

# Chinmaya Smrithi



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

**Volume 23, Number 3, May 18, 2013**

*Celebrating Mother, Father and Guru*

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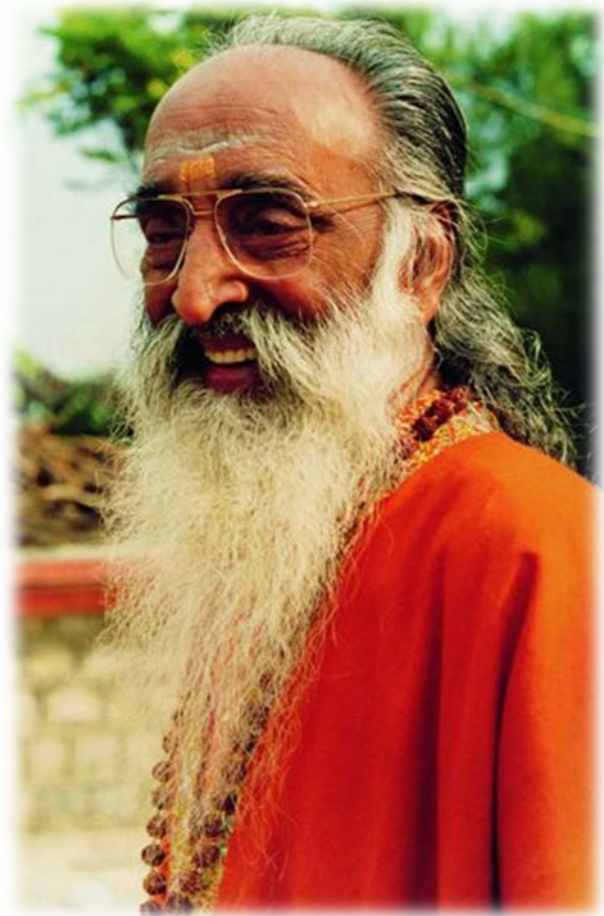
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**CMWRC celebrated 97<sup>th</sup> birthday of Sri Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda on May 11 and 12**

## Calendar and Upcoming Events

- Sat May 18 – Bala Vihar Tilak Graduation Ceremony
- Sat May 27 – Sun May 28 – Memorial Day Spiritual Camp with Acharya Sadananda at Chinmayam
- Sat June 1 @ 6PM – Performing Arts Annual Day at Chinmayam

- Sat June 8 @ 5PM – Language Annual Day at Chinmayam
- Sat June 8 – Sun June 9 – Annual Day Bala Vihar Performances locally at all chapters. Last day of 2012/2013 Bala vihar
- Sat June 8 – Sun June 9 – Acharya Sadananda talks on 'Upadesa Sara' in NY
- June 14-16 – Devi Retreat with Acharya Vilasiniji and Acharya Vivekji
- June 27 – Children Summer Camp in VA

### 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 - July 2013, are due by July 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***

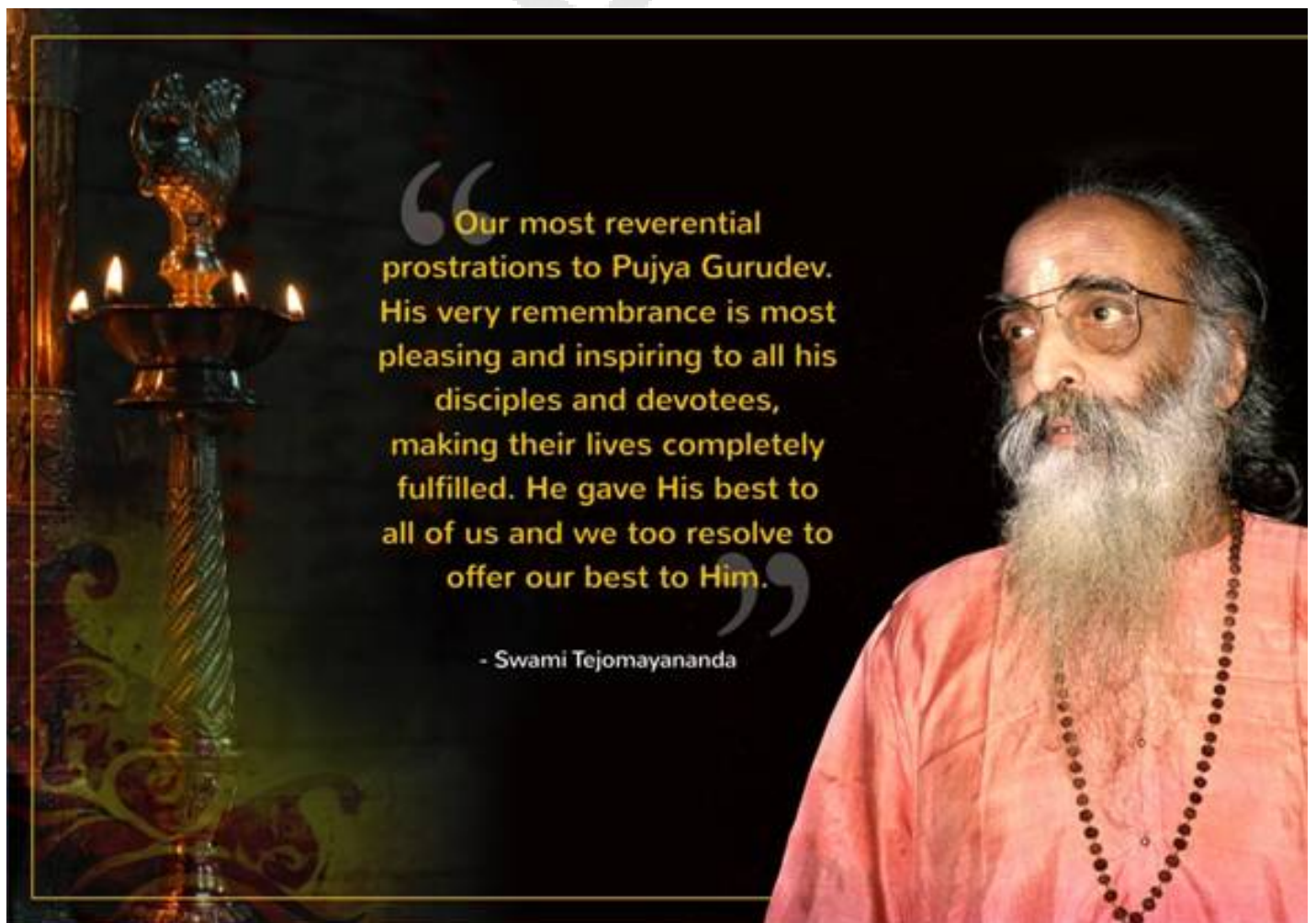
***The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of Chinmaya Mission or CMWRC***

***Editorial Staff: ([smrithi@chinmayadc.org](mailto: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!*

## SRI GURUDEV JAYANTHI GREETINGS



## News, Notes and Flyers

### CMWRC Events Held

- Sri Rama Navami and Carnival at Chinmayam was held on Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>
- “7 Sopranos” concert Fund Raiser for Chinmaya Somnath held on April 20<sup>th</sup> in Northern VA
- Hanuman Jayanthi Puja was performed at Chinmayam on Thursday April 25<sup>th</sup>
- Jnana Yajna was conducted by Acharya Vivekji at Frederick MD, April 25-28, on “Sambandha: Freedom through Relationships”.
- 2013 Gita Chanting Competition, held locally at all chapters, Saturday, April 27 & Sunday April 28<sup>th</sup>. Results posted on [www.chinmayadc.org](http://www.chinmayadc.org) site.
- Chinmaya Seva Day was observed on Saturday May 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday May 5<sup>th</sup>.
- “Minute to Mind Management” workshop was conducted by Acharya Vivekji at Chinmayam, April 29-30.
- Chinmaya Jayanthi prayer and birthday celebration and Mother’s Day observation took place locally at all chapters on Saturday May 11<sup>th</sup> and Sunday May 12<sup>th</sup>

### Announcements

- Chinmaya West Newsletter for May 2013 is available at Chinmaya West website: <http://www.chinmayamission.org/cmwnews>
- Friday Evening “Adult Vihar” Satsang at Chinmayam – next sessions: May 17<sup>th</sup>, May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 14<sup>th</sup>. The bi-weekly sessions are free and open to all members and friends. For further details, please contact: [fridaysatsang@chinmayadc.org](mailto:fridaysatsang@chinmayadc.org) or visit <http://www.chinmayadc.org/FridaySatsang/FridaySatsang.htm>

### Current/Upcoming CMWRC Events

- CMWRC Bala Vihar Graduation Tilak Ceremony at Silver Spring – Saturday May 18<sup>th</sup>
- Memorial Day Spiritual Camp, “Maitreyii Brahmana of Brihadaranyaka 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.
- Acharya Sadananda talks on “Upadesa Sara” by Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi in Saten Island NY, June 8-9.
- Devi Retreat June 14-16, with Acharya Vivek Gupta
- Virginia Children’s Summer Camp: June 24 - July 19
- Guru Poornima Observation – July 21
- Maryland Children’s Summer Camp: July 22 – August 16
- Sri Gurudev Aradhana Day - August 3rd





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

## **VEDANTA CAMP 2013**

Conducted by

***His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda***

*Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide*



**June 18-23, 2013**

**'Krishnalaya' Ashram, Piercy, Northern California**

**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)

[krishnalaya@chinmayamission.org](mailto:krishnalaya@chinmayamission.org)

**(707) 207-5011**



## Hari Om!

Chinmaya Mission Ann Arbor is blessed to host the **20th Anniversary Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Family Camp 2013**. It is that auspicious time of the year when hundreds of Chinmaya families from all across the United States gather to celebrate the glory and vision of our beloved Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda. We extend our warm welcome and invitation to all Chinmaya devotees worldwide to take part in this very special event with your entire family and be blessed by His limitless grace.

This spiritual camp will uplift your whole family with its unique programs specially designed for each age group. Adults will find peace and fulfillment through meditation, discourses, satsang, and learning at the lotus feet of the Master Vedantin, H.H. Pujya Swami Tejomayanandaji. Young adults/youth will engage in lively discussions and learn more about themselves while meeting like-minded friends. Children will learn different aspects of Hindu religion and culture through fun and games. This will certainly be a retreat to remember! Come gain the Vision of Truth at this inspiring camp!

**Details and Brochure:** <http://www.mychinmaya.org/msc/index.php>



## CHINMAYA MISSION

### Washington Regional Center

Kailas Niwas, 46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905  
(A nonprofit religious organization registered in Maryland)



### Brihadaranyaka Upanishad – Maitreyi Brahmana

### Two-Day Memorial Weekend Camp on May 25 and 26 at

### Chinmayam, Silver Spring MD

Even modern science agrees on the role of spirituality in joyful living. A retired scientist by profession, Acharya Dr. Sadananda will share the great wisdom available in the ancient scriptures of Hinduism. Acharya Sadaji's unique methods of teaching provide ample practical tips for our day-to-day life.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad provides the quintessence of Vedanta. In the Maitreyi Brahmana, the great sage, Yajnavalkya, teaches his wife, Maitreyi, that knowledge knowing which there is nothing more to know. Yajnavalkya's teaching will be explored, step by step, to understand why and how self-knowledge becomes the Supreme Knowledge, and why intense listening to the teaching is essential to gain this Supreme Knowledge.



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

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

CMWRC will provide child-care services subject to the availability of volunteers

**Registration is required. Please register before May 18; instructions are provided in the form below. For more information, please contact Subbarao Kari at 703-981-1808.**

**Directions:** Take I-495 to exit 28 North for New Hampshire Ave (towards White Oak). Drive approximately six miles and turn left on Norwood Road. CHINMAYAM is the 4th building on the left.

<b>Registration Pledge:</b>	<b>Single - \$15</b>	<b>Couple - \$25</b>	<b>Additional Adults - \$10 each</b>
Name(s): _____			
Name(s) & Age(s) of Children: _____			
Address: _____			
Phone: _____			
Please submit completed registration form with check in favor of 'CMWRC' by May 18 to your Chapter Coordinator or mail to 46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905. You can pre-register by sending email to <a href="mailto:campmd@chinmavasomnath.org">campmd@chinmavasomnath.org</a> .			



6 Romer Road, Staten Island NY 10304

Registration is Free, but space is limited. Please Call 347-974-1976

# Upadeśa Sāra Retreat

A 2 Day Discourse covering  
Bhagavān Ramana Maharsi's

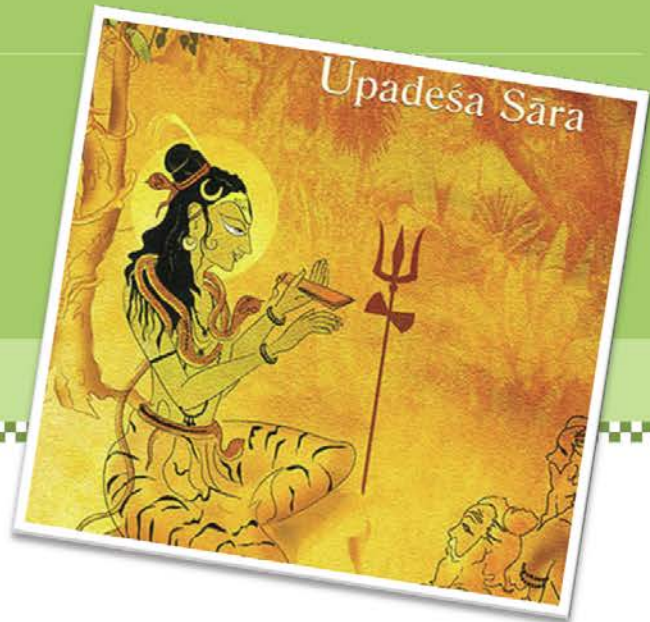
*Upadeśa Sāra*

by Acharya Dr. Sadananda.

*Chinmaya Mission*

*Washington Regional Center*

June 8<sup>th</sup> – June 9<sup>th</sup> 2013



## Program

- June 8<sup>th</sup> AM    I. Introduction  
                     II. Karma Yoga  
                     - Path of Action
- June 8<sup>th</sup> PM    I. Bhakti Yoga  
                     - Path of Devotion  
                     II. Aṣṭāṅga Yoga  
                     - Path of Yoga
- June 9<sup>th</sup> AM    I. Jñāna Yoga Part 1  
                     - Path of Knowledge
- June 9<sup>th</sup> PM    II. Jñāna Yoga Part 2  
                     - Path of Knowledge

## Spirituality in Everyday Life

Vendānta is a deep and serious subject and to explain it in simple terms is a challenging task. *Upadeśa Sāra*, while being a relatively short text compared to many of the other spiritual works, contains essences of the highest of Knowledge. It propounds the four main prevalent paths to the Truth. These are Karma Yoga – The Path of Action, Bhakti Yoga – The Path of Devotion, Aṣṭāṅga Yoga – The Path of Yoga, and Jñāna Yoga – The Path of Knowledge. These paths lead to the ultimate goal of Self Knowledge.

Acharya Sadaji will be providing his deep insight into this vendāntic text over 2 days covering these Paths and how to apply them to Everyday Life.



## About Acharya Sadaji

Dr. K. Sadananda, a retired scientist from the U.S. Naval Research Lab, is a disciple of His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda, and was conferred the title of Acharya by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda in 2009.





## Swami Tapovan Aarati

*Acharya Vivekji,  
Chinmaya Mission Mumbai*

परमपूज्य स्वामी तपोवन महाराज की आरती

paramapūjya svāmī tapovana mahārāja kī āratī

ॐ जय गुरु तपोवन स्वामी सद्गुरु तपोवन ।

मन बुधि चित कर पावन परमानन्दघन ॥ ॐ जय गुरु तपोवन ॥१॥

om jaya guru tapovana svāmī sadguru tapovana,  
mana budhi cita kara pāvana paramānandaghana ॥ om jaya guru tapovana. (1)

उत्तरकाशिनिवासी ज्ञाननिष्ठ स्वामी ।

हिमवद्विभूति है जो नित अन्तर्यामी ॥ ॐ जय गुरु तपोवन ॥२॥

uttarakāśinivāsī jñānaniṣṭha svāmī,  
himavadvibhūti hai jo nita antaryāmī ॥ om jaya guru tapovana. (2)

चिद्विलास शिवपूजक श्रुतिमारगधारी ।

तप ही जिनका जीवन वेदभाष्यकारी ॥ ॐ जय गुरु तपोवन ॥३॥

cidvilāsa śivapūjaka śrutimāragadhārī,  
tapa hī jinakā jīvana vedabhāṣyakārī ॥ om jaya guru tapovana. (3)

बदरीहरिध्यायक जो गङ्गास्तुतिकर्ता ।

भक्तिविरागविधाता शास्त्रज्ञानदाता ॥ ॐ जय गुरु तपोवन ॥४॥

badarīharidhyāyaka jo gaṅgāstutikartā,  
bhaktivirāgavidhātā śāstrajñānadātā ॥ om jaya guru tapovana. (4)

ब्रह्मनिष्ठ भयहारक भवमोचकरूपा ।

चिन्मय गुरु हमें देकर महती कीन्ही कृपा ॥ ॐ जय गुरु तपोवन ॥५॥

brahmaniṣṭha bhayahāraka bhavamocakarūpā,  
cinmaya guru hamerī dekara mahatī kīnhi kṛpā ॥ om jaya guru tapovana. (5)

*Editor's Note: This Aarati composed by Acharya Vivekji is sung to the tune of the popular Aarati - 'Om Jaya Jagadeesha Hare'.*



# CHINMAYA SANCHAR

An offering by CCMT in association with Tekworks



Hari Om

**Central Chinmaya Mission Trust launches Chinmaya Sanchar – the Official Chinmaya Mission Mobile App** offering you vedic wisdom for modern living from the world renowned revered exponents of vedanta His Holiness Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Tejomayananda and other Acharyas of Chinmaya Mission on your mobile devices.









Available  
Now on  
Mobile App Stores



Register

**Chinmaya Sanchar offers you :**

-  Talks and satsangs from Acharyas of Chinmaya Mission in video & audio format
-  Holy Gita: slokas in sanskrit, translation and commentary by Swami Chinmayananda
-  Stories, giggles and informative information for kids
-  CHYK Corner: inspirational stories, zenyasi, thinktoons, prayers and inspirational videos
-  Current news, events and itinerary of Swami Tejomayananda
-  Wallpapers and ringtones

This knowledge would enliven us, re-charge us and help us face the challenges of life with courage and confidence. This can be accessed @ any place @ any time and any number of times. Subscribe today and get drenched in the nectar of devotion. [Click here to subscribe](#)



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## Thyagaraja and Purandara Dasa Aradhana

Aparna Saravanan

*The Frederick Chapter Chinmaya mission Music class celebrated Sri Thyagaraja and Sri Purandaradasa aradhana on March 23, 2013. We have been successfully doing this for the past 10 years. The main purpose of this event is to pay tribute to the great Indian musicians and composers. Many professional artists in the Indian music field come together and perform all day long which is a divine feast to our ears. We also give opportunity for the upcoming artists in the music arena. It is a wonderful chance for them to perform in front of great musicians and pay tribute to their predecessors at the same time. Simply being present at such a wonderful event takes you to another world.*

*There is a big difference between listening to electronic devices and listening to live concerts. Unless you attend one, you won't know it!!*

*There is a big difference between listening to electronic devices and to listen to live concerts. Unless you attend one, you won't know it!!*

It was a beautiful spring day in Urbana, MD. The custodian of the Urbana Middle school, who has some purva janma bandha to Indian culture, I think, agreed to come early and opened the doors for us at 7:30 am.

Frederick chapter volunteers got busy setting up the altar, stage, sound system, chairs, posters, book stall, food, coffee, tea and snacks.

Artists from Ragasudha group from Maryland and Virginia arrived and our Frederick Chinmaya BV kids came beautifully dressed up, starting the event with Pillari Geethams in a wonderful fashion. All the kids putting the thala together and singing in a synchronized pattern was an awesome sight to see.

It was prime time and the Raga Sudha group accompanied by 4 violinists and 3 mridhangam occupied the stage. They enveloped everyone in enchanting music for more than an hour. It was nothing other than divine bliss.

Our DC metro area teachers from the Swaralaya School of Music, Swara Music Academy, Sangeetha Sharada Music School and Malola Vihar Music School brought their students to sing the compositions of the saints, and we are thankful to them for training the next generation of children in Indian Music.

Famous artists including Kamala Kiran, Saraswati Chaitanya and Saketh Pantula performed short concerts as well.

Local upcoming artists showed their talents and the gifted artists like Kamala Kiran accompanied them without any hesitation untiringly. We were moved by the humbleness of the professionals.

The day came to an end with a Grand finale Concert by Deepa and Divya, sisters who made us feel like we were being treated like royalty. They brought their whole lineage in front of us.

After an all-day feast to our ears, it was time to treat our eyes. Natraj School of Indian Dance performed two songs and Smruthi Hariprakash ended the event by enchanting the audience under her spell of expressions. The auditorium was so quiet and some were in joyful tears. Everyone could feel the spiritual presence of Saint Thyagaraja and Purandaradasa and the almighty himself.

All the artists were recognized with a token of appreciation from the Frederick chapter and a book for each artist personally signed by our Swamiji Dheerananda.



Rashmi Shankar shared her Bala Vihar experience and inspired our local community Indians to bring their children to attend Bala Vihar classes.

Not only did we have a feast for our eyes and ears, our tongues were treated well with a delicious breakfast, lunch and dinner.

We fondly remembered but sadly missed Sri. Raju Soundarajan (Rajugaru) who led and guided our efforts in the past years when he was physically present in this world ☐☐

With the Almighty's, Gurudev's, the saints, Rajugaru's and our Swamiji's blessings, the event went very well and we look forward to seeing you all join us in the forthcoming years.

Hari Om!



## Introducing Devi Retreat 2013

*Devi Retreat at Chinmayam by Acharya Vivekji and Acharya Vilasiniji -- June 14- 16, 2013*

*Vandana Bapna*

For All Devis...

Chinmaya Devi Group, a study forum and support system for women, was established in November 1958, in Chennai, India. Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda, blessed this event with a message centered on women's role in the family: "When a mother is a true seeker, the whole environment of the house changes. Your family does not have to go out to hear a Swami. You are the mother, the model, the Guru. Women mould the future of the country. The caliber of the children will be determined by the upbringing given by their mothers. Indeed, women have been, and even today are, the real custodians of our country's spiritual culture."

We have heard a similar cross cultural message across racial, ethnic, religious, geographic and political horizons. The concept of our country as the motherland and our mother as an incarnation of goddess or Devi is an unspoken part of Indian culture. A famous phrase from the 1865 poem by [William Ross Wallace](#) is often used as a quote, "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world." It is in praise of [motherhood](#) as the foremost Shakti for bringing about any change in the world. With the rapidly changing technological advances along with the associated challenges we face today, it is the women who are empowered to encourage grassroots innovation in the ways we think, feel and act to make the world a joyful and harmonious place.



While fulfilling the multiple roles and responsibilities and giving unconditionally, many Devis today face unprecedented stress levels and overwhelming challenges not experienced by Devis of prior generations. Lost and muddled in this cycle, they tend to lose touch with their divinity, and fail to appreciate their own worth, the power to transform themselves & the world around them, their virtues of nurturing, compassion, unconditional love, and bringing joy to their loved ones.

The upcoming Devi Retreat will be a wonderful opportunity to connect with other Devis, share your stories and discuss ways to resolve some of the challenges. Most of all, it will be an opportunity to get back in touch with your own divinity and get recharged. From the depths of the collective spirit, paths will open up for making choices and developing attitudes...to fulfill all the roles with peace & acceptance, with cheer & love, with awareness of the Shakti endowed upon the Devis and with reverence and gratitude towards that gift within them.

Devi Retreat will inspire you with the age old Vedantic culture, wisdom of our scriptures and their practical applications in all aspects life. I encourage all Devis to join in and gain an insight into the

meaning of life, their special place in the cycle of life, and discover tips for blooming into their highest potential.

**What:** First Time Special Retreat at Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC) for Devis 29+ and Mothers. The event will be conducted by Acharya Vivekji (Chinmaya Mission-Niagara Falls) and Acharya Vilasiniji (CMWRC) with Swami Dheerananda's (Resident Acharya at CMWRC) opening and concluding remarks.

**Where:** Chinmayam, Silver Spring, Maryland.

**When:** Friday June 14th evening 6:00 pm to Sunday June 16th 1:00 pm.

**How:** Register online at [devi.cmwrc.org/](http://devi.cmwrc.org/)

or e-mail [devigroup@chinmayadc.org](mailto:devigroup@chinmayadc.org)

\$100: Early bird special until May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

\$125: After May 31st, 2013.

**Lodging Options:** Commute from home or Lodge with other Devis at a recommended nearby Marriott Courtyard. Double-occupancy rooms are provided. Transportation will be arranged. For additional information, contact Smt. Shanthi Shankar at [shanthigs@aol.com](mailto:shanthigs@aol.com) or Smt. Meena Sankar at [Meena17.Sankar@gmail.com](mailto:Meena17.Sankar@gmail.com) All six meals will be provided at the Mission.

**Visit**

us: <http://www.chinmayadc.org/DeviGroup/DeviGroup.htm>



**Chinmaya Mission®**  
Washington Regional Center Presents ...

**DIVYA SHAKTI** a retreat for Devis

adults and young professionals



Retreat guided by  
**ACHARYA VIVEK**  
of CM Niagara Falls

**June 14-16, 2013**

*A uniquely inspiring weekend retreat for women*

**At Chinmayam**  
**46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905**

**Registration\*** (includes 6 meals)  
\$100 Early Bird - \$125 After May 15

Friday 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM  
Saturday 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM and  
Sunday 7:00 AM to 1:00 PM



Joined by  
**ACHARYA VILASINI**  
of CMWRC

Discourses Workshops Cultural Activities Meditation

\* Registrants wishing to stay near the Center during the camp may check the registration website for a list of recommended hotels.

Register at <http://www.chinmayadc.org/> or  
contact Meera Ravichandran at 301-279-0434 or [devigroup@chinmayadc.org](mailto:devigroup@chinmayadc.org).



## **Geeta Chanting Competition - A Success with more to come**

*Sudha Sivaram*

When I was growing up there was an evening routine. Much the same, I presume, of many who are reading this; perhaps with slight variations. Lamps were lit at 6:30. We were expected to have washed up and left all our playmates and things (all of which were usually outdoors) and gather in the puja room for prayer. There was a list of prayers invoking all the major Hindu Gods. We chanted these without any real sense of devotion; but I observed keenly my grandparents and parents sense of concentration and what I now recognize as Bhakti.

When Swamiji asked me to coordinate the Geeta Chanting Competition, I thought that this was an opportunity to serve and learn. By facilitating an opportunity for children and parents to read the Holy Geeta, participation can help children and adults experience a few moments of peace and family bonding. It also allows our children to show by example a central tenet of the practice of Hinduism – invoking good thoughts and action through prayer and chanting. Something that can surely stay with them throughout their life.

The results from the competition this year are encouraging and show that our Balavihar children and adults are enthusiastic and work hard to participate and excel in this competition. Along with the dedicated leaders Muktha Thyagarajan from Chinmaya Somanth and Bijay Dash from Chinmaya Frederick, I am happy to report that there were 305 participants in the competition this year – across all three chapters. Chinmaya Silver Spring had a total of 106 participants – 75 children and 31 adults; Chinmaya Frederick had a total of 39 – 36 children and 3 adults. A total of 133 children and 27 adults participated in Chinmaya Somnath.

We thank the members for their support and feedback and encourage everyone to consider taking part. We also encourage adults to volunteer their time and bring

to us ideas to make the competition more engaging and fun.

To this day, despite other chants that I have picked up along the way, I still remember verbatim that list of prayers when I was in school. Other friends and members of Chinmaya mission have similar stories that they have shared with me. Muktha, Bijay and I hope that you will be part of our effort to help our children embrace the life lessons embedded in the Holy Geeta.

With Peace to all. Hari Om!



## Chinmaya Somnath Construction Progress

As of April 26, 2013

### Current Work

- Structural Steel, Joists and Decking completed on 1st Story Area
- Electrical and Plumbing BFF Rough-ins underway on 1st Story Area
- Metal Stud Framing continuing on Cellar Level
- Mechanical and Electrical Rough-in work continuing on Cellar Level
- Fire-Proofing completed on Cellar Level



### Upcoming Work

- Pour 1st Floor Lobby Slab week of 5/6/13
- Commence with Structural Framing of 1st Floor Area
- Complete framing in Cellar by Mid-May
- Completed Ductwork and Plumbing Rough-ins by end of May
- Excavate and Rock Removal for Gas Line



### Schedule – Overall

- Substantial Completion is scheduled for 12/1/13 for owner occupancy of 1/1/14; project still about 2 – 3 weeks behind due mainly to weather. Expect to make this time back up during summer months.

## Poems: Mother's Day & Spring: A Set of Haikus

*Megha Karthikeyan*

### **Mother's Day**

My mother is so special to me  
She took care of me as a baby  
And works hard to make me happy  
My mother is so special to me

My mother is so special to me  
When I cry, she gives me hugs  
And she's given me love  
My mother is so special to me

My mother is so special to me  
Even when she's tired she talks to me  
I tell her everything that I want to be  
My mother is so special to me

My mother is so special to me  
She is devoted to her child  
And always smiles  
My mother is so special to me

My mother is so special to me  
I love her with all my heart  
And we'll never be far apart  
My mother is so special to me

A Haiku is a set of poems about nature involving only three lines per poem. The first line has five syllables, the second line has seven syllables, and the last line has five syllables.

### **Rebirth of the World**

Frost melts off the ground  
Cherry blossoms everywhere  
The sun starts to smile

### **Ode to Spring**

**Birds chirp and tweet now**  
**The weather is a cool breeze**  
**Leaves start to turn green**

### **Calm Mind**

The wind blows softly  
The animals start to play  
People stop rushing.



## I Am

*Atman Panigrahi*  
*Chinmayam Bala Vihar, Silver Spring*

I am alive because of constant cellular respiration, an endless cycle of where biochemical energy is derived from nutrient rich food, because of the presence of a supreme light that illuminates me down to the core of my existence, because of chemical reactions proceeding forward, assisted by a myriad of catalysts which provide new paths for the reactions to take, because I rejoice in the delicate beauty of our world as deftly constructed by the hands of a greater power, because of a neurological system that transmits electrical impulses to the entirety of my body, because of my ability to utilize my five senses to absorb the wonders we perceive every day, because of buffers that resist changes in pH and assure a stable internal environment within the body, because of a divine aura of sanctity that comforts and motivates me, always prompting a journey to a higher goal, instilling in me not just a love for everyone and everything, but more importantly, one ideal and one word: devotion.

I cannot doubt that my body presses forward day in and day out because of a collection of chemical and biological marvels. But, why, I must ask, is this the end of it? What else explains my existence beyond these chemical equations and reaction mechanisms? While the intricate universe of atoms and molecules displays its own extravagance, a more divine influence transcends it, and it has my full faith and trust. The atman, the endless and eternal consciousness, reverberates universally, present in all that exists. The atman gives me the ability to survive, but in reality, the ability to thrive. To soak in the sights of our planet, to listen to the

beautiful tunes of our race, to smell the ravishing scents of a fresh meal, to feel the soft caress of the wind, or to feel the gentle touch of a mother's hand. My trust in this spark of life comforts me, heals me, and inspires me to reach greater heights in my life. And while this atman seems so distant from the land of science, in all actuality they are both the same. They each have beauty in their own regard. Science and spirituality convey the same splendor in our world, only in unique ways. So as religion and science seemingly claw at one another desperate for the higher ground, something much more significant becomes clear. They are, and have always stood together, intertwined, providing life to world surrounding us, and providing life to me.

## Tilak Ceremony

*Chetana Neerchal*

The graduation of seniors from Bala Vihar at the Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC) had always been celebrated, albeit in a low key, and fragmented way, with each chapter in Maryland, Virginia and Frederick (and each session in each chapter!) having separate, quick celebrations on the Bala Vihar Annual Day in June. The idea for a joint ceremony was born seven years ago, when at one of the Chinmayam graduation celebrations a senior appeared on the stage in shorts to receive blessings from Swamiji! Flabbergasted at this, Mangala Rao, my Bala Vihar co-teacher and my husband, Nagaraj, also a Bala Vihar teacher, discussed that a single, joint, well-planned graduation ceremony was very much needed. The ceremony would be designed to leave a lasting impression on the seniors who would receive the blessings of the Chinmaya family and allow the Maryland, Virginia and Frederick chapters to come together to celebrate this special event. Nagaraj provided excellent input for a framework based on his university experience. Mangala, with her very nice approach to details, laid out a plan and the three of us talked to our Acharyas. Swami Dheeranandaji and Acharya Vilasiniji at once gave us their blessings.

The Tilak Ceremony has evolved into its present structure greatly benefiting from the gentle pruning, weeding and watering by both our Acharyas. Even though the format repeats itself every year now, it remains fresh, just like the perennials blooming each year. The number of graduates' photos on the beautiful poster created to announce the ceremony is ever increasing, the audience gets larger each year, more alumni come

to celebrate the graduates, remembering their own times past. With our Beloved Gurudev towering tall at all times, the joint CMWRC Tilak Ceremony has become a beautiful culminating moment of our children's sacred experiences at Bala Vihar.

The conch sounds "om" the traditional three times. The graduation procession of the seniors bright in their best Indian attire, headed by our Acharyas, enters the Chinmayam Auditorium in tune with the divine energy of Vatapi Ganapathim in Hamsadhwani. The family, friends, and teachers of the seniors rise to greet this young, auspicious procession and the photographer who has been attending the Chinmayam Tilak Ceremony for seven years, clicks away, digitizing moments that will be shared soon as memories. The ceremony is introduced by our Bala Vihar CHYK teacher who emotionally remembers her own graduation from Bala Vihar. Once the seniors settle into their respective places, a CHYK member invokes the blessings of the Guru with 5 verses of the Gurustotram. Our Acharya Vilasiniji blesses the seniors and introduces the guest alumna speaker who reminisces about her Bala Vihar days and links those experiences to the current moments. The graduates bow to their Bala Vihar teachers from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. A CHYK representative welcomes the graduates to the CHYK fold and explains how they can continue their Vedanta studies and Chinmaya association through CHYKs around the country. Swami Dheeranandaji gives his witty, solemn and loving blessings. The ceremony ends with the Chinmaya aarati and pledge and a beautiful group picture on the front steps of Chinmayam. A festively decorated Kailas

Niwas welcomes the seniors for a simple reception of samosas, dhoklas and ice cream. The graduates celebrate Swami Dheeranandaji's birthday because the Tilak Ceremony weekend always coincides with his birthday weekend! Parents bless the graduates with Guruji's composition of "Abhinandanam, abhinandanam, aadhyaanta kale abhinandanam."

For the past seven years, my daughter, now fourteen, has grown with the Tilak Ceremony, happily editing the souvenir of our graduates' accomplishments and memories, tucking their certificates into their holders, and being a wonderful helper in many different ways. My son browsed the souvenir each spring, reading the proud achievements of the seniors and justly proud when his own time came, all too soon.

The entire program is rendered beautiful, uplifted by several volunteering hands. It is a great joy that our Bala Vihar children help out in the preparations, enthusiastically, as if visualizing the day when they too will give their 30 second speech which will draw smiles and tears, evoke loud claps from the cheering CHYKs, will receive tilak from their beloved Swamiji, and walk off from Bala Vihar to the beyond with the gift of the sacred Japa Mala in their hands.



## Poems

*Aziza Meer*

### Flying high

Flying high  
Where there is no atmosphere  
Flying with the angels  
Where there is no fear  
Flying but not feeling the flight  
In still light with glow so bright  
Looking into loving eyes  
Letting go of all that was in my sight  
For those pair of eyes  
For that stillness bright  
For that joy of nothing  
Sweet, sweet, sweet  
Nothing.

How fortunate  
Not a thought or sight  
All in those eyes  
No name, no form,  
No motion, no sensation.

Call this Death? Go ahead.  
Cos I'm too at ease;  
And caring to argue  
Caring to reason  
Is too shaky  
For this season that I'm in.

Totally nothing  
Blissfully nothing  
Screeching silence of all that meant too much  
All those pieces flying in the air  
In contrast I love this season  
Not a season of passing  
A season to settle in.

### From loneliness to solitude

From loneliness to solitude  
Leap and hop and drop  
Many times, in despair;  
Some friends say  
"Not God alone can inspire."  
From loneliness to solitude  
Bit by bit to aspire  
The path is rough and  
You climb, you drop, cliff to cliff  
One fine day to reach  
Free like the wind  
Soul clad in peace  
Effortless all day  
Much you accomplish  
Not so much that you try  
Just that you do anyway.  
Effortless, in spritely gait,  
Gentle smiles, in sweet light  
You share with all you meet  
Give to all you greet  
Prayers for those that care  
And for those who frown and dare  
Life's a sheer joy  
When from loneliness  
You go to solitude.

## Wanting This Evermore

Dancing light of sweet nothing  
My humming soul in solitude  
Breath like a baby's  
Body still and light  
Floating energy  
Wanting this evermore.

A jerk, a thought:  
"How peaceful this is."  
Soon come in boss, client,  
Meetings, politics.  
A better thought:  
"What am I doing?"

Into deepness of the gap  
Choosing to drop  
Receding into nothing  
Like on deep ocean floor  
Gently swaying to waves  
Wanting this evermore.

Dancing light of sweet nothing  
In deepness of the gap  
My humming soul in solitude  
Receding into nothing  
Breath like a baby's  
Like on deep ocean floor  
Body still and light  
Gently swaying to waves  
Floating energy  
Wanting this evermore.

## Poems

*Chetana Neerchal*  
*Bala Vihar Teacher*

### SIMPLY SPRING

Follow  
the shadow  
of the bird

Sleep  
in the  
cave of the trees

Dip into  
the grass  
with the goose  
and sheep

Hop with  
the oriole  
in the  
sunshine

Stroll with  
the cat on  
the lawn

Turn  
the shiny doorknob  
on an  
old wooden door

Listen to  
the song  
of the artist  
painted  
in the dreams  
of a child  
swinging  
in spring.

April 2013



## SPRING CLEANING

When shall  
we explore the  
lanes and bylanes,  
with their secrets  
of spring,  
my friend?

These spring days  
beckon to us  
to touch them  
as  
we motor by.

The sounds of  
spring  
silent to us  
in our rush  
to get back  
to the structure  
of our life.

The urge  
to do something  
new, different  
covered by  
lethargy  
too vast  
to be  
swept aside.

And when shall  
we explore  
the secret  
lanes and bylanes,  
of our mind  
my friend?

How shall we  
sweep  
away lethargy  
this spring?

AND HOW SHALL I SEEK THEE THIS SPRING?

A lamp stayed  
burning beside you  
while  
the music  
filled the room.

A heart stayed  
sweetly with you  
while  
thoughts  
roamed around.

A woman sat  
seeking a  
presence  
to fill  
an empty page.

A bee buzzed  
heady with spring,  
his hum a single  
"OM".

The light within  
sketched  
your presence  
on my page,  
in shadows  
spilling all around.

## Poem: Reflections on Self

*Deepa Krishnan*

Snow....  
White, powdery, mist,  
The color of  
Purity,  
Peace,  
Penance,  
There is something meditative  
In watching,  
That snowboarder and skier,  
Go up the lift,  
And come down the slope,  
Again and again,  
In quest of perfection,  
Like Me.

The mountains,  
Steady, strong,  
While the winds blow,  
The trees sway,  
But the mountains stand,  
Unmoved,  
Reminding me,  
To live,  
Like the lotus leaf,  
Untouched by the very waters,  
In which it dwells,  
As our Pujya Swamiji Says,  
Be a thermostat,  
Not a thermometer,  
Changeless,  
In the ever changing world,  
Like My Self.

We come and go,  
But the world goes on,  
Stories,  
Of generations that have been,  
And generations to come,  
Bound together by the  
Gossamers of time,  
The mountains listen,  
The trees whisper,  
And the snow,  
Paints and melts away again.  
Memories,  
In the mere finitude,  
That our body perceives,  
Our mind feels,  
And our intellect thinks:  
If we only tune in,  
To our inherent nature,  
To the silence within us,  
We can see,  
Glimpses of,  
The Infinite,  
Lord Jagadeeshwara,  
Chinmaya Guru Swaroopa,  
Sat-Chid-Ananda.

*I wrote this poem when we visited the Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, Virginia, during spring break as I watched Arjun, Navya and Aditya, snowboard and ski down the mountain slopes, in their quest for the perfect run.*



## Travelogue: Char Dham Yatra

*Nirmala Limaye*

Mountains have played a role in physical healing. The power of mountains to refresh and lift one's spirits is known all over the world.

In the western world monasteries were built on a high mountain peak with difficult pathways for approach. Many sanatoriums built in Switzerland will prove the health benefits experienced by many. The mountain air was thought to be especially beneficial for ailments of lungs. Mountains also have a calming and restorative effect on human psyche.

This effect is noted by even the mountaineers who get a sense of exhilaration when they reach the peak.

For a long time I used to think why our Rishis built temples at such a place too high and difficult to reach when there were temples galore at ground level.

I feel that they had two thoughts for these temples. First was for people who are spiritual aspirants who need a serene atmosphere to study, contemplate where minimal required comforts are available. Their studies take a higher mental level which is easy to get on a mountain. The second idea was for grihastas (House-holders) who have fulfilled their social obligations and try such difficult journeys to attain peace.

Our rishis added the spiritual touch by having temples in these mountainous areas.

The famous char dhams are located in the northern state of Garwal now known as Uttarakhand which the local people call as "Dewabhumi" Each famous

dharm is located onto four paths which can be taken from uttarakashi One can either start from Rishikesh and go to Badrinath , gangotri , Kedarnath and lastly Yamunotri or vice versa starting from Haridwar Dehradun Barkot. Now the roads are wider yet except Badrinath, where cars can go close to the temple. All other places you have to walk at least few furlongs.

Warm season is from May till end of June when it is very crowded. Monsoon season and after monsoon season is somewhat less crowded but unpredictable. The rain is torrential and at times the whole road gets washed away! Landslides and cloudbursts add to the difficulty of travel yet, this season adds beauty of green mountains and lots of wild flowers and no crowds!

Gahrwal travels is a safe bet. One can take a bus, small station wagon or private cars with driver depending on time available and money needed.

We opted for a car and driver. It was a good decision as the roads were terrible and he was a good driver. We travelled via Haridwar, Dehradun to Yamunotri but were turned away by police as 2 kilometer road fell down in the valley (a huge landslide). Thus, we reached Uttarakashi. The hotel was right on Ganga river the waters of which was roaring down. First thing we noticed were the rice paddies on the slopes of mountain which appear green along with wildflowers of many colors. The town is full of holy people as well as car rentals, hawkers selling different pictures of all devatas. A very beautiful Vishwanath temple on the banks of Gangaji. People here are very honest and hardworking.

Next day we were on the way to Gangotri where road was a half broken road full of ditches, waterfalls were damaging the road further. The mountain ranges almost forming a v shape the Ganges flowing thru the narrow valley, the wild flowers at Harsil( a town on the way)

One has to walk up some 100 steps from the vehicle stop to the temple. A very simple white structure facing the river. Opposite of it are large statues of Lord shiva and Bhagirath getting the blessings from the Lord

The whole site is breathtaking. The waters were very cold so, we washed our hands and placed some on our heads. The food stalls were not very appetizing due to off season. Gangaji's darshan was enough for us.

Day 3 was a journey to Guptakashi where we stayed for 3 days. Camp Nirvana was a collection of 12 tents well equipped with western amenities and food served in the tent. The beauty of the camp was its location overlooking a cliff and faraway snow-clad mountain Meru.

That felt like darshan of Shiva in a calm mood. 2 days later we saw his Rudra Roopa when we saw cloudburst (a torrential rain with horrendous lightning along with noise of landslide going on for 11 hours!) We prayed to Lord shiva for protection from this nature's wrath. Later that day we chanted prayers, many sukta,s in an open tent.

The day before we went to Kedarnath, crossing many tall mountains. Here we opted for Dandi( a course version of palanquin since the ascending path is a stiff climb for 14 kilometers. Since one depends on these four men, I felt like loss of control and total dependence on these four carriers .My life was in their hands Any false step by them would end our lives making a death at a very auspicious time, a path to real Kailasa!) I just kept on silent chanting of Om Namah Shivaya throughout this

ascent. How much of this was out of fear and or bhakti only Lord Shiva knows . Being Adhik mas (extra month in the Hindu calendar) and Monday I considered this journey very auspicious. Even fear coming to mind, I enjoyed the awesome beauty of flower filled beauty of the rocks on one side and roaring Mandakini flowing thru the deep valley. The journey was awesome reminding us danger as well as immense beauty at the same time.

Evening time visit was very pleasant. Mythology about the deity was unbelievable. It seems Pandavas travelled here and unbeknownst to them they fought with Lord shiva as Kirata riding on Nandi. As Arjuna and other Pandavas were winning, Lord shiva escaped to Nepal .What remains in the temple is back of Nandi which Bhima held on! The pooja is offered to the lord and everyone rubs butter on the back of nandi as he was injured. The lord is seen over the backdrop of mount Meru

A magnificent view that was more satisfying was to visit Adi Sankara's Samadhi located behind the temple. Adi Sankara's serene statue invites you to sit and meditate. A very peaceful place which makes you forget the pandyas, the ash laden sadhus, some indulging in substances and lying in trance ( they do not bother you). This meditation made our day! We were thinking of the enormous work done by Adi Sankara in spreading Vedanta to all four corners of India with constant hardships (physical) and giving away life at 34years of age. We were reluctant to leave this place but did it with eyes full of tears and respect for Him.

Because of landslide and road conditions, we had to abandon our visit to Badrinath. Guptakashi has a famous temple of Lord Ardhanarinaleswara and Lord Bhairava. A small tank has two Gomukhas from which water flows, believed to be part of Ganga and Yamuna flowing into the tank. It was peaceful and the temple priest was well versed with Sanskrit rituals where we did poojapath (with

money for temple priests per request). They do not get much income here as it is not part of Chardhams, I suppose.

On our return journey, we saw a large statue of Rudra by the roadside on the banks of Gangaji near Rudraprayag. Next stop was Rishikesh. The city has grown lot with motorbikes crossing the Laksman Jhoola as well as Ram Jhoola.

Due to very short stay we could not visit many ashrams and organizations famous for spiritual institutions. One needs to spend at least few weeks to really see all.

We did see Ramdevbaba's ashram from the road.

On the whole we felt that this area is devabhumi. Above all we were moved by the guileless people, their hardworking nature and honesty, proving the benefits of living in The Himalayas, our famous mountain range.





## **Father's Day:**

### **A Seeker Son's Message to Father nearing final journey**

*CP Shankar*

*March 5, 2012*

*My dear Appa,*

*Trust this note finds you doing well. Here is copy of Advaita Makaranda with commentary by Swami Tejomayananda. I hope you will enjoy it as much as I did. Its a fascinating summary of everything. We should simply spend the time reflecting on its contents.*

*Everything around us is but a misapprehension of the real. Though a rope may appear as a snake, it is not a snake; and the snake can only appear on a rope. The rope can never become a snake; and a snake can never be a part of the rope. When we are truly awakened, the misapprehension of the snake is gone and the rope alone remains.*

*Our body is unreal; Our mind is unreal; Our intellect is unreal; Our sense organs, our feelings and our thoughts are all unreal. They are all but the reflection of the Brahman. Our body is conscious of our sense organs and we are conscious of our body. So, who am I?*



*A table cannot be conscious of the chair in the room; and the chair cannot be conscious of the table. But, we can be conscious of both the chair and the table. Only the supreme consciousness can be conscious of all inert objects including our body and all other things. It alone (Brahman) is the witness of everything and everything else is the witnessed.*

*When we imagine a snake on a rope, it appears that there are really two things - snake and the rope. But when the dreamer is awakened, there is only the rope. So rope minus snake - rope alone remains. There never was a snake. Similarly, when we are truly awakened to the real, only Brahman remains. There is no two anymore. There is only one. So, you, Amma, me, Raji, Sharada, Rama,, Michelle, Kevin, we are all one and the same.*

*It is what it is.*

*Love you Appa,*

*Shankar*

**Editor's Note: The author expressed knowledge gained as a student of Advaita Makaranda to express his love to his father. His father left the body shortly thereafter.**

## Jnana Yoga and Self Realization - XIII

*Acharya Sadananda*

Here is the perspective based on the scriptural understanding. We have to be clear about the nature of the self and the nature of the world and the nature of the self-realization without any confusion in the terms and the approach. Two major problems arise by not having the correct understanding; one common error is getting confused between paaramaarthika and vyaavahaarika (i.e. essentially put one leg there and one leg here), and the second more pervasive error is habitual mental objectification of the self in the very realization process. The root cause of the problem stems predominately by not having the teaching from a teacher, who himself trained from a proper teacher – essentially a teacher that has sampradaaya or traditional teaching to back him-up. The reason for traditional teaching is obvious since every possible pit fall has been worked out and every conceivable doubt has been raised and answered methodically. Possible objections (puurvapaksha) and how to address those correctly (siddhaanta) are provided traditionally not for intellectual arguments but for establishing clarity in understanding. That is why scripture itself insists in having a proper teacher.

The following topic keeps coming – Is scriptural study necessary or is ‘who am I’ inquiry not sufficient for self-realization?. The answer depends clearly on what is involved in the –who am I – inquiry. Major problem lies in not understanding the full implication of Bhagavaan Ramana’s teachings. For those who are deeply interested – the video of the teaching of the SAT DARSHANAM text of Bhagavaan is available in [www.advaitaforum.org](http://www.advaitaforum.org), where the first two introductory slokas provide the depth of his teaching. Here is the problem. If the – who am I – inquiry leads only in understanding the saakshii chaitanyam or Witnessing Consciousness aspect of I am, then the inquiry is incomplete and does not lead to realization of the SELF. In separating the subject I from object this, we end up with dvaita or duality with I am which is not this, and this

is which is not I am. In addition we will have multiple jiivas with each jiiva realizing who he is. The self-realization should include the recognition of the mithyaatva aspect of the world or unreality of the world with clear understanding that the self that I am pervades the world of objects too; then only that inquiry of who am I – leads to SELF realization. How does the -who am I, leads to the understanding that I am the substantive of the world too? For that only Vedas provide the ultimate pramANa or means of knowledge, since the direct perceptual knowledge confirms only the duality while the logic rests on perception for validation. Self-realization does not involve dismissing the world but sublimating the world by understanding its substantive is the self that I am. That is what mithyaa aspect of the world means. Hence Krishna clearly states – sarva bhuutastam aatmaanam sarva bhuutanica aatmani – one who realizes that I am the self in all and also recognizes that all (starting from creator to the blade of grass, says Shankara) in myself – He alone realizes. Hence Krishna declares:

***maya tatam idam sarvam jagat avyakta muurtinaa |***

***masthaani sarva bhuutaani na ca aham teshu  
avasthitaH | -9:4***

***na ca masthaani bhuutaani psyam me yogam  
aiswaram |***

***bhutaBhinna ca bhuutastho mamaatmaa  
bhuutabhaavanaH | 9:5***

I pervade this entire universe in an unmanifested form as the very existence-consciousness itself. All being are in Me, but I am not involved in their individual sufferings. In reality, there are no beings in Me since I am pure undifferentiated existence-consciousness yet appearing as many – look at my glory Arjuna. Without the principle of existence nothing can exist – Any existence of any being or object is only attributive name

and form which is only superimposition on the existence principle – Existence principle is never affected by the changing attributive beings or objects. It is similar to gold being unaffected by the changing names and forms.

Essentially who am I inquiry should involve understanding of three things. 1. Who is that I am or tvam pada vichaara – inquiry into the subject, I am, by rejecting subject is different from the object using neti neti – not this, not this. 2) what is the nature of tat or that – that -standing for the entire universe – essentially understanding that - I am - is the substantive or essence of the whole world of objects – aitat aatmyam idam sarvam and 3) finally understanding or equating oneness of the subject and the object as one as stated by –asi- statement in the tat tvam asi. This is stated as the fundamental advaitic principle – 1. brahma satyam, Brahman alone is real 2) jagat mithyaa, the world is just apparent names and forms with Brahman as substantive and 3) jiivaH brahma eva na aparaH, I am none other than Brahman. This essential teaching of advaita has to be clearly understood using scripture as a basis. Exhaustive analysis of the scriptural statements is provided by aachaaryaas in terms of bhaashyaas and prakaraNa books; hence the need for the study. Hence scripture itself advises two things – one is to approach a teacher to gain the knowledge of the truth and second is shravana, mananam and nidhidhyaasana, that is study of the scriptures for a prolonged length of time until one has clear understanding (shravana), discussion of the contents until no more doubts exist in the mind of the seeker, mananam and finally contemplation on the truth expounded by the scriptures, nidhidhyaasana. This is well established and well trodden path and aside from this there are no other direct paths or short cuts for this. Any other claims to the contrary cannot be verified as there are no other pramANa for verification too.

In this context, all other requirements including karma anushTaanaam or performing karmas or as well as their parityaaga or giving up karmas, etc are only aids in preparing the mind so that the above understanding can take place. What is required is a mind that is conducive for the knowledge and that is stated by Shankara as possessing the saadhana chatuShTaya sampatti – the four fold qualifications involving Veveka, vairaagya, Shat

sampatti and mumukshutvam – Discriminative intellect, Dispassion, Discipline and Desire for liberation – the four Ds.

Preparation of the mind is essential. It is easy to say I am the subject and not the object in the -who am I- enquiry. The logic is very simple. However this logic can be easily applied to a car or a dog or any external object that I perceive. I see the dog, the seer, 'I', is therefore different from the seen, and hence I am not the dog. The application of the logic is easy when it comes to all objects in the world. Nobody in the world mistakes that I am the dog that I see, even though some people get so emotionally attached to their pets that they suffer intensely when something happens to the objects that they love. This was Arjuna's problem and this is everybody's problem – where –mine- includes my own close relatives that I love.

However, when in applying the logic of - I am not this - to the body, mind and intellect (BMI), the objects that I am so intimately associated with as -I am this-, it becomes monumentally difficult to separate I am from this is, even though it is logically clear that I cannot be - this. What makes it so difficult is our attachments and aversions, first to the external body, next to the emotional mind and finally to the intellectual accomplishments and convictions. I am = this- is the essence of ego, where the I-ness associated with this BMI is the ego or ahamkaara, and a notion that this is mine is mamakaara. Ego forms the basis for all our transactions in the world. One has to use the BMI for transacting with the world. In fact, the ego is involved in a subtle way even in self-realization. Atma or all pervading existence-consciousness does not have to realize, and this BMI which is inert cannot realize. Hence realization as we discuss before occurs in a way with the identification with BMI only. The problem comes only when I do not know myself and hence take myself only as this BMI in an absolute sense, even though I know this is inert and I am a conscious entity. There will not be any problem if I know who I am and deliberately take this BMI as I am, for the purpose of transactions – then I am jiivan muktaH, liberated while still operating within BMI. The intellect, mind and the body in that order – as though – borrow the light of consciousness that I am and

act as sentient entities operating in this world. Hence the essence of the human problem rests in intense identification with the mind and intellect and through them with the senses, and physiological functions, and then with the gross body. In this operation of I am this, there are two components I am and this is, and the ego involves identification of I am this. Realization of my true nature involves intellectual discrimination or disassociation of I am from this, using the very ego. I have to recognize my true identity in the - I am this – as I am pure I am without this. This switch in identification of my real nature or self-realization process requires in a way the same ego or the mind in recognizing that I am not this and my true nature is pure consciousness because of which I am conscious of the ego, mind and intellect and the rest of the world through them. Hence when Vedanta says ego gets surrendered or annihilated or when Ramana says that mind gets destroyed (maanasantu kim maarganekRite naiva maanasam) – all that means is that the notional mind gets destroyed. Notions are due to ignorance and they can get destroyed only by knowledge. Knowledge takes place in the mind only. For knowledge to take place a means of knowledge or pramaNa is required. For this non-objectifiable entity (aloukikam), only Vedas form the required means of knowledge. The separation of I am from I am this (ego) using this very ego is indeed requires a very subtle intellect that does not objectify the subject yet recognize the subject in the very inquirer or inquiry. Lack of appropriate pramaNa or means of knowledge is one of the reasons why in the deep sleep state even though saakshii is there, there is no jnaana prakriya or process that helps in gaining the knowledge. For existence, which is all pervading, no medium is required for its manifestation. For ignorance also no medium is required. However for knowledge to take place a medium is required that involves a pramaNa, prameya and pramaataa, the triad. This can be the knowledge of the self or any objective knowledge including the knowledge of the ignorance. In the case of the knowledge of the self, the object of the knowledge, prameya, itself is the knower, pramaataa, and the veda pramaNa acts in this case as a mirror or darshaNam for a seer, pramaataa, to see himself in and through the prameya. Hence as we discussed before it is like seeing

the image of oneself, and using that image recognize the original self that is getting reflected as the image in the mirror of the mind. Otherwise I cannot see myself without the mirror. Similarly I need the mind to see my reflection and by seeing the reflection I recognize or realize my true nature. I am currently misapprehending myself that I am the mind. With the Vedantic teaching, I recognize my true nature using the same mind by seeing the light of illumination that is getting reflected in the mind and from that reflected light of consciousness realize that I am the original light of consciousness whose light is illumining the mind. The sequence can be visualized in this way. When a thought rises in the mind, I am conscious of the thought because the wave of the thought is illumined by the reflected light of consciousness from the mind. That is what constitutes the knowledge of the thought. Hence first thing we need to know is every thought has two components; the contents of the thought which is related to the attributes of the object (idam vRitti) and reflected light of consciousness that illumining the thought because of which the contents of the thoughts become known. Currently we get carried away by the contents of the thought and do not recognize the light of illumination because of which the thought is known. The same thing happens when we see an object outside. The external light falls on the object and that light gets reflected and reaches eyes. An image is projected on the retina which the optical nervous system carries to the brain. This electrical signal has to be converted into thought. Lord has provided a programming language that converts the signal to vRitti in the mind (similar to the computer processor converting input data into a machine language that it can understand). We do not understand this programming language. Thus what is projected is attributes of the object as measured by senses that provided an input signal that forms image in the mind. This image with attributive content is called vRitti. As the vRitti forms, it reflects the light of consciousness by which I become conscious of the thought or vRitti. Becoming conscious of the thought is the same as gaining the knowledge of the thought. That means I know the thought whose contents are nothing but the sense input arising from the vision of the object. The object out there is now imaged as the thought in the



mind. We are conscious of the thought only because it is illumined by the reflected light of consciousness that I am.

Normally we get carried away with the sense input forgetting it is the reflected light image from the object. We rarely pay attention to the light that helps in the seeing process. Similarly, we rarely pay attention to the light of consciousness that is illumining the thought and get carried away with the contents of the thought. Without thought forming in the mind there is no reflection. Hence self-realization is not elimination of thoughts and make the mind empty which itself is a struggle, but pay attention to the light of consciousness that is illumining (because of which we are knowing the presence and the contents of the thoughts) rather than get carried away with the thought contents. Hence Kenopanishad says – it is not that what the eyes can see, but because of which the eyes have the capacity to see, it is not that what ears can hear, but that because of which the ears have the capacity to hear, it is not that which mind can think of, but that because of which the mind has the capacity to think of, is Brahman not this that one worships. Hence Veda as pramaana is directing the mind to shift the attention from the contents of the thoughts to that which makes the thoughts known – that light of consciousness that is getting reflected by the sequence of thought waves – know that alone is Brahman not any objectified concept that you worship.

Paying attention to the light of consciousness that is getting reflected in every thought, particularly in the very fundamental thought as I am this (notion of ego) is difficult only because I get carried away with the contents of the thoughts and do not pay attention to the reflected light of consciousness because of which that very thought is getting revealed. The most common problem of a Vedantic student is looking for self-realization as an event in time. In the very longing for Brahman, the mind is conceptualizing Brahman as an object to be known. Self is self-revealing all the time. There is no time I am not conscious of the thoughts that arise in mind, as mind cannot stop thinking unless one goes to deep-sleep state. Thoughts occur in sequence and are interconnected in terms of contents. When I pay attention to the contents, I forget the fact that the

thought is an object that I am conscious of. I jump from one thought to the other since they occur in rapid sequence each somehow connected to the other. Like a monkey jumping from one branch to the other and one tree to the other, I jump from one thought to the other without any time to stand apart and look at how a thought is getting revealed. For me to know each thought that rises in my mind, existence-consciousness that I am has to provide the existence as well as illumination for the thought so that I am conscious of the existence of the thought and its contents. For me to pay attention away from the thought contents without getting carried away by it involves complete detachment and vigilant observation. JK says just observe your mind or thoughts, without providing a means to achieve it. It is difficult to get detached from the thoughts to be an observer of the thoughts since these thoughts are centered on my likes and dislikes. Detachment from the thoughts require attaching my mind to something that remains constant without changing and examining the thoughts that arise as an impartial observer or a saakshii without getting carried away with the thoughts. Vedanta says that can done only if I can surrender my likes and dislikes at the altar of my devotion that is stable, noble and ever inspiring for the mind to hold on to it. That is the bhakti that saints and sages talk about. That surrender of all my likes and dislikes or raaga dveShaas at the altar of my devotion is what is called as sharaNaagati or prapatti, or surrender of ego. Krishna says that is not easy either but with constant practice and detachment one can achieve it- abhyaasenatu kounteya vairagyena ca gRihyate. Since thoughts that are entertained are also about the nature of the reality it becomes easier to get detached from attachments other than to the truth which is never changing and eternal. Karma yoga also helps in purifying and neutralizing the intensity of these likes and dislikes.

As the intensity of the likes and dislikes are neutralized, I can detach myself from the flow of the thoughts and be a silent observer of the thoughts. Becoming a saakshii, I can witness how the light of consciousness illumines all the thoughts. Since thoughts are nothing but images of the world of objects, I begin to recognize that I lend the support to all the thoughts and indirectly to the world of

objects, since independent of me their existence and awareness cannot be established.

This surrender of the ego is beautifully expressed by Bhagavaan Ramana in the very invocation sloka of Sat Darshanam – mRityunjayam mRityibhiaashritaanaam, aham matirmRityumupaiti puuvam ...– He says the one who is afraid of death approaches Lord mRityanjaya who is a conquer of the death (Lord Shiva) for protection. Lord instead of protecting his devotee from the fear of death, Bhagavaan Raman says that He destroys the devotee. It may sound unreasonable on the part of the Lord to destroy those who come to Him for protection. What Lord destroys is devotee-deity duality by destroying the ego (aham mama iti – the notion of I-ness) because of ones identification with his BMIs. The death or change occurs only for the finite and not for the infinite. Hence He destroys their notions of separateness from Him. Recognition that I am the pure light of consciousness that eternally exists is liberation or moksha or freedom from all limitations. It is not something to gain or somewhere to go or something to be given – it is recognition that I am nitya mukta swaruupaH – I am the eternal being one without a second ever liberated since there was never a bondage for me.

When I did not have clear understanding of my true nature, I mistook myself to be finite and localized BMI. Since my true nature is infiniteness, I could not accept this superimposed finiteness of mine and therefore continuously tried to work to gain infiniteness by adding or subtracting finite entities to my BMI. Now I recognize that I was never finite but existence-consciousness that is infiniteness – satyam jnaanam and anantam I am. It is not that I became infinite; I recognize that I was ever infinite.