat has come forward to coordinate the program and manage all the logistics, programs, and even food offerings.

#### How to Participate?

Although the program is offered to all adults, including non-member family and friends, at no charge, it has been originally conceived to benefit those families with unmet needs after their children graduated from Bala Vihar. The program is still developing and fluid to accommodate the needs of all our community members. All suggestions and comments are welcome. The idea is to develop spiritual programs based on the interest levels and availability of teachers and resources. If there is enough interest, the alternate Fridays have the potential to progress to every Friday Satsang with something to interest everyone. Member participation is vital to developing this innovative program into a vibrant and uplifting satsang for all!

## What is Offered?

Over the past few months, the program has developed to offer various simultaneous options to suit a variety of temperaments and moods.

- 7:00 pm: The Friday Satsang coordinator, Arvind Bhagwat, decided to offer light dinner at no charge. He wanted to facilitate the option to join directly from work. Any family is able to sponsor the light dinner as well.
- 7:30 to 9:00 pm: There is a short aarati together, followed by concurrent sessions.
- ❖ Gurudev's video on Bhagavad Gita followed by guided meditation sessions by Acharya Vilasiniji (when she is not travelling).
- ❖ Study Group with Dr. D.C. Rao: He has just completed 'Sadhana Catushtaya', the qualifications of a fit student of Vedanta. On 22<sup>nd</sup> March, **New!** Study of Upadesha Sara, a text composed by Sri Raman Maharshi will commence.

Dr. D.C. Rao has conveyed the importance of Study Groups: *"We learn a lot from pravachans and our reading texts on Vedanta but these truths are not absorbed by us unless we engage in "mananam", reflection. Participating in a study group is one of the best ways to accomplish this."*

- ❖ Vedic chanting by Sri Gopal Gopinath: Over the past two satsangs, he has taught portions from Yajur Veda and Shivopasana mantra.
- ❖ **New!** On 22<sup>nd</sup> March, a premier of Upanishad Ganga TV episodes will be held amidst the blessings and presence of Swami Dheerananda and discussions led by Sri Vijay Kumar. Jay and Chandrika Sriram will introduce the series. Both adults and teens

are welcome to the Premier. These series of 52 episodes are the Vedic Wisdom based stories in Hindi (with English subtitles), produced by Chinmaya Mission and shown on Indian TV. It is the product of Pujya Swami Tejomayananda's sankalpa that Upanishadic wisdom and Vedic culture could be taught in modern times through the media of TV.

- 9:00 to 10:00 pm: Simultaneous options:
  - ❖ Bhajans have been led by our melodious singer members and CHYKs, including Urvi Mehta and Purvi Nanavaty. During one satsang, we had a beautiful rendering of lead and follow video of Pujya Swami Tejomayananda's compositions, sung by him as well.
  - ❖ **New!** On 22<sup>nd</sup> March, there will be commencement of Tulsi Ramayana pravachan in Hindi by Smt. Neeraja Venkateswaran.

## Where?

Unless specified otherwise, all activities from 7:30 pm onwards are held in the Chinmayam building in Silver Spring, MD. The light dinner at 7:00 pm is offered in Kailas Niwas, ground floor. Devi Niwas may be used when Chinmayam is not free.

## Note:

My husband and I have been able to join most of the satsang events since inception. We tend to join different concurrent sessions and appreciate the choices offered to suit our individual personality and moods. We truly enjoy the energizing yet peaceful experience. We feel blessed and grateful

towards our teachers and sevaks for their dedicated efforts and love in offering this opportunity to everyone.

**Children:**

At this time we do not have arrangements for children under age 18.

**Contact:**

Arvind and Medha Bhagwat at:

[fridaysatsang@chinmayadc.org](mailto:fridaysatsang@chinmayadc.org)

**Survey:**

Please fill out the survey with your ideas and suggestions. It will take only a couple of minutes.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TKBC8HH>

## Tapovan and Gita Jayanthi Celebration

Editor's Note: On Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 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.

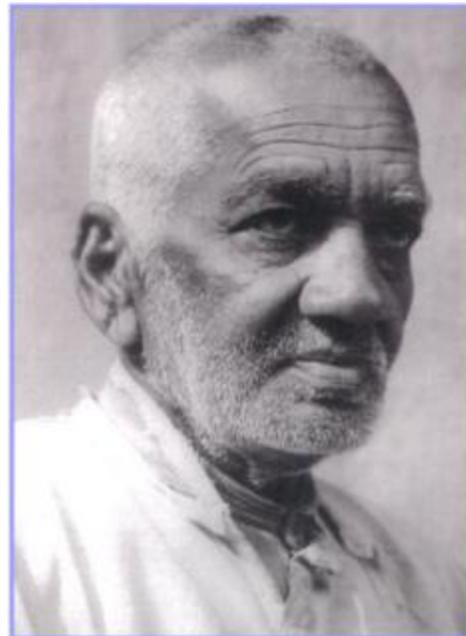
Siri Neerchal, Tapovanam Class at Silver Spring

One of my favorite verses from the Gita is Chapter 12, Verse 5:

kleśo'dhikatarasteṣam  
avyaktāsaktacetasām  
avyaktāhi gatirduḥkham  
dehavadbhiravāpyate

This verse means that those whose minds are set on the Unmanifest have greater trouble, because the Unmanifest is very hard for the embodied to reach. The term "embodied" refers to those who are attached to their bodies. This is one of my favorite verses because it shows how personal worship and devotion are. Also, I have had many frustrating experiences in which various teachers and classmates have argued that Hinduism is a polytheistic religion and I have tried to explain to them that this is not the case. However, I myself was never completely certain of exactly why Hinduism is a monotheistic religion. In this verse, I found an answer to my own questions as well as to those of others. However, I have also realized that because I have an answer for myself, I do not need to be frustrated if after my many attempts at explanations, others still do not understand.

\* \* \*



\* \* \*

Chetana Neerchal, Bala Vihar Teacher and Coordinator for annual Bala Vihar Tilak Graduation Program

Chapter 2 Verse 20

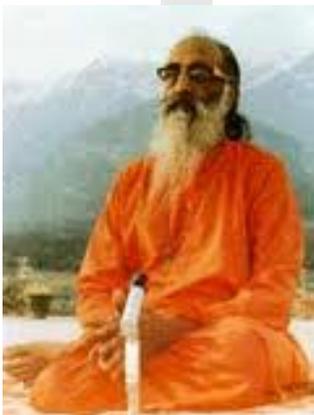
*Na jayate mriyate vaa kadachit  
Naayam bhootva bhavita va na bhooyaha*

*Ajo nityah shasvatoyam puraana  
Na hanyate hanyamane shareere*

*“He is not born, nor does He ever die; after having been, He again ceases not to be; unborn, eternal, changeless and ancient, he is not killed when the body is killed.”*

When life's experiences are overwhelming, I chant this sloka to remind myself that despite the experiences, the essence of me does not change. The anger of a moment changes to a smile with the passage of time and the smile can change to sadness. My body weight changes between seasons, some to my liking, sometimes not. Even societal values change - what was considered wrong yesterday, may be discriminated as acceptable today. In the middle of all these changes, I continue to exist, am conscious of my existence, and always strive for happiness. Being conscious of my changeless Existence that is always desiring happiness helps me tide over changes. Becoming aware of the constancy of change makes me accept the changes.

\* \* \*



Anita Kulkarni, Bala Vihar Teacher

Chapter 2, Verse 22:

Vä-sää-si jér-ëä-ni ya-thä vi-hä-ya  
na-vä-ni gâh-ëä-ti na-ro'pa-rä-ëi  
ta-thä ça-ré-rä-ëi vi-hä-ya jér-ëä-n

an-yä-ni saà-yä-ti na-vä-ni de-hé

I have heard this verse from a very young age. This was a favorite verse of my father. I remember when my grand uncle died, and he consoled my grandfather with this. My father was an ardent reader/follower of Bhagavad Geeta, he knew many shlokas and would quote them time to time. After joining CM about 8 years ago, when I used to tell him kids are chanting chapter 4,5,9, 12, he would always say that is good but teach them chapter 2. He passed away in Feb of this year and as though a tribute to him we did chapter 2 and this verse this year. I felt like sharing my father, his favorite verse with all of you to keep him alive in my heart and memory.

\* \* \*

Ram Jayaraman, Member

Prior to Chinmaya I too was unsure as to what Hindus label God as. But I also was wondering whether the concept of God was identical from religion to religion—you know, a manifestation of all that is good in the world. However, upon close inspection of the following verse, I had found otherwise.

What you see here is an English translation of verse 28 from chapter 13 in the Gita. The verse reads, “Anyone who perceives the Ultimate Consciousness residing equally in all living entities ubiquitously as the imperishable within the perishable, a true Arya, actually perceives.” So basically, Krishna is trying to tell Arjuna that God is absolutely everything, good, and bad. This struck me as very different in comparison to all the other faiths I had some knowledge about; they all state that God is a manifestation of everything good.

Just as a temporary aside, however, one point must be made perfectly clear. In school, at least, my middle school, I was taught that Hinduism is a polytheistic faith. However, polytheism denotes multiple supremacies, which is not what Hinduism espouses. We still believe in one Brahman, and the different deities are just manifestations of that Brahman. So these different manifestations have different characteristics, but our one Brahman, their root, is still the infinite everything—everything

good, and everything bad. From immediate view, it may seem that if God is everything, good and bad, then aren't arsonists and killers manifestations of the lord that we worship? Are they God? According to Hinduism, these criminals are God. So it may seem that this philosophy is backwards. Suffice it to say, it isn't.

I have here an example that substantiates this: ICBMs, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and nuclear power plants are both manifestations of nuclear energy. One is used to kill thousands of individuals, while the other is used to provide millions with power grids. So then, just because the ICBM happens to be a bad thing, as a manifestation of nuclear energy, is nuclear energy itself inherently evil? Of course not! A source cannot be held liable for the actions of its manifestations, just as God cannot be held liable for the actions of man.

In the modern world, however, your boss, your lazy team member and you—hopefully a diligent and forthright individual—are all manifestations of the company. If any one of those individuals presents the company in a bad light at a meeting, even the lazy bum on your team, the company takes the blunt, and your boss gives you a verbal beating. Obviously, you are not the one responsible. You know this. This happens. But don't blame God if this happens, then. As I said, God can't be held responsible for the actions of man, so if you're feeling down, Use the opportunities that God has given you to push through any adversity you may face—and that too, with a smile. It's not he that's messing with you.

\* \* \*

Lakshamanan Kodanate, Member

Chapter 9 verse 22:

Ananyas chinthayantho mam  
Ye janah paryupasate  
Tesam nityabhi yuktanam  
Yogakshemam vahaamy aham

“But to those who worship Me, meditating on Me alone, to them whoever preserver, I bring

attainment of what they have not and security in what they have”

In this verse, the Lord has revealed to us that in order to achieve our objectives, both material and spiritual, we need these three qualities: 1) Single minded purpose 2) Directed action and 3) Self-control. When one acts in this way, then the Lord Himself will ensure our success. Generally, we are most worried about acquiring new possessions and preserving our existing possessions. The Lord here compassionately assures us of success if we can follow the three principles laid out above and thus gives us a pointer to reduce our agitations and worries.

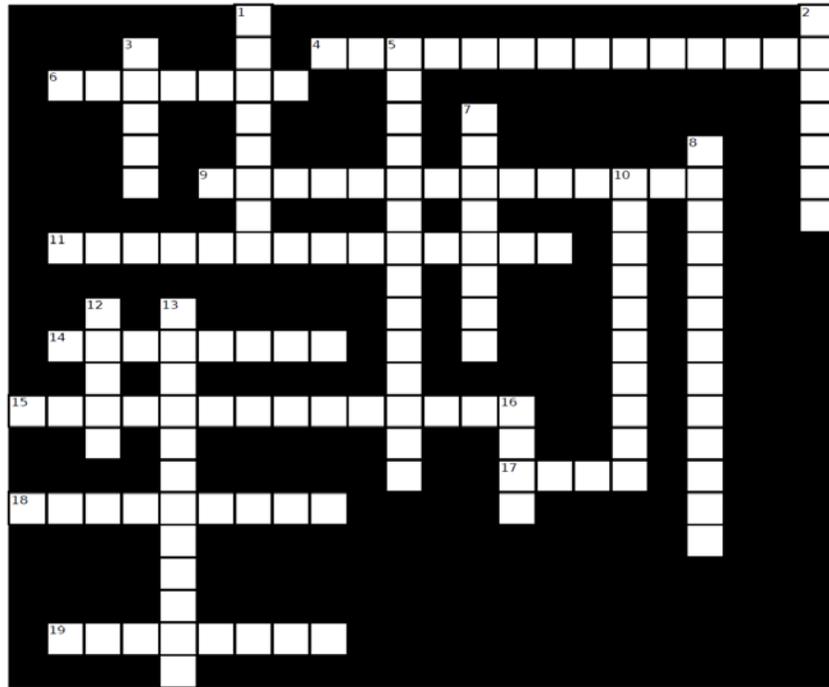
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## Maha Shivaratri Crossword

*Vishnu Dharmaraj*

*Tapovanam Bala Vihar, Silver Spring*

### Shivarathri Crossword Puzzle



- Across
- 4 An incarnation of Shiva, composer of Bhaja Govindam
  - 6 Meaning of "trimurti"
  - 9 Lord Shiva in the Guru's role
  - 11 Naama Japa, also know as panchakshari mantram
  - 14 Name for Shiva meaning "great god"
  - 15 Popular way to worship Shiva, Shiva is bathed in auspicious liquids
  - 17 What the snake represents, Sanskrit for "time"
  - 18 The flow of the river Ganga represents the flow of this
  - 19 The part of Shiva that represents the nectar of life

- Down
- 1 Dancing depiction of Shiva
  - 2 Dance of Shiva that is the source creation, preservation, and destruction
  - 3 Type leaves used to worship Shiva
  - 5 Meaning of "Shiva"
  - 7 How Mahashivaratri is observed, practiced by fasting all day and staying awake all night with the mind focused exclusively on Shiva
  - 8 On Shivarathri, Shiva manifests himself the form of this
  - 10 Name for Shiva meaning "three-eyed one"
  - 12 The name of the vehicle of Shiva
  - 13 The name of the poison Shiva drank
  - 16 The month of the Hindu calendar when Shivarathri is celebrated

## Sankranthi Celebration at Frederick Chapter

*Priya Tandon*

*Fredrick Chapter Tapovanam Bala Vihar Student and Smrithi Team Member*

Hari OM! On January 13, 2013, apart from our usual common time activities in the morning at Frederick Chapter Chinmaya, we had a wonderful surprise. It was about Sankranthi Celebrations In India. Each state celebrates this holiday in different ways. This holiday marks the harvest season in India. It was delightful to see Sundaram class had organized an informative presentation mixed with traces of humor and culture for the Chinmayam families. Since many of the children are born and raised in United States, we were not aware of the traditions, and beliefs practiced by the people.



The Sundaram students started out their presentation by giving us a little insight on what this holiday is exactly about and how it is celebrated. Each

student in the Sundaram class chose a state in India, and explained how Pongal is celebrated there. For example, one of the students chose Andhra Pradesh and explained how in that state it is celebrated by exchange of homemade sweets and flying kites. Another student explained how in Karantaka cows and bulls are decorated and fed Pongal (sweet dishes made from rice), and then at night they are made to jump over a bonfire to the beat of drums and other instruments. It is interesting to know that in one part of India this festival is celebrated by flying kites and eating sweets, and how in another part this festival is celebrated by decorating cows and having them perform. I also learned that this festival is called Pongal in the south part of India, in the north part of India it is called Makar Sankranti, and in Punjab it is called Lohri. I believe this informative program has made each and every one learn something new and interesting about this festival. After this wonderful event, we completed our usual activities and the students and adults were dispersed to their respective classes.



## BMI RAP

*Smruti, Simmi, Rohini, Smaraki, Hirsh, Anmol, Ian, Bhaswant*

*Frederick Chapter Chinmayam Class*

Editor's Note: Chinmayam Class from Frederick Chapter composed the BMI Rap. The audio version is posted on the website: [http://www.chinmayadc.org/Smrithi/BMI\\_RAP.mp3](http://www.chinmayadc.org/Smrithi/BMI_RAP.mp3). Please follow the link to listen to the audio as you enjoy the lyrics here.

### BMI Rap

Chinmayam class studies the BMI to make our minds sore high  
Body, mind, intellect represent who we are  
If we look within each one, our life will go very far  
Thoughts, emotions, and objects are all the three worlds we are dealing

Looking up into the True nature we will all go further than the ceiling  
we perceive, feel and think because our mind makes the links.  
We have to remove our bad vasanas, so our minds don't rust cuz of us!

Mind is like a river- just the thought flow  
Then the Intellect comes and tells the bad thoughts to go  
Vasanas express as thoughts that come into our mind  
Here is a short rap to help you unwind  
Vasanas shape who and what we are  
Look within and not too far

When I see Chipotle walking down the street  
I get so jelly; I wanna grab it and eat  
I love you Chipotle, will you marry me  
My vasanas corrupt me, oh just set me free!

Wait, what's that I smell  
My mom made Pani Puri, she makes it so well  
Now I realize that home cooking is the best  
And it is better than all the rest  
We defeated our vasana, cuz we're so strong  
We killed the Chipotle Ravana; we realized we used to be wrong

Now meditate by resting your eyes, don't even blink; don't talk, just think  
You have worked all day, receiving a solid pay,  
Your body is sore, you can take no more  
It has perceived many objects day after day now reflect on your perception and find "the  
true way"

We feel the deep emotions that come to our mind,

And even if we are hurt, we should still be kind  
Don't just think you'll learn it all now;  
It all takes the focus that the mind will allow

Now go back home and study the BMI  
Even when you're drinking that homemade chai  
When you make your mind as sharp as a knife  
It helps you focus on the good things in life

Body Mind Intellect, all the tools of mine  
I am not them; nothing but Divine

Perceive with your body  
Feel with your mind  
Think with your intellect

**BE your Self  
Hurry HOME !  
HARI OM!**

## Chinmayam Class Summaries

Anil Kishore

*Bala Vihar Teacher – Chinmayam Class & Hindi Language at Silver Spring*

### Class Summary

October 28, 2012

Abir Muhuri

As reviewed from the class before, religion can be compared to the growth of a tree, bounded by either an elastic band or a cement block. The elastic band allows for change and growth, while the cement block can make the tree break. Similarly, religion must be adjustable to changing times and circumstances.

#### Guiding question: What are religion's positive and negative effects on society?

Positive: Religion can bring together people with similar thoughts and can provide guidance and a sense of purpose. It can also work for the betterment of society.

Negative: Extremists of a religion may say there is only "one way." Conflicts between ideologies and societies may occur. Rather than coming together, people may separate based on differences in thoughts and beliefs and this can lead to eruptions of violence.

#### Follow up question: How can we find a common ideal such that we can always be an elastic band?

Religion doesn't cause anything. Its merely provides guidelines by which people can live.

When working towards a common good, people achieve peace. However, identifying too strongly

with an ideology can lead to violence if people choose to follow strict interpretations (e.g. religious fanatics).

(Like a Rope and its Holder. One holder may use a rope to hang someone, while another may use it save someone from falling).

#### Class consensus: Religion: Set of Guidelines

There is not spiritual path that is a beaten path. As no two people are alike, no two paths are alike. Every path is going to vary person to person. Religion should be a lifestyle. If you find an inconsistency between thought and your religion, then the religion is wrong.

#### Conclusion

True Religion is the art of living and the cultivation of religion in one's life. There are no doctrines or straight commands. Practice *Mata*. This means to think through a proposed opinion. Ultimately, it is most important to stick to that IDEAL!

#### THE TRUE GIFT OF THIS DISCUSSION

Daily Tips: Practice daily Introspection, observing what I have done each day towards my goal. This is also known as Self-Unfoldment., If one practices this, then one is practicing religion.

## Class Summary

### Balance

**Nithin Venkatraman**

**November 4, 2012**

During this class, the main question we ventured to answer was how do we achieve balance in our everyday lives? In order to answer this question, we first had to define the type of balance that we wanted to achieve. As a class, we decided that our goal was to gain a balance between spirituality and the material world in order to increase our standard of life. We then talked about overindulgence and how this was a gross imbalance of the physical world over our own spiritualities. We used a story about a fish as an example of this imbalance. In this story, a fish sees a worm on a hook and decides to take a nibble. He nibbles on the fish and backs away quickly. After tasting the worm, he decides to take another small nibble, and does so. After this, he decides to take a third nibble on the worm, but that third nibble turns into a large bite. His greediness becomes his downfall, as the hook gets pulled and he is pulled to his death. After this example, we talked about how not to eat an entire chocolate bar as an example of controlling ones impulses and preventing overindulgence.

After talking about all of this, we did a class activity where we separated our goals into spiritual goals (be happy, have meaningful friendships, etc.) and personal goals (get into a good college, care for others, become a doctor, etc.). The new talked about the path of pleasant and the path of good. The path of pleasant is an action that has immediate pleasure, but later ends in disappointment and sorrow. The path of good is something that may be unappealing at first, but later on brings happiness and fulfillment. An action done simply for the reward that comes after is in the path of pleasant while an action done for the sake of the action is one that falls in the path of good. Finally, we discussed anger, and how it affects the decisions you make possibly more than anything else in your life.

The lesson we learned at the end of class is that balance is a vital part of our lives. Without balance, none of us can truly be happy, and achieve the goals that we wish to achieve. Furthermore, we learned that every decision we make should be weighed greatly so that we can maintain balance in our lives. I know I will be thinking through important decisions in my life like this in the future so that I will truly be happy, and I believe that we all should as well.

## Ch 4 – Balance

**Sanjay Kunchakarra**

**November 25, 2012**

This class focused on Chapter 4, Balance. Swami Chinmayananda explains the reality of applying religion to our daily lives. While it is necessary to improve one's spiritual well-being through the Vedantic principles that we've been discussing, it is also essential to maintain one's material growth, else inner rehabilitation becomes useless. Both the standard of living, material growth, and the standard of life, spiritual growth, must be developed to go through life with ease and happiness.

To illustrate this phenomenon, the class split up into three groups, each representing a company with various fiscal standings and workforce satisfaction. One company had a terrible financial year and poor employee morale, another also faced a bad financial year but had strong employee satisfaction, while the last company had strong workforce satisfaction and financials. Each group brainstormed ideas to improve company performance and morale for the upcoming year and shared these ideas with the class. The overarching tenet of this activity was that balance is an ideal goal: that we should aim for a stronger standing in the standard of living and the standard of life. Unhappy workers or those who are so happy

that they are hardly working, may not be motivated to perform optimally and this will translate to poor outcomes for a company. And even successful companies with happy employees should continue to find ways to improve and not become comfortable with the status quo as life is continually evolving.

Following the class activity, Harshita Didi described scenarios that she pulled from her own life in which she has tried to develop balance. One example, was how she learned to deal with “road rage,” and that getting angry at other drivers ultimately did her more harm than it did those other drivers. In the discussion that followed, Hari brought up the ever-present plague of “Senioritis.” Our guest teacher, Krishna, explained this concept further. The ideal progression through the gunas is from tamas to rajas to satwa. The idea of “Senioritis” illustrates how after a severe period of activity (rajas), studying and keeping up with schoolwork, we revert back to laziness (tamas) instead of transcending to satwa.

The last topic we discussed regarding balance was the importance of Viveka, or discrimination. Reaching balance is tied with Viveka, it is not black and white, but rather subjective. Each individual has the capacity to choose how to achieve balance in their life and this led to the topic of suppression v. sublimation. The goal in attaining balance is to remove suppressed ideals and attain a state of sublimation in which you are able to eliminate false values. Some of us raised concern over the validity over that particular distinction. In some societies, people may not be able to differentiate a false ideal from the truth as we would because of the values they have been instilled with. In that case it becomes nearly impossible to truly eradicate those false values if you truly cannot understand the immorality associated with it. However, societies in which people are allowed to question, and not just follow beliefs blindly (the “blind belief” that Swami Chinmayanandji refers to in his definition of suppression), can lead to sublimation of thought, as we accept true values through discussion and our intellectual pursuits.

## Ch 5 BMI

### Atman Panigrahi

December 9, 2012

To begin class, we reviewed the previous week’s topic of BMI. We discussed individuals who have served as great representations of the ideals conveyed in the chart, including Hanuman and Ram. However, Anil Uncle and Ajay Bhaiya pointed out that there is one letter we always tend to overlook: V, for vasanas. Vasanas are the unconscious imprints of the mind that impact and define who you are as a person. Vasanas are present at birth, and are created through experience over time. They are expressions of the past; if you have vasanas, you will always have desires. There are three main kinds of vasanas: social, physical, and the urge to know. These three types of desires lead us down the ladder of fall. Desiring thoughts lead to emotionally agitated thoughts which lead to bodily actions that hurt us or those around us. The desires generally create an unsteady mind, and as a result, we live and work with an ineffective intellect. It is important to examine the ways to overcome these desires/vasanas.

There are two ways people generally overcome vasanas: suppression, or a forced denial of truth, and sublimation, the acceptance and elimination of false values. The best way to transcend vasanas, however, is to perform selfless dedicated service. As our discussion progressed, we began to talk about sat-cit-ananda, or existence-knowledge-mass. Sat is the infinite existence of Brahma, cit is the awareness or consciousness of Brahma, and Ananda is the happiness and bliss gained when you are one with yourself. This happiness is far greater than any material, ephemeral joy. Objects are merely instruments of happiness, and you must find the happiness in yourself. Ajay Bhaiya provided an example to elaborate upon the idea of Brahma: if a pot is in a room, the space in it is the same as the space outside of it. Similarly, humans are all different manifestations of the same matter. That which is in

us is everywhere around us. This is Brahmin. To become honest with ourselves and recognize our true selves, we must train our minds to have a positive outlook on everything. One must transcend human limitations, and grow from mistakes. Sometimes we force ourselves to be fake to meet expectations (job/college interviews), but you never know what will happen to your future if you change yourself. Ultimately, the class learned that there are many factors in life that make it difficult to find your true, positive self. In the end, however, the responsibility is upon you to work hard to make the changes necessary to improve.

Teachers Addendum -

(1) we should strive to be good, whether or not it shows up on resumes or in college essays...volunteer for the sake of volunteering, not because it'll make you stand out as a student, (2) one should not underestimate one's capacity for goodness...it is also important to "sell" oneself ' - Harshita

Lord Hanuman's devotion for Lord Rama can never be underestimated. His strong Body, his Mind and his Intellect were always devoted to Lord Rama.

Vidyavan Guni ati Chaatur Ram Kaj Karibe Ko Atur

Vidyavan (One with higher knowledge), Guni (one with all the gunas), ati Chaatur (most Intelligent) - all for Lord Rama. His goal was his Lord and the BMI was for dedication and devotion to the Lord. All the contribution in BMI were to reach the Supreme Lord none for his own negative tendencies..and then how could he have them if he only had Lord Rama in every breath. - Anil

## Chapter 5: BMI

Raghav Muralidharan

December 2, 2012

Today's chapter of focus was BMI, the body, mind, and intellect. We began talking about the difference between Mind and Intellect and reviewing the BMI chart: that the Body is for perceiving objects, the Mind is for feeling emotions, and the Intellect is for thinking thoughts. We proceeded to debate whether animals have intellect, and concluded that animals may have an intellect but that it is not as developed as the human intellect, and most animals operate solely on a sensory plane (as far as we can tell), but in turn they have a lesser sense of ego than humans. At the same time, the way one operates and proceeds in life, is molded by experience. Experience has three components: the person who is experiencing, the object of experience, and the experience itself which is the bridge between the person and the object. One experiences through the body, mind, and intellect the objects, feelings and thoughts that surround our lives. While a person is eternally connected to these three instruments of experience, the person must be a separate entity. The self, atman, is the pure consciousness that expresses itself through the vehicles of the body, mind, and intellect. While BMI alone is inert and atman has no self expression, the marriage of the two results in Om, the representation of oneness in everything.

## Chapter 5: BMI- continued

Isha Darbari

December 16, 2012

We started class with a discussion on *vasanas*. We concluded that they are inherent and unconscious tendencies that define us. They are shaped by our decisions when we try to fulfill desires, as well as by our general thoughts and actions of the past. Often, *vasanas* hide our true nature and make us feel limited until we get exactly what we want, leading to ignorance, or *avidya*. An analogy is when the Sun is covered by clouds. The Sun is always there, but the clouds must move to let the sunlight shine through. Similarly, we must get rid of the veil of *vasanas* to let our true self shine through.

This true self doesn't derive happiness from material objects. An object that appears to make us happy one day might bore us the next. For example, if you get an iPod, you might be really happy the first couple of months. But as soon as a newer and improved iPod is available on the market, your happiness dwindles as your desire for the better iPod increases. This struggle is made clear by the happiness equation (where Happiness = Desires Fulfilled / Total Desires). The only way to escape "fractional happiness" is to limit our desires.

These *vasanas* can be controlled by disciplining the mind and its thoughts. For example, one way to control a peer-pressure based *vasana* would be to use *viveka*, or the knowledge of discrimination, to learn about the bad aspects of the *vasana*, making one less inclined to doing it. We also have to learn to condition our *jiva*, or ego. Our ego is like the reflecting surface of our mind. If we steady the ego and stop making it the center of all of our thoughts, then it won't be able to distort our mind. By doing this, we can achieve *sannyasa*, or true renunciation, which is when we learn to make

decisions solely by ourselves, instead of based on our impulses. This is the only way to reach our original and limitless nature, *Om*.

With all of this in mind, it is important to remember that not all *vasanas* are bad. For example, it isn't bad to have a music *vasana* or a learning *vasana*, in which you have a desire to play music or gain more knowledge. Similarly, a service *vasana* with a desire to regularly help others isn't a bad trait, because service is a great way to show kindness. The key lesson is making sure that everything is done in moderation.

## Chapter 6: Action

Thayjus Pancholi

January 6, 2013

We began today's class by reading Chapter 6 (Action) from Self-Unfoldment. Class discussion was prompted by the question: "If a man is sitting under a tree doing nothing, can he be active?" After everybody voiced their opinion, the class concurred that while the man may not be physically active, we do not know of his thoughts and mentally, he could be extremely active yet not moving a muscle. His dedicated stance under the tree could reflect an outward expression of an inward journey. This segued into a story about Michelangelo. In the tale, the renowned painter was sitting by a pond, observing ripples in the water (that later became the inspiration for some of his great art). A merchant walking past him wondered how the artist could sit by the water and eat food brought to him while he (a worker) struggled and worked laboriously all day. The moral of the tale is that Michelangelo was made immortal because he worked from a place of great passion, always inspired, while the worker died a "nobody" because he was unambitious, had negative thoughts and was only driven by his desire for money. It can be said that the attitude with which an action is performed is what defines it.

**Sandhya Piratla**  
**January 13, 2013**

We proceeded to differentiate between laborers, workers, and people of achievement as defined by Swami Chinmayananda. A laborer is somebody who has no ideals and only works selfishly for money/food for himself and/or his family. A laborer could have a high or low ranking job, but they remain a laborer so long as they work only for their (and their family's) benefit. A worker is then said to be somebody who does not only work for a profit, but works toward a definite ideal they have in life. His drive for working is an effort to make that ideal a reality. He is willing to sacrifice much, so long as he can bring that ideal into the world. Swami Chinmayananda then defines people of achievement (POA) as those who solely work for the betterment of others. They are classified by the public as saints and expect nothing in exchange for their services. Their sole reward is the knowledge that they helped correct an injustice. They also can often be persecuted by society as seen with Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, and Gandhi. An example brought up in class is how there is a physician in Wisconsin who serves the poor and receives no payment or recognition, yet still willingly helps the poor with their medical issues. As a contrast, Michael Jordan was not deemed to be POA as he only worked to earn money, and only unintentionally inspired people with his play. While inspiring, people of achievement do not have to be perfect. As an example, Gurudev inspired many but struggled with chewing tobacco and a multitude of the founding fathers owned slaves.

The class then was split into three groups and we each had to write an original rap featuring a person of achievement. Group 1 chose Abraham Lincoln, Group 2 chose Hanuman, and Group 3 chose Dumbledore and each group performed their respective "rap" prior to class ending.

Hari Om!

Last class, we continued the discussion on Action. Specifically, we focused on the section: The Secret of Success. This section stated the idea that what inspires us and our attitude measures the value and quality of the work produced. If you work with a selfish attitude, you will receive no joy, only fatigue. This leads into the example of the farmer and the office worker.

The main difference between a farmer and an office worker is that the farmer faces the day with a fresh and positive attitude. While he works strenuously all day with a miniscule break, he doesn't stress about how much work he has to do. He even comes home and sings with full glee for the rest of the evening. However, the office worker worries and worries. He worries about his position, getting better profits, getting more clients, money needed to get a Mercedes etc ... By the time he reaches the office, he is already so exhausted, even if he hasn't done any work.

In the society we live in, many of us tend to act like the office worker. The reason why we are so fatigued is because we think so much about selfish desires. The farmer mentally is enthusiastic and is free of desires and dissatisfaction. However, the worker is always thinking about selfish desires, such as buying a new car.

Materialism can make anyone start focusing on ensuring that their own needs are met. One of the main reasons why is because they think that by improving their standard of living, they can improve their standard of life. However, because they work so hard to improve their lives, they start worrying more, attitude becomes negative, and thinking negative thoughts more often. There is no way that a person living in these conditions can be truly successful.

To be successful, you need to have a positive outlook. You can save a lot of mental energy so that you wouldn't be so fatigued when you started the day. Also, if you strive with constant dedication to a certain ideal, it will boost us up from all of our selfish desires. This means that we would also have more happiness, which could mean better work and improvement of society. As Ajay Bhaiya said: "You can only give as much happiness as you have."

Hari Om,

Sandhya

## Chapter 9: Mind

Lasya Komaragiri

January 27, 2013

In last week's class we discussed the difference between the mind and the intellect. Our class defined the mind as a flow of thoughts and the intellect as the experience of those thoughts. All living things have a mind but not all have an intellect. An example that helps differentiate mind and intellect is the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. Both of these seas get water from river Jordan, but one sea is very salty and unproductive (Dead Sea), while the other is the most fertile and most productive (Galilee). River Jordan acts as a filter and clears the water which goes to Galilee, while the waste gets sent to the Dead Sea. In this situation the seas symbolize the mind and River Jordan symbolizes the filter which sends good things to the mind (sea of Galilee), and throws the bad things out (into the dead sea). I found that this example really helped clear up the difference between mind and intellect.

Even though every human being has a mind and an intellect, there are other personalities that make each one of us different. Physical (the most gross layer of the four), mental, intellectual, and spiritual (the most subtle layer of the four) are the four different personalities. An example that clearly shows all of these personalities is when someone offers you a piece of cake. Right away your senses are aroused; your mouth starts watering, the nose takes in the fragrance and the eyes can't help but stare at the cake. Your physical personality causes all these things to occur. Next the mental personality comes forth as you experience pleasure and happiness while receiving the cake. Then you may start to evaluate the situation; "although the cake looks so good right now, I remember my doctor saying I should cut down on sugar". This is the intellectual personality in you trying to make the right

decision. Finally, the spiritual personality will make you think about the true locus of happiness, "does this piece of cake truly bring me happiness?" which most likely it will not. We may not realize when it's happening but we use these personalities every day.

Right thinking is the most important thing in the happiness equation. When a person is thinking, they can have positive or negative thoughts. The nature of mind is choosing which one to express. It is very important to express positive thinking and negate negative thinking. For example, Ajay brought up that last week his gaarba team had a very remarkable performance. The hard work in the performance really showed and pleased everyone, thus making everyone believe that they should win. The judges finally decided that his gaarba team got third place, which upset all of the team mates. They had many negative thoughts going through their mind because of their placing, forcing them to express those negative thoughts. Instead of worrying about the placing, the teammates should have been happy because everyone enjoyed their dance. Moreover they should dance for the sake of doing it, not for the prizes. Even though their team failed, it led to a realization which helped them learn and prepare for the future. This example also applies to the quote, "if success is Prasad, then failure is Maha Prasad," meaning although success is a reward, failure can offer a bigger reward because of what you learn from the failure that helps prepare you for the future.

There are a couple things that one must do in order to train the mind to make right decisions. One must negate negative thoughts, substitute positive thoughts for those negative thoughts, and flood the mind with creative ideas. With this in mind, one must also look within and introspect daily, detect diligently, negate ruthlessly and substitute wisely. Introspection is going through your day without thinking too hard about it. You should be able to go through your day without thinking of things you should have or have not done. Detection

is discovering the weaknesses and faults in your day, but not drowning yourself in them, just accept them. Negation is negating all the negative thoughts that come into your mind. Finally, substitution is replacing those negative thoughts with positive thoughts. Doing these things daily will surely guarantee calm and happy feelings.

In summary, we learned a lot about what the mind really is and how we should use it properly. With right thinking, training of the mind and looking within, everybody should be able to have a happy and peaceful mind.

## Class Summary

February 3, 2013

Jitesh Nadimpalli

Today in class we read chapter 11, Karma. We started class by discussing the law of Karma which states that every thing has an equal and opposite reaction. Treating people nicely sparks a good reaction, treating others badly earns a negative reaction. One scenario we discussed a lot in class is what we should do if someone drops \$20. Should we pick it up and give it to the person or keep it for ourselves.

People brought up some very good points that we must consider when faced with this problem. If you take the money you may develop a tendency to steal and also hurt your integrity. One reason to give the money back to the person is because it may spark a good chain of events. But one thing the entire class agreed on is that your choice would rally depend on the man. If he is a beggar that needs the money you may think twice about stealing but if the person is a millionaire you may not care.

People also brought up the question, what if that man was destined to lose those \$20 and we were destined to pick up that \$20. But of course we could also argue that the money was destined to fall out of

the man's pocket and we were destined to develop some good karma by helping the man.

As class went on we also discussed that we had a third option; leave the money alone and let what is going to happen, happen.

While discussing about karma and the punishment for doing something wrong the topic of capital punishment came up. We were discussing whether it is right to kill a murder or imprison him. We all agreed that the amount of punishment will vary based on perspective. This led us to a new question; who decides how much a man should be punished. No one really had answer for this question so we moved on.

While going along the subject of the results of karma we wondered is it right to dwell in the past and think about what we could have done or think about the future and worry about its uncertainty. We know that it is fine to think about the future to an extent, but it is never right to live in the past. We must face each day in the present and learn to accept the past. One topic that related to this is college acceptances and job interviews. For the remainder of the class we discussed this topic. Just like the book says about not living in the past, we must accept rejections and learn to move on. All of us have or will be rejected by a few colleges but we cannot let this get us down. We must overcome these failures and move on.

That was the end of the class summary. Tell me if it needs any revisions. Sorry it took so long to send.

-Jitesh

**Sunday February 24th**

**Prateek Sayyaparaju**

mirror, and tamasika desires envelope the pure self like the womb envelopes a fetus. After learning about the Gunas and the caste system, we said our closing prayers.

We started today's class with the opening prayers. We then proceeded to today's class topic, the gunas. The gunas are the three thought textures, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. Sattva is characterized by purity, Rajas by passion, and Tamas by inertia or laziness. Each of these thought structures is a form of human bondage. The desire for happiness can also be a form of bondage while a divine person without desires is unrestricted.

We also talked about foods and how foods consumed can contribute to one's thought texture. You need a balanced diet of all foods to have a balance between all three thought structures. Very few people can actually achieve divinity because most have duties to their relationships. We decided that you should always aim for divinity but with the daily practicalities of life, it can be hard to reach. We also established that our thought textures evolve over a lifetime. You might start out as tamasic as a child, rajasic during the school years, and later in your life you may become more sattvic. Once you finish all your duties, then you can become detached and pursue divinity.

We also discussed how pain and pleasure make the waves of life. One who is divine experiences the waves but is not swept away by them. Divinity is characterized by action-less not inactivity. We also talked about the caste system. We clarified that four castes were originally determined neither by ancestry nor vocation, but by a person's inner temperament. The brahmin is the thinker, the ksatria is the leader, the vaisya is the trader, and the sudra is the laborer. These castes are based on the proportions of textures of thoughts in an individual. Each of the thought textures creates a different type of veil over the true nature or pure self. Sattvika desires veil the self like smoke covering the fire, rajasika desires cover the self like the dust on a

## CHYK DC – Hanuman Chalisa-thon

### Nine Divine Hours

*Rasshmi Shankar*

*Bala Vihar Teacher, CHYK DC Leader*

A powerful rhythm for the body, a peaceful tune for the mind, and a sweet voice for the soul...these are the feelings we were left with.

We, the Yuva Kendra local to Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center, embarked upon a journey on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 to chant the Hanuman Chalisa for 9 hours continuously as a group. Each hour was dedicated to a different raga, inspired by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejoymanandaji's SwarAnjaneya CD.

Starting at 1:30 in the afternoon and finally stopping at 10:30 at night, we found ourselves joyously immersed in the rhythm of the mridangam and tabla, the peaceful tune of the keyboard and the sweet voices of our peers. The smiles, the enthusiastic "JAI"s at the end of each round, Swami Dheeranandaji's calming presence, and so many families joining throughout the nine hours was perhaps what created such a blissful atmosphere in Chinmayam that day. United by an effort to sing relentlessly in order to invoke the discipline and devotion of Hanuman ji, we further solidified our bond with each other and the Divine Guru.

We were also united by our goal to use this opportunity to raise funds for the Youth Empowerment Program, coming to the West from India for the first time this summer. The Youth Empowerment Program is to be offered free of cost to participants at Chinmaya Krishnalya in Piercy, California. Participants will study Vedantic principles

as well as, leadership and management techniques, in order to dynamically serve as leaders of the community. Upon conclusion they will engage in a yearlong service commitment to a Chinmaya Mission Center.

With our goals minutes from our reach, we entered into the ninth hour of chanting. The voices were louder, the drums played faster and the keyboard tied us all together. We smiled excitedly at each other and sang the Hanuman Chalisa for the 70<sup>th</sup> time that night with enthusiasm and happiness just radiating from within. Finally, 10:30 struck and simply put, we did it.

We would like to thank the ever flowing support, generosity and blessings showered on us by CMWRC and all of its members. That night, not only did we reach our goal of chanting the Hanuman Chalisa for nine hours, we surpassed our goal of raising \$2500.00 for YEP and have collected upwards of \$9000.00. We are eagerly and excitedly sending CMWRC's support to all of the Gurus and participants involved with CHYK West's first ever Youth Empowerment Program.

Every hour after this embarking on this journey, we CHYKs feel we have been EMPOWERED by a powerful rhythm by which we will march forward, a peaceful mind with which we will learn, and a voice for our souls to continue to chant "Jai Hanumana Jnana Guna Sagar...".



## **I Learned To Come Home**

*Aziza Meer,  
Bala Vihar Teacher*

I learned to come home where I'm given a space  
To sit and not be touched by frustrations,  
Irritations, hurts, and anxious race.

Here is a spot given to me,  
A special spot.

It is purged of all problems,  
And like a child in a mother's lap after dinner  
Just lounging and no cares coming even close.

Joy is sweet,  
joy is being together,  
joy is knowing that there are powers  
holding the space for me,  
fondly keeping it for me—  
like my mom did,  
after I had a rough day,  
served me warm food,  
game me a warm, clean home  
where no one can enter without her permission.

She kept me safe,  
she kept me free,  
she kept me happy  
and with no care.

Such spot.  
I'm given a spot.  
In God's heart.

Today I shared such space with a boy  
When he got locked out of his home for an hour

In the bone-chilling cold  
Waiting for a kind soul

To go and rescue him into a warm fold

I got a call asking for help

I ran to share with him the warmth I had

To begin with , a warm car.

Blankets I piled on him as we drove

Brought him home to a warm space

Gave him more blankets,  
Mugs of warm green tea and honey I continuously supplied  
Then I let him wander in the house  
Get on the computer and be free.  
I made him warm lunch and his brother joined by then  
We all ate together  
Hungry the two kids were  
We all sat sharing a space  
Of comfort and care, ease and love.  
The spot God gave me  
I saw is very elastic  
He had me share,  
He brought the boy to warm care  
He took his chill away  
And filled him with health  
Filled him with ease  
Kept his body and soul  
As fondly as could be.

## Poems

*Chetana Neerchal*  
*Bala Vihar Teacher*

### KEEPER OF MY PEACE

From whence is this  
fascination  
for  
dark silhouettes,  
silver horizons,  
the moon floating  
in midnight's breath?

Ever-lasting  
never dying,  
I want you  
with me always,

for

You are the  
keeper of my peace

through

childhood's dreamy smiles,  
teen's wild melancholy,  
today's struggle  
in accepting  
Life.

January 31, 2013

A REVERIE

On my ride back home yesterday, I was watching the trees weaving their bare branches into a net, thick in places, thin in others, sharp needles of pines and firs, silhouetted against the silver evening sky. My occasional peeks at the moon, late into the night, when my teen thoughts needed peace, came back to me. I wondered at the objects of my fascination and my fascination itself which has not waned over the years, but has only grown fuller. My fingers inevitably sketched my thoughts into a poem. I looked out the window again. It was dark already - how swiftly the night had fallen.....my fingers continued to write....I stepped out of my bus and the cold January night reminded me to be grateful for the light and warmth of my house. My thoughts were complete for the evening.

February 1, 2013

### LIGHT IN THE NIGHT

And the night  
has fallen,  
my friend;  
suddenly, quickly,  
as only a winter evening  
can end.

Our day is done,  
its light is swept  
into the corners  
of the world.

Its time to  
light up  
our prayers  
on this  
cold January night.

January 31, 2013

A DRIFTER

Swirling snow flurries  
forever linked to  
drifting desert sands

A snowflake  
sliding down  
the window pane  
taking its time  
to link  
one water drop  
to another

Words  
swirling,  
sliding,  
strumming  
drifting,  
through  
strands of time,  
to give shape  
to thoughts  
that will soon  
be buried  
in sands of time.

January 26, 2013

The drifter is myself....and all of us....

A couple of days ago, Harsha and I were driving back in the snow. The snowflakes swirling on the road reminded him of the desert sands he had seen in Qatar when he visited there in December. From now on when I see the snow flurries, I will be forever reminded of my ride on that road with Harsha - its a photograph in my mind.....

Later, as I was writing my poem, Siri was strumming the strands of her guitar. I wanted to weave my memory of Harsha linking snow swirls to desert sands into her music....and my words drifted through the strands of time.....a drifter at heart....constantly drifting through experiences, memories and thoughts and trying to find words to express them.

## **Relaxing Teacher's Retreat**

*Devi Ramaseshan,  
Sundaram Teacher, Frederick Chapter*

During the month of February, CWMRC organized a refreshing retreat for Bala Vihar and language teachers from all chapters at Silver Spring. The program started with delicious food, followed by Dr. D.C. Roa's glorious discussion on Dharma and Ahimsa. Teachers shared their delightful and humorous experiences on how these two strong pillars of Hinduism are discussed and practiced with students. Then Acharya Vilasiniji conducted a meditation session and led a discussion on the "Nine fundamental Principles of Hinduism". The program concluded with a soothing session on Yoga Nidra Meditation.

The fantastic food for body, the intelligent discussions for the mind and the peaceful yoga for the spirit reminded me about the BMI chart founded by our beloved Gurudev.

Thanks and pranams to all the volunteers who organized this enjoyable event. As a teacher, I enjoyed this relaxing retreat and shall cherish the memories of this event for a long time.

## **GOD Is Like Space**

*Vandana Bapna*

### **GOD is like... Space**

**We are hearing through it, but can't hear it with the ears**

**We are seeing through it, but can't see it with the eyes**

**We are smelling through it, but can't smell it with the nose**

**We are tasting through it, but can't taste it with the tongue**

**We are touching through it, but can't feel it with the skin**

**We are conscious of breathing, but not conscious of air in the Space**

**Our body, mind and intellect are enlivened by it**

**We exist in it, but do not realize it**

**Without it, we will cease to exist**

**GOD is always here, there, everywhere and yet found to be no-where**

**Just like Space, here, there, everywhere and yet found to be no-where**

**GOD is uncovered through silence, just like the silent Space**

**In a voyage from No-where to Now-here, Forever!**



## Purandara Dasa's Achievement towards Creation of Classical Music

*Dhadesugoor R. Vaman*

Purandara Dasa was named at his birth as Srinivasa Nayaka by his parents Varadappa Nayaka and Leelavathi. He was born in 1484 in the village Kshemapura (near Thirthanahalli) in Shivamogga District of Karnataka. He was a successful merchant in his early 20s inheriting the business of gemstones and pawn shop from his father who died when he was 20. He married Leelavathi at the age of 16. At a very young age, he became a millionaire as a merchant.

As a greedy merchant and miserly person, Srinivasa Nayaka endured an incidence where a poor Brahmin (in disguise) came to his wife for money to perform the sacred thread ceremony for his Son's wedding. She gave the Brahmin her nose ring. In turn, the Brahmin sold the nose ring to Srinivasa for getting the money. But Srinivasa wanted to know whether the ring that was sold to him was the same one that his wife wore. His wife knowing the character of her husband prayed her favorite God to give a nose ring similar to the one she gave it to the Brahmin. God gave her a nose ring. When Srinivasa came home and saw that his wife had a nose ring similar to the one he was sold to by the Brahmin, his wife revealed what happened. This incidence changed Srinivasa from being miserly and greedy into a charitable person. He gave away all his wealth and became a devotee of Lord Krishna. He composed his first song, "Analekhara Unni Boladi" in Shuddha Saveri ragam that was set to Tripata Taalam. This song depicted his wasted life prior to becoming a devotee of Lord Krishna. Since that time, he wandered and has composed numerous compositions on Lord Krishna and other forms of God.

As he was wandering, he met Vyasathirtha, guru of Krishnadevaraya, the emperor of Vijayanagara kingdom. It is believed that Srinivasa had his formal

initiation at the hands of Vyasathirtha in 1525 when he was about 40 years old, with the name Purandara Dasa bestowed on him. Purandara Dasa traveled extensively through the length and breadth of Vijayanagara Empire in Karnataka, Tirupati, and Pandarapura composing and rendering soul stirring songs in praise of God. He wrote more than 2 Million songs on Lord Krishna and other forms of God. He spent his last years in Hampi and also sang in Krishnadevaraya's Aasthanam. It is believed that he stayed at Purandara Mantapa in Hampi in his later years in Vijayanagara (Hampi, Bellary District). He died at this place in 1564 at the age of 80.

His created the original composition of carnatic music by introducing "Raaga Mayamalawagowla" as the basic scale of melody which is the basic scale for music instructions for swaravalis, junta swaras, and alankaras. Music students learn these initially as part of their instructions. While Purandara Dasa's Kruthis or Keerthanas can be sung in many ragas, he has made sure that some of the songs which are dedicated must be sung only in specific raagams. For example, he dedicated the song, "Amma Nimma Manegalalli Namma Rangana Kandirenamma" to Sourashtra King and the ragam is referred to as Sourashtra. Purandara Dasa was the architect of introducing Bhava, raga and laya in his compositions. He was eloquent in writing the compositions where songs can be sung by common people. He also introduced "sooladis" which are musical master pieces and are the standard raga lakshana. Even the varna mettus are standardized by Purandara Dasa.

In summary, Purandara Dasa provided a systemic method of teaching carnatic music which is being followed even today. On a personal note, the kaalas (speed) are more in binary form and they are very easy to master at a younger age. More recently, I

found that learning carnatic music faster even at an older age is possible by looking at the spectral compositions of the frequencies used in music which is very interesting. If I were to teach carnatic music to young kids, I would be able to show the spectral compositions of “Sa Ri Ga Ma Pa Da Ni Sa” which is very useful to master the music faster. I have personally experienced it. I must warn that initially one needs a teacher who can make sure mistakes are not made.

excellence, it is critical these things be followed to increase the melody in music.

My experience in music taught me that there are several stages of learning music:

Stage 1: Maintaining monotonic chord for each Swara takes time and one gets good at it.

Stage 2: Developing Junta Swaras where there is a small variation between the first and the second Swara of the same type (also referred to as Gamakam)

Stage 3: Singing Swaras using “Aakaaram” alone.

Stage 4: Learning the initial “Alapana”.

Stage 5: Moving the head while singing to get perfection in swaras.

All these are very challenging and finally, the song must be remembered and one should not practice singing looking at the song. It changes the melody substantially. Purandara Dasa has made this knowledge known to musicians if one looks at his music carefully.

Another aspect in Purandara Dasa’s songs is the depiction of God in the song appropriately. For example, Lord Krishna comes in different times for different reasons, whereas Lord Hari stays at one place; and Lord Rama depicts peace and priceless patience. One should not mix the Lord’s names in the song as many great musicians tend to do for the sake of music. Purandara Dasa’s original compositions have never made mistakes like this. For a good learning experience and achieving

## Highway to Heaven

*Deepa Krishnan,  
Bala Vihar Director*

“Yadyatkarma karomi tattadakhilam śambho tavārādhanam“

The directions to Heaven from our home are easy.

Take I-270 N to Route 200 E, turn left on New Hampshire Ave and then left onto Norwood Road to arrive at ... Heaven. When I am at Chinmaya Mission, my troubles seem to melt away and there is an inexplicable sense of peace, joy and contentment in our Pujya Swamiji's presence. One such recent inspiring memory will linger in my mind for a long time.

It was Maha Shivaratri day. As I stepped into Chinmayam for the morning meditation, I entered into a realm of inner silence and blissful awareness. It was still dark outside and the reflection of the bright, steady flame in our crystal Shiva Linga reminded me once again to be ever aware of the Self within.

Shiva Manasa Puja composed by Adi Sankaracharya played in the background and with each chanting, a devotee performed holy Abishekham to Lord Shiva. As the water flowed continuously over the reflecting Shiva Linga, my thoughts merged in a continuous flow of Om Namah Shivaya.

I was transported to the foothills of the majestic Himalayas, to Sri Kedarnath Mandir, where we had performed Abhishekham to the Holiest of Jyotir Lingas with Bilva Patras we had carried from Uttarakashi. Mentally I offered Bilva Patras to the Lord of Kailas.

I travelled to the simple Samadhi shrine of Adi Sankaracharya, surrounded by snow tipped mountains in Holy Kedarnath, where this immortal vedantin who had composed so many beautiful Sanskrit hymns, had chosen to meet the Lord. I offered my prostrations to Adi Sankaracharya who is verily the crown jewel of Vedanta.

That day, Chinmayam was Kedarnath. The Lord of Kedar had descended to be amidst His devotees and Adi Sankaracharya was Himself chanting the hymn of Shiva Manasa Puja.

As our Pujya Swamiji sat in meditation at the end, the Chinmayam hall was filled with a strong vibration of focus and devotion. Each of our individual attempts at meditation were joined together with Pujya Swamiji's powerful meditation, like pearls on a necklace, to adorn Lord Jagadeeshwara, in unison.

Later that day during the Bala Vihar session puja, we followed Pujya Swamiji, in chanting the following verse from Shiva Manasa Puja. One of our Sunday morning Bala Vihar coordinators, Indira Konduri shared the meaning with some of us, afterword. I have read it again and again since.

ātmā tvam girijā matiḥ saha-carāḥ prā-ṇāḥ śarī-ram gṛham  
pūjā te viṣa-yopa-bhoga-racanā nidrā samā-dhi-sthi-tiḥ |  
sañ-çārah pada-yoḥ pra-dak-ṣiṇa-vidhiḥ stot-rāṇi sarvā-giro  
yad-yat-karma karo-mi taḥ-tad-akhi-lam śambho tavā-rādha-nam || 4 ||

*You are my Self, Parvati is my intellect.*

*My vital breaths are Your attendants,*

*My body is Your house, and,*

*all the pleasures enjoyed by my senses are materials for Your puja.*

*My sleep is Your state of samaadhI.*

*Wherever I walk, I am circumambulating You,*

*Everything I say is a hymn of praise to You,*

*Everything I do is in devotion to You*

*oh Shambhu!*

The entire Shiva Manasa Puja can be found in the Mahashivaratri resource page on our website.

<http://www.chinmayadc.org/Shivaratri/MahaShivaratri.htm>

Also here is a link to a beautiful discourse on Shiva Manasa Puja

<http://cmdfwmedia.org/resources/downloads/ShivaManasPuja.pdf>

My sincere thanks to Andrea Beri and the entire team of sevaks who made another magical Maha Shivaratri possible for us. And many thanks to Pujya Swamiji for inspiring us, always.

## Reflections – Gita Chanting Competition

*Sitaram Kowtha*

Why compete? Am I not too old to memorize? Gita is so sacred, why even have a competition? These were the questions I had in mind as I pondered whether to sign up or not for Gita Chanting Competition, when we joined Chinmaya Mission about 10 years ago.

Swami Dheeranandaji was teaching Chapter 3 – Karma Yoga – of the Gita during adult sessions. Later that year the announcements came out asking members to sign up for the Gita Chanting competition. Swamiji had identified 1<sup>st</sup> 12 or so verses from Chapter 3 as the material for the event. It not only seemed daunting: memorize Gita verses, pronounce Sanskrit clearly, and chant in front of judges; but also pointless. Why bother chanting Gita. What good will it do? Why bother competing, knowing that I am not really prepared for this.

Despite such misgivings, I signed up simply because Swamiji asked everyone to sign up. I popped the CD I received during registration into my car's audio and started hearing the practice verses on my commute back and forth between my home in Howard County and my office in Northern Virginia. Slowly, the verses started to become familiar. I could chant along with some of them.

As days turned into weeks, I was able to chant all of them, except making a mistake here and there. Slowly, the act of hearing the verses turned into listening to the verses. With some background in Hindi and Telugu, and relating to what I remembered Swamiji taught on Sundays, I was able to make out words and their meanings, and had some sense what Arjuna was asking and what Krishna was answering. With growing understanding and out of curiosity, I opened the Gita book one day, and poured over the verses and their meanings, along with Sri Gurudev's commentary. Now as I listened to the verses and chanted along, I could follow the conversation between Arjuna and Krishna. After some more time, I found myself humming to the verses as I tended to routine chores around the home. I

became confident that I have now learned the verses, have a good sense for their meaning and the sequence of the verses based on the dialogue and fairly good sense for the pronunciation. What started with misgivings and an attitude of "let's see what happens" to learning the joy of Gita.

On the day of the competition, my confidence ebbed a little bit. I think anxiety started to take hold. I managed to trip up myself once or twice during practice. As I started chanting in front of the judges, my mouth went dry and I blanked out around 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> verse. I stopped. The kind judges provided gentle prompts to get me back on track. After that I relaxed and completed the remaining verses without hesitation, and I think, without error. After that, I was not concerned with the score I might have received. I was happy to be introduced to Gita Chanting.

Since then I have had a number of occasions to learn about many topics covered in the Gita, especially Karma Yoga. I don't remember the verses from Chapter 3 anymore. But I still have a good sense for the dialogue and some of the key verses. I may not remember the specific verse, but I can confidently go to Chapter 3 and look it up. And it will be there, waiting to be read, chanted and re-understood. The understanding tends to be lot deeper than when I was initially learning to chant. The Gita keeps giving, and it has a lot more to give, only if one is willing to study it more.

Over the past 10 years, I continued to participate in the competition. Two years ago, the verses from chanting came in handy during our trip to Tapoval Kutir in Uttar Kashi. We sat in the prayer hall next to Kutir and chanted Gita Chapter 12 – Bhakthi Yoga. Every description in Chapter 12 of a great devotee aptly reflects on the life and nature of Swami Tapovan Maharaj.

Gita chanting is a great way to get started in the study of the Gita! Swamiji and sevaks prepare and publish audio tracks, as well as a chanting booklet. Recently Swamiji made it even easier for Adults. All one has to do is to become familiar with chanting the verses, pronunciation, and the meanings – no need to memorize!

As the first verse of Gita Dhyanam observes, Mother Gita will patiently take the student into her arms and teach him or her gently, regardless of their background.

\* \* \*

Some answers to the questions I explicitly or implicitly invoked earlier:

**Why Chant:** Just as children learn to recite alphabets or numbers before they know their value, so too chanting Gita helps with familiarity of the subject we seek to study. Chanting also endears what we are about to study. Studying what we have learned to chant already, inspires us into even deeper study.

**Why Study Gita:** It is widely known that a key message of the Gita is that one should perform his or her duty. Gita is actually a treasure trove of beautiful messages. Even though the essence of Gita is covered in Chapter 2, it is only in the unfoldment of main aspects of chapter 2, which is done in Chapters 3-18, that the brilliance of the Gita can be appreciated and imbibed. Swamiji often makes an interesting comment such as this, “chapter 11 comes after chapter 10, but before chapter 13”. There is a method to the unfoldment of the Gita. A great saying of the Vedas or the “Mahavakya” is “Tat Twam Asi” or “That You Are”. Gita is divided into three sets: 1<sup>st</sup> six chapters focus on the “you”, the next six focus on “That” or the nature of the Lord, and the last six focus on the relationship between the two. Gita is an elaboration of the Mahavakya. Studying the Gita, along with other Upanishads, Ramayana, Bhagvatam, etc. further elaborates in the student’s mind what the message of the Gita is.

**Why Compete:** There are two ways of looking at the competition. First, a competition serves as a forcing function for preparation. It sharpens our mind on what it takes to do well, forces us to practice, and helps

reprioritize our time and activities so that we can do reasonably well. Second, the competition reminds us that we often have competing interests, priorities and tendencies within ourselves. We have to make sure that chanting Gita takes precedence over other activities and priorities, and we had to do that in a sustained manner. Thus the competition helps us elevate study of Gita to a higher level priority within our own lives.

There is one important reason to participate in the competition – Sri Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda. Gurudev’s message in rekindling Hinduism to Hindus was for greater and renewed appreciation of the wisdom of the Upanishads. The Gita embodies that wisdom. He became a messenger of the Gita by conducting numerous Gita Jnana Yajnas, in English, across the world. He encouraged those who responded to his call to study the Gita and spread the wisdom of the Gita. As Chinmaya Mission members, we honor and pay respect to Sri Gurudev by participating in the competition, ultimately leading a life inspired by the Gita.

Sri Gurubhyo Namah

Hari Om!

## Jnana Yoga and Self Realization - XII

*Acharya Sadananda*

We have so far established using scriptures, logic and experience, in that order, that - I am -, designating for the pure saakshii, is not different from saakshyam as emphasized by the statement – tat tvam asi or you are that. The scriptural statement starts with the declaration that –existence- alone was there before the creation, and it was one without a second. Scriptures continue to say that the existence continues to exist as such, since that which exists can never stop existing. If existence disappears, then in its place non-existence must come into existence, which is a contradiction in terms, since we cannot say non-existence exists. By the statement that it was one, alone, without a second, that existence was without any qualifications or without the three possible distinctions i.e. sajaati, vijaati and swagata bhedaas. Then what happened to that existence after creation? It continues to exist, now apparently in varieties of names and forms or with varieties of attributes. Being infinite, it does not or cannot undergo any mutation of any kind. How can it become many without any mutation? Scripture itself provides three examples – just as gold becoming varieties of ornaments while remaining as gold, as clay becoming pots while remaining as clay, as iron becoming iron tools while remaining as iron. In all these examples gold, clay and iron are material causes for their products, and the materials remain while varieties of products appear to form. It is called vivarta or transformation-less transformation. From gold point there are no bangles, bracelets and rings. What is there is only gold, alone, without a second. Gold was before it appeared as rings and bangles, gold is while appearing as rings and bangles and gold will be even if they change into other forms. It remains as gold, while names and forms keep changing. What is satyam or immutable is gold; what is mithyaa is that which is there temporarily as entity for transactions. Forms are not conserved; only material is conserved. By providing these examples, scriptures declare that existence remained as such, forming the material or

substantive cause for the universe. Hence creation is nothing but existence itself in varieties of names and forms, starting from space. From existence point there is no creation or the world. What we see is only the names and forms but not the substantive existence which is imperceptible.

Thus scriptures declare that existence permeates the whole universe as the substantive while appearing as divergent plurality. Plurality distinguishes itself by the varieties of objects with divergent attributes, while the undifferentiable and imperceptible existence providing the substantives for the varieties. Every object is limited location-wise, time-wise, and attribute-wise (desha-kaala-vastu paricchinnam) and is distinctively different from the other objects. Without the existence principle pervading all these objects of plurality in the creation, they cannot exist independently. Hence any object exists implies that existence pervades as a substantive of the object, lending existence to the object so that one can perceive the object.

In deep sleep, no object is perceived. Hence scripture says – **na kancana kaamam kaamayate** – ManDukya. There, it is expressed as no desire for any object, because no seer-seen distinction exists in deep sleep state. Yet the existence principle exists as we say there is a deep sleep state that is different from waking and dream state. In that state I exist as the very subject, who is awake in deep sleep state as saakshii, now witnessing the absence of all objects of knowledge including space and time. Hence, the ego which exists with an identification -I am this - is not there, since –this-, which is nothing but a thought of BMI, is not there. **I am** – exists without any –this, this involves qualifications which are perceptible via senses; and that unqualified - I am – is, therefore, imperceptible. In fact, scriptures say I am that existence principle that exists, and lends existence to all the objects that I perceive that are distinct from me, based on their attributive content.

Hence, in the identity equation - I am that – the identity refers to I am that existence principle that pervades all this universe of plurality – *idam sarvam*, and that refers to that which is eternal and undifferentiable, and hence imperceptible, making scripture as the only pramANa for this realization or recognition. Whatever I perceive or known, is therefore an object with attributes, which is essentially existence itself with attributes of the object, just as gold itself appearing as attributive ring or bangle, etc. While other philosophers say that I see therefore the object is true, advaitin will say I see therefore it is not true since it gets negated, also not un-true since I am seeing; hence it is mithyaa. Shankara says – *drisyatvaat*, because I see it is mithyaa. It implies that truth cannot be seen and untruth (as in vandhyaa putraH) also cannot be seen. Hence whatever is seen is neither truth nor untruth- sat asat vilakshaNam, which forms the definition for mithyaa.

Analysis of the deep sleep state is very subtle. It is a state of nirvikalpa, where mind exists in dormant state without any thoughts. However, I am there in the deep sleep state – I, the existence-consciousness existing without illumining anything. After getting up from sleep a waker says, I slept very well, and I was not aware of either myself or any other entity in deep sleep state. Just as in the pitch dark room, no object is perceived and we do not even know if any object exists or not, so is in the deep sleep, where there is a blanket of ignorance covering the mind. It is not ignorance of something (like chemistry, physics, etc) but ignorance of everything, called muula avidya. Mind, as we discussed before, acts as intermediary between saakshii, i.e. myself, and the objects that become known. The mind first gets illumined by the light of consciousness of saakshii, and the reflected light from the mind further illumines the object-thoughts. In the waking state, not only I know what I know, I also know what I do not know. That is, even the ignorance of x, y, or z, I know. Mind, as though, illumines the absence of knowledge or ignorance too. Since mind is not there in the deep-sleep state, not only I do not have the knowledge of any object, unlike in the waking state, I am not conscious of my ignorance too. After getting up from sleep, I say that I slept very well, and that I am not conscious of myself as well as not conscious of anything else. This declaration is by the

mind or ahankaara, which was dormant at that time. Hence from the point of the mind, the statement, at a first glance, appears to be a statement of inference. However, once awake, mind can re-cognize its absence at that time in that state (like missing 18.5min gap in the Nixon tapes), and also re-cognize or recollect the absence of everything or absence of pramaataa-prameya duality since there is gap in the memory with no cognition of any kind. There is, however, an advaitic experience where all problems appear to be resolved and was peaceful, confirming the scriptural declaration that duality is the cause of fear, *dvitiyadvai bhayam bhavati*, Br. Up. That means, I never have to work for an advaitic experience, since nature provides that abundantly everyday. However, I have no knowledge of myself at that time. Yet, I was there enjoying the absence of everything. That enjoyment due to advaita in deep-sleep state is not an inference but real experience that everyone longs for. Thus, in the deep-sleep state that I was there is not an inference but experience of happiness due to absence of duality. Since there is no jnaana prakriya or process of acquiring knowledge for which mind is required, I have no knowledge of myself, since I am also not conscious of myself. Hence scriptures say saakshii alone was there along with ignorance in the deep sleep state. Not only I do not know myself I also do not know that I have ignorance. Both are not revealed. Even though ignorance is there, it is not revealed during that state, since revealing instrument, the mind, is not there.

Now the question is, why is the self-effulgent saakshii that is present even in deep sleep state is not revealed? Interesting thing is even to reveal the self-effulgent saakshii we need the mind. We discussed this before using the light analogy. If there is light spread out all over in space, we can never know the existence of the light unless there is an object to reflect the light. By the reflection of the light by the object we can know two things: the existence of the object and the existence of the light that illumines the object. Object does not bring the light since it is, by itself, inert or jadama. The self-luminous saakshii is always there shining but it needs the BMI to reveal itself. We have a peculiar relation between saakshii or existence-consciousness and the BMI. Saakshii is needed to know the presence of the BMI.

Only in the light of consciousness the BMI is revealed. On the other hand BMI is needed to recognize the presence of saakshii too. Shankara discusses this aspect elaborately in his bhaaShya on Prasnopanishad. Sureshwara discusses this in his Naishkarmasiddhi in II-106 and III-57. Essentially the mind makes the all pervading consciousness to manifest in terms of names and forms. When the mind is not there as in deep-sleep state, neither I know myself nor I know the presence of any object including ignorance that I have. Then, how does a jnaani sleep? He sleeps as a jnaani, where, as saakshii swaruupa he is awake but there is no illumination of the objects nor the recognition of saakshii since his mind is not there. Essentially we can say that the mind of the jnaani sleeps, just as in ajnaani. His jnaani status is not revealed since mind is absent, just as for ajnaani his ajnaani status is not revealed. Both enjoy the advaitic experience. For jnaani he enjoys there also, while ajnaani enjoys there only.

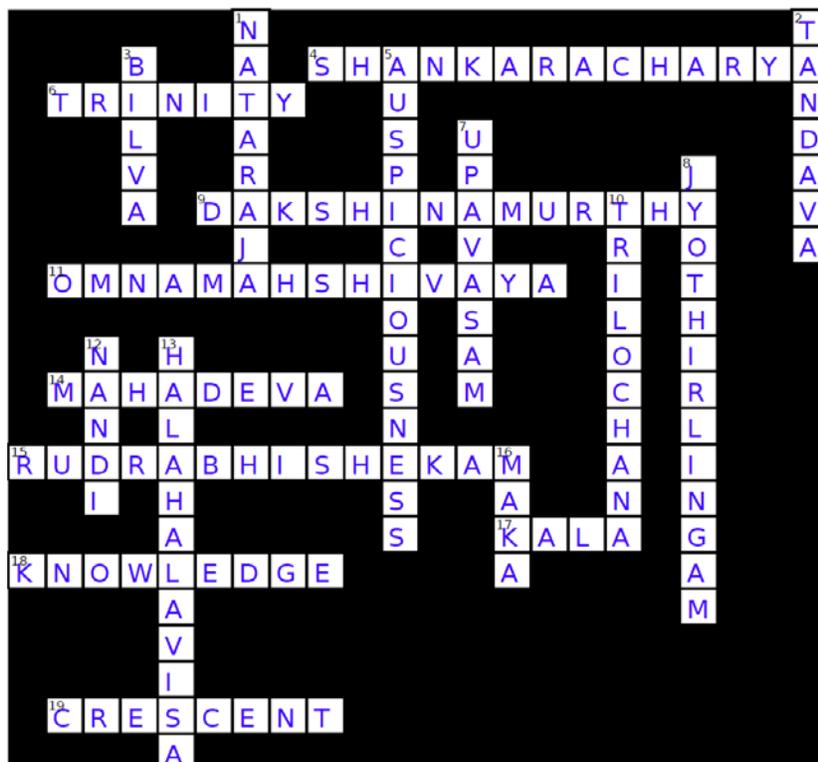
Before we proceed further we need to ask another question – If I am pure existence principle and the substantive of the whole universe, which has no sajaati, vijaati and swagata bhedas, then where do these attributes of world of objects come from? Let us apply this question to our friend, Mr. Gold. When gold alone was there before creation of all the ornaments, where did these varieties of attributive names and forms such as ring, bangle and necklace, etc., come from? Goldsmith obviously is going to make them according to the desires of the people who want those specific attributive forms of gold. The same logic we can apply here. The pure existence principle decided to become many depending on the subtle desires of those that want to experience the world of objects. This is called karma, left in subtle form from the previous cycle of creation, says Krishna in Ch.8. The samaShTi or totality of all vaasanaas of all beings that are ready to express in terms of desires to experience the world of plurality formed the basis for the creation. Hence the scripture says – **sa kaamayata – bahusyaam –prajaayeya- sa tato2tapyata-sa tapastaptvaa**-(Tai.Up.), etc indicating that before the creation is manifested into varieties of names and forms, the creator visualized or planned or contemplated taking into consideration all the blue-prints required for creation to meet all the specifications of all beings that

are there now in subtle forms. Thus according to scriptures, creation is not a random phenomenon or accidental processes or at the whims and fancies of the creator, but well-thought out or contemplated or well designed following the well laid out rules and regulations. Hence it is a creation and not a chaotic random process. Thus the cycle of creation, sustenance and dissolution is a beginning-less cycle. The one who transforms the subtle forms into grosser forms is Iswara, the creator, similar to our goldsmith. He needs the subtle form of karma in the form of vaasanaas which are avyaktam or unmanifested forms to help in the creation. This is called maayaa. Iswara thus is equipped with maayaa shakti to create the world of plurality. Where is that Iswara? Scriptures answer – He himself became many. **prajaayeya – bahushyaam** – Let Me become many and He became many. Implying that existence principle which was there before the creation, he himself became many. That means it is not only the material cause but intelligent and instrumental cause too, since He is equipped with all the tools needed to become many. Hence VishNusahasranaamaavali says – he is karNam, kaaraNam, kartaa.. He is the instrumental, material and intelligent cause for the universe. Thus the existence that was there before creation is a conscious-existence, since creation can only be done by a conscious entity and not by inert entity. Existence and consciousness are not two but one and the same – Hence – I am – include both sat and chit that I am – and I am that, the whole world of plurality too – the sakshyam that I witness. Hence I am a saakshii that we understood from **tvam** padaartham and using the scriptural statement -**tat tvam asi**- the tat – that is saakshyam is also the existence-consciousness that I am. Thus both saakshii and saakshyam, the witnessing consciousness and the witnessed consciousness – both I am. Since there are only two – saakshii and saakshyam, I am the total – aham brahmaasmi follows the teaching, when I realize that truth in the statement - tat tvam asi.

However, saakshyam is inert and how can the conscious-existence entity, Brahman, become inert? This aspect will be addressed next.

## Crossword Solution

# Shivarathri Crossword Puzzle



- Across**
- 4 An incarnation of Shiva, composer of Bhaja Govindam
  - 6 Meaning of "trimurti"
  - 9 Lord Shiva in the Guru's role
  - 11 Naama Japa, also know as panchakshari mantram
  - 14 Name for Shiva meaning "great god"
  - 15 Popular way to worship Shiva, Shiva is bathed in auspicious liquids
  - 17 What the snake represents, Sanskrit for "time"
  - 18 The flow of the river Ganga represents the flow of this
  - 19 The part of Shiva that represents the nectar of life

- Down**
- 1 Dancing depiction of Shiva
  - 2 Dance of Shiva that is the source creation, preservation, and destruction
  - 3 Type leaves used to worship Shiva
  - 5 Meaning of "Shiva"
  - 7 How Mahashivaratri is observed, practiced by fasting all day and staying awake all night with the mind focused exclusively on Shiva
  - 8 On Shivarathri, Shiva manifests himself the form of this
  - 10 Name for Shiva meaning "three-eyed one"
  - 12 The name of the vehicle of Shiva
  - 13 The name of the poison Shiva drank
  - 16 The month of the Hindu calendar when Shivarathri is celebrated