

Chinmaya Smrithi



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

Volume 23, Number 6, November 22, 2013

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Vedanta

- Series: Jnana Yoga – XVI – Acharya Sadananda



Happy Deepavali

Calendar and Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

- Sat Nov 23 – Annual Fund Raiser
- Sat Nov 29 – Sun Dec 1 – No Bala Vihar classes. Thanksgiving Weekend
- Fri Nov 29- Sun Dec 1 – Jnana Yajna by Swami Chidatmananda
- Sat Dec 14 – Sun Dec 15 – Gita Jayanti and Swami Tapovan Jayanti observation, during Bala Vihar Common time
- Sat/Sun Dec 21-22, Dec 28-29 – No Bala Vihar. Holiday Weekends
- Fri Dec 27 – Mon Dec 30 – Jnana Yajna by Pujya Swami Dheerananda – Gita Chapter 2, Vs 37-53
- Wed Jan 1 – New Year Puja – Vishnu Sahasra Naamavali, Lakshmi Puja and Guru Paduka Puja

Study Groups

- Please contact Sri Vijay Kumar ji by email at vijaykumar@rocketmail.com, if you are interested in forming or learning more about study groups.

Bookstore/Library

- Please contact Mr Vijay Singh by email at publications@chinmayadc.org to order any books, CDs, DVDs, etc.. Browse online at www.chinmayapublications.com
- Srimad Bhagavad Gita with Sri Gurudev's commentary is online at www.myholygita.com

Next Issue

- Articles for the next regular bi-monthly issue - January 2014, are due by January 1st, 2014
- Email submissions to smrithi@chinmayadc.org. Submission instructions at www.chinmayadc.org.

Useful Links:

CMWRC – Washington Regional Center www.chinmayadc.org

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust www.chinmayamission.com

Chinmaya Mission West www.chinmayamission.org

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

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

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

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

Please Note

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

Editorial Staff: (smrithi@chinmayadc.org)

Sitaram Kowtha, 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

- Puja Swami Dheerananda commenced Thursday Night Discourses at Kailash Niwas on Oct 3rd. The topic for 2013/2014 is 'Upadesha Sara' by Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi.
- Devi Navaratri and Vijay Dasami was the theme during common time during Oct 5/6 weekend at Chinmayam. Bala Vihar children described the significance and chanted few verses from Mahishasura Mardhini Stotram.
- Deepavali was celebrated at Chinmayam on Saturday, Oct 26th. Deepavali was also observed at common time during Nov 2/3 weekend at Chinmayam. Bala Vihar children described the significance of the festival.
- CMWRC took part in 'Om Sri Chinmaya Somnathaya Namah' likhita japa during the Dasara and Deepavali festival time. Adults and children filled out the japa naama in specially prepared booklets. These booklets will be placed inside the altar shrine, under the Murti of Lord Somnath at the soon to be completed Chinmaya Somnath facility in Northern Virginia.
- On Sun, November 10, US Army Chaplain, Captain Pratima Dharm addressed Chinmayam congregation in honor Veterans Day. After she described its history and significance, She was joined by Bala Vihar children in reading out a poem by Rabindranath Tagore. The Bala Vihar children and adults then joined her in singing the Indian and American National Anthems.

Announcements

- Please donate generously to CMWRC Capital Projects.
- Join us at the Annual Fundraiser to be inspired by Swami Chidatmananda, enthralled by 'Chinmaya Natyam', and to learn more details and progress on the current CMWRC capital projects
- Jnana Yajna by Swami Chidatmananda, "All Full Nothing" based on Adi Sankara's 'Dasa Sloki', Nov 29 – Dec 1 at Chinmayam
- Gita Jnana Yajna by Puja Swamiji in Northern VA, December 27-30

Current/Upcoming CMWRC Events

- Annual day Fundraiser – Saturday, November 23
- Gita and Tapovan Jayanti Observation, December 14-15, during Bala Vihar common time
- Jnana Yajna by Swami Chidatmananda, Nov 29 – Dec 1
- Jnana Yajna by Puja Swami Dheerananda on Gita Chapter 2, Verses 37-53, December 27-30, at South Riding VA
- New Year Puja in Virginia: Vishnu Sahasra Namavali, Lakshmi Puja and Guru Paduka Puja, on Jan 1, 2014, at South Riding VA
- New Year Puja at Chinmayam on Jan 1, 2014
- 2014 Gita Chanting Competition – Registration Underway. Registration Form, Audio and Practice Booklet available at www.chinmayadc.org (<http://www.chinmayadc.org/GeetaChanting/GitaChanting.htm>)



CHINMAYA MISSION®

WASHINGTON REGIONAL CENTER



We Cordially Invite You To Our

2013 Annual Fundraiser

In Support of CMWRC Capital Projects



KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY SWAMI CHIDATMANANDA

Acharya - Chinmaya Mission, Hyderabad, India

Regional Head - Chinmaya Mission, Andra Pradesh, India

- Swamiji conducts well-attended spiritual camps and yajnas internationally
- His lectures are rich, profound talks and are easy to understand
- He includes guidance for practical application of scriptural teachings in his talks



chinmaya natyams

An innovative Bharatanatyam dance performed by

Dr. Archana Shyamsunder

Dance Choreography, Vocal and Nattuvangam by

Delhi Guru V. Krishnamoorthi

Accompanied by many locally and internationally renowned artists



Veena
Villianur Lalitha

Ghatam
Sowmiya

Mridangam
Dr. Rohan K.

Nattuvangam/Vocal
V. Krishnamoorthi

Flute
Raman

Tabla
Debu Nayak

Vocal
Jaishree Sankaran

Saturday, November 23, 2013

5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

(Seating starts at 4:40 PM)

Langley High School

6520 Georgetown Pike

McLean, VA 22101

**A delicious sit-down dinner
(buffet service) will follow the program**

Tickets

Adult or Youth - \$100, \$50

Child (Pre-K to 12) - \$20

Contact:

Ashish Tikhe 202-247-7629

Sudesh Nimishe 202-492-4930

Saravanan Parandapalli 301-305-4438

tickets@chinmayadc.org

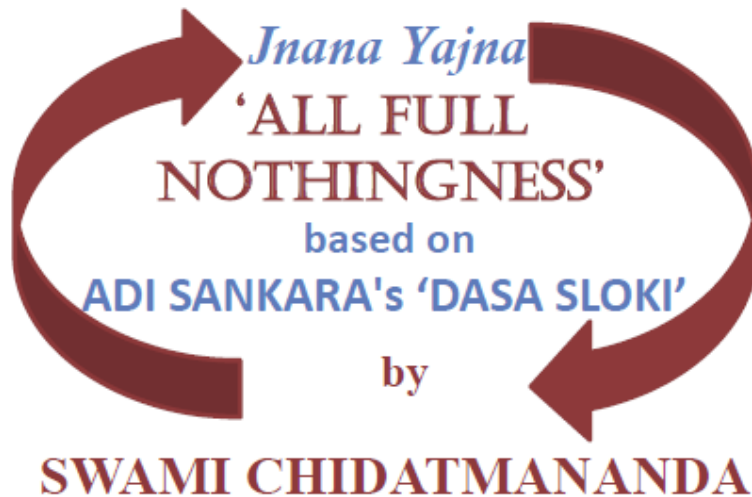
**Child care with special entertainment
will be available for children Grades Pre-K to 12**

Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center* (CMWRC*) is a non-profit Tax-Exempt organization under IRC 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Our Federal Tax ID is: 52-1618964.

Mailing address: 46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring MD 20905. Website: <http://www.chinmayadc.org/>



Chinmaya Mission® Washington Regional Center



at
CHINMAYAM
46 Norwood Road,
Silver Spring MD 20905

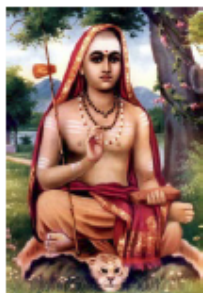
Thanksgiving Weekend

Nov 29, Nov 30 and Dec 1
10:00am to 12:20pm
(Each Day)
(20 minutes break)



To register, please email
yajna@chinmayadc.org

Please be sure register to help us
better plan for the event.
Hall seating capacity - 300



Background on Sri Adi Sankara's 'DASA SLOKI'

When Sri Adi Sankara approached Sri Govindapada to be accepted as a disciple, he was asked who he was. In response, Sri Adi Sankara spontaneously composed and recited ten verses, which have come to be known as the 'Dasa Sloki'.



**SWAMI
CHIDATMANANDA**

Acharya – Chinmaya Mission,
Hyderabad, India

Regional Head – Chinmaya Mission,
Andhra Pradesh, India

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CHINMAYA MISSION WASHINGTON REGIONAL CENTER

(A non-profit religious organization registered in MD)
Kailas Niwas, 46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905



PRESENTS
**BHAGAVAD GITA
JNANA YAJNA**
(A Series of Free Discourses)
**GITA CHAPTER 2
VERSES 37-53**
(*The Yoga of Knowledge*)

By Swami Dheerananda
(Resident Acharya, Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center)

7:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M.
Dec 27-Dec 30, 2013
**@Dulles South
Multipurpose Center**
24950 Riding Center Dr,
South Riding, VA 20152



Swami Dheerananda has been serving the **Washington DC area** since 1989 when Pujya **Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda** placed him as Resident Acharya for the Washington DC Metro area. **Swamiji** is the architect behind **Chinmaya Mission's** very popular **Bala Vihar** and **Summer Camps for children** in the Washington DC area.

Activities for kids ages 4+ are planned during the Discourses



VISHNU SAHASRA NAMAVALI, LAKSHMI PUJA & GURU PADUKA PUJA

Will be celebrated on
Wednesday, 01-Jan-2014
(10:00 AM - 12:00 Noon)
at the same location

WE INVITE YOU TO SPONSOR THE YAJNA & SUPPORT CHINMAYA SOMNATH
For Information or to Sponsor the Yajna please send email to yajna@chinmayasomnath.org

DIRECTIONS: From Beltway- Rt. 495 take I-66 W to Route 50 West past Route 28 overpass. Travel 5 miles, turn left on Loudoun County Parkway and turn right on Riding Center Drive. Go past the 4-way stop sign and the center will be to your left. Parking is free.



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

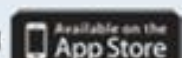
This knowledge would enliven us, re-charge us and help us face the challenges of life with courage and confidence. This can be accessed @ any place @ any time and any number of times. Subscribe today and get drenched in the nectar of devotion. [Click here to subscribe](#)



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Chinmaya Somnath Construction Progress

As of Oct 31, 2013

Work for the construction of Chinmaya Somnath is progressing well. During the month of October, exterior brick work has been completed and the window frames and glass panels have been installed. Dry wall in the basement for class rooms is almost complete and paint work is in progress. Metal frame work in the lobby is complete and much of drywall has been installed. Plumbing work for rest rooms has been completed.

Negotiations with contractors are being held by members for Audio Video, stage lighting and security system installation.

Availability of power is still delayed resulting in scheduled completion of building work. some of the work (installation of Elevator) can not even be started without power.

Following is the detailed description of progress:

Current Work

Basement– Classroom Areas

- Electrical Metal Conduit has been completed (Home-Runs) & MC Distribution Cabling is 99% complete
- Plumbing Waste/Vent is 99% complete and walls have been Inspected
- Metal Duct-work is 95% completed; and Insulated
- Framing & Electrical Inspections have been completed on interior walls and drywall is being installed and is about 99% complete; Finishing of drywall is 98% complete
- Operable Partition Track has been installed
- Paint priming and one coat of finish paint has been applied

Lobby Area

- Wall Framing is 98% complete
- Electrical Rough-ins are 100% complete
- Plumbing Rough-in of Restrooms has been completed 100%
- Roofing has been completed and coping installed
- Windows framing and glass installation has been completed.
- Drywall has been hung about 95% and is being taped.

Main Floor - Sanctuary Areas

- Roof Drain piping work is 100% complete
- Perimeter wall framing is 100% complete
- Stage over-build (support structure) has been completed and floor slab has been poured
- Ceiling soffit framing in Sanctuary has been 100% completed
- Drywall is being installed on exterior and interior walls and is 85% complete
- Ceiling soffit in Lobby and Fellowship is 95% complete
- HVAC Duct-work is being installed and is 90% complete
- Electrical Rough-ins are 100% complete; Lights are being installed in soffits – 75% complete
- Windows installation is completed except for radiuses in upper windows.

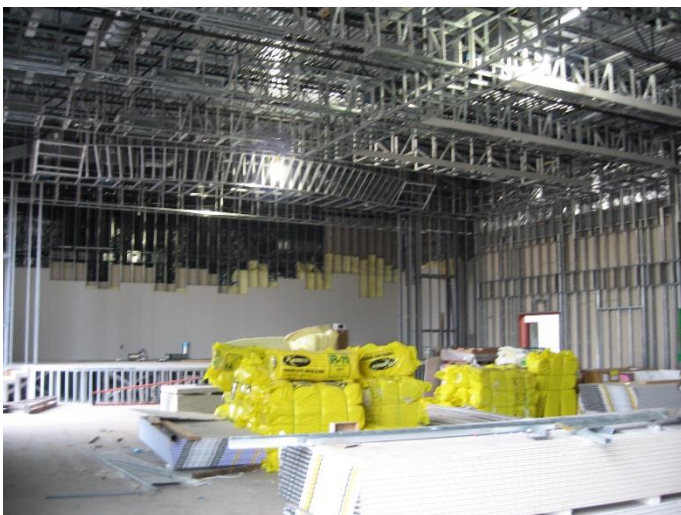
Exterior & Site Work

- Site contractor is installing water line & digging bore pit for sanitary sewer; building back-fill work and grading around building is in progress and roof drainage system has been installed – 100% complete.
- EIFS installation is 98% complete
- Brick veneer is 100% complete on exterior

Upcoming New Work in November

- Paint Priming & ACT Grid in Cellar Level
- Elevator delivery expected in November – awaiting power
- Sprinkler piping has been delivered, install Sprinkler rough-ins in Cellar and Sanctuary
- Mobilize Flooring Subcontractor for Ceramic work in Cellar

Substantial Completion is now more likely end of January due to lack of power availability; Completion Date will slip due to dependency on power. Previously it was thought power would be available to site by October 15.



Deepavali Celebration at Frederick Chapter: Lakshmi Puja

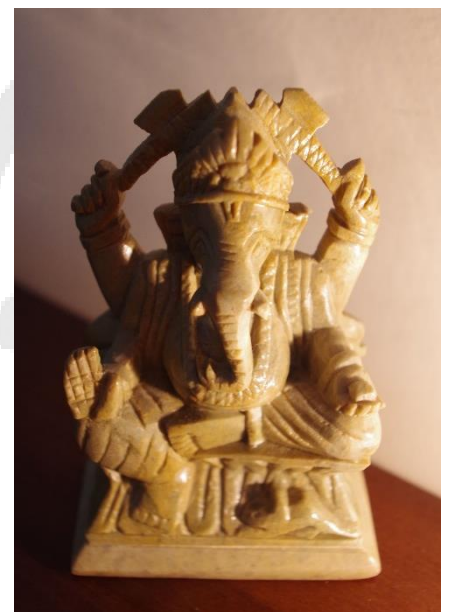
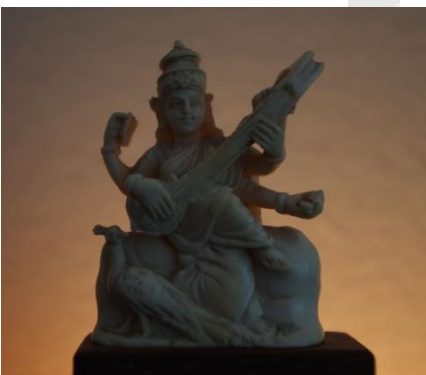
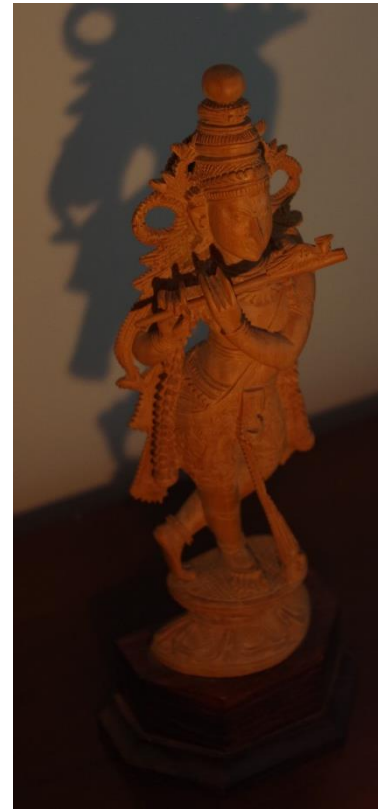
Aparna Saravanan

On the cool morning of Nov 3rd in Walkersville, the middle school was filled with divine music, while the volunteers were busy decking up the stage and the altar with beautiful lights and other ornaments for the Lakshmi Puja. The place was warming up with the soft glow of the candles and the warm smiles of the members greeting each other with Hari Om – Happy Diwali. Close to 10 am, Sathyam teachers with their young students occupied the stage besides the altar along with the yajaman family. It was a beautiful sight to see Goddess Lakshmi seated on the lotus smiling at the innocent kids ready to do the puja. The teachers guided the Lakshmi Pooja following the puja vidhi supported by their students chanting the mantras and Lakshmi ashtotram. It was sweeter to hear those chantings than the Diwali Sweets. All the devotees followed the puja vidhi and did the pooja at their own altar. Goddess Lakshmi was entertained with Karaoke style Bhajans and the puja ended with Vedic, Chinmaya and Lakshmi Arathi sung by the mothers of Sathyam kids. We could feel that Sri and Srinivas were pleased with our devotion and blessed us all. Lots of sweets were distributed which we couldn't resist, of course!



Deepavali & Murthy Photos

Nishant Carr





Deepavali 2013 Celebrations at Chinmayam

Usha Konduri

The festival of Deepavali comes around every year in the fall and is widely celebrated by most Hindus. Everyone looks forward to Deepavali, whether it's the kids awaiting the possibility of receiving presents and lighting firecrackers, or the adults eager to light up their homes with lights and diyas, attend poojas, meet friends to catch up and eat sumptuous food at parties. I have always enjoyed Deepavali, but I know my parents fondly recall the Deepavali traditions they celebrated when they were in India; I can see it in the wistful look my mom gives as she talks about it. Luckily, we have Chinmaya Mission right here to fill that void and provide us a place to come together and remember the meaning and value behind all those wonderful traditions.

This year I was fortunate to serve as the Master of Ceremonies, the MC, along with my sister, Thara Konduri, at the Chinmaya Mission Diwali celebration, held on Saturday, October 26, 2013. The Chinmaya families were welcomed with the traditional savory Diwali snacks of Mysore-pak, mathia, phaphda, mithai, chiwada during meet and greet from 5 to 6 pm. A fantastic Cultural Program offered music by Bala Vihar children and CHYKs, a comedy-filled Vedantic Play, a Diya dance by aunties, and Swamiji's special Deepavali message until 7:30 pm. The cultural program at Chinmayam concluded with dandia raas and garba by all the Chinmaya family members, accompanied by a live orchestra consisting of our talented CHYK and adult families which lasted until 8:30 pm. This was followed by the special dinner of shrikhand-puri and other delicious menu items enjoyed with family and friends at Kailas Niwas. Everyone was filled with a livening spirit as the night progressed. The CHYKs, Purvi Nanavaty and

Vinay Mallikarjun took the show home with their Bhajan and Tabla duo by opening the show and seamlessly filling the gaps between each act. A huge highlight for the show was a play written and directed by Arvind Bhagwat Uncle called "The Royal Secret", conveying that the secret is learning how to live with the spirit of Vedanta in our lives, each and every day. A diya dance performed by the aunties of the Chinmaya Mission family including Paulomi Aunti and Preeti Aunti, the chief organizers of the entire evening, left the audience with a 'lighted' and warm feeling. To top it off, Vishnu Dharmaraj, Ashana Pandya and Vani Ravichandran sang beautiful songs.

Nothing in Chinmaya Mission is fully complete without Swami Dheeranandaji giving us words of wisdom and something to think about afterward, so he did just that. Swamiji prompted us to think about the "Divine Light" shining within each one of us, and recognize that it is the same Divine Light that shines in each and every one of us; we must be conscious and aware of this light of consciousness within us, so that our actions and thoughts are guided by it. Deepavali is a celebration and tribute, honoring this divine light of consciousness dancing through everyone, resembling rows and rows of lamps lit up through every living being. "Deepa" means light or lamp, and "Avali" means rows and rows. The evening ended with a splendid dinner at Kailas Niwas as everyone greeted each other and mingled with friends lovingly and joyfully. A merry time was had by one and all!!!



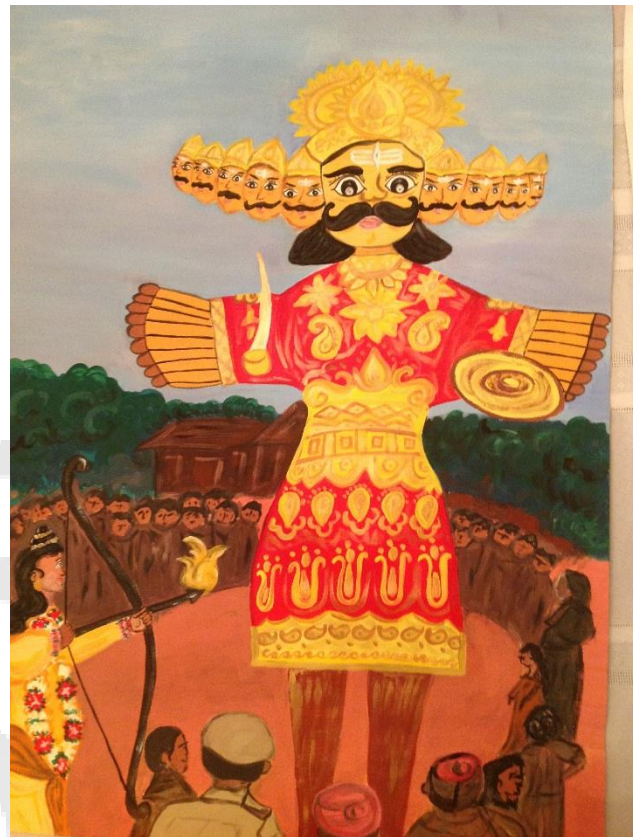
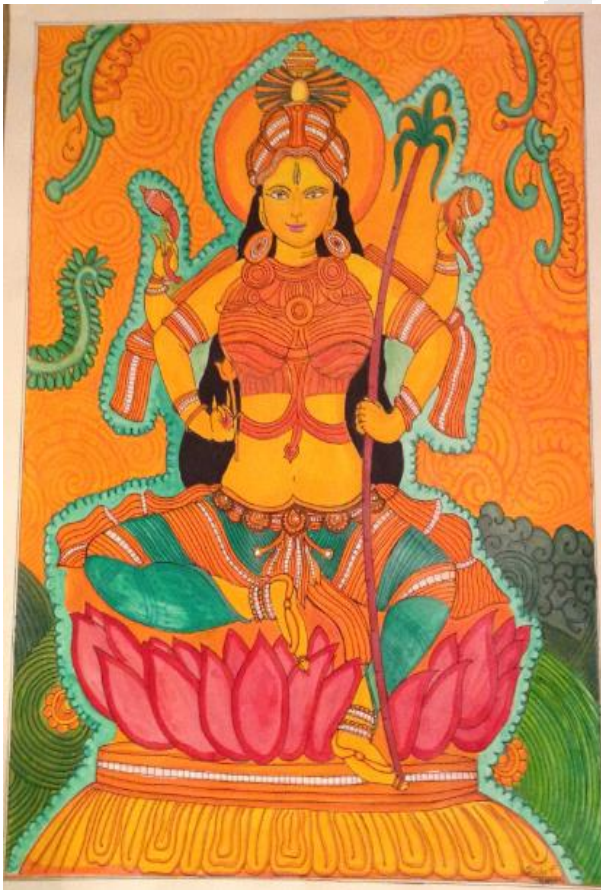






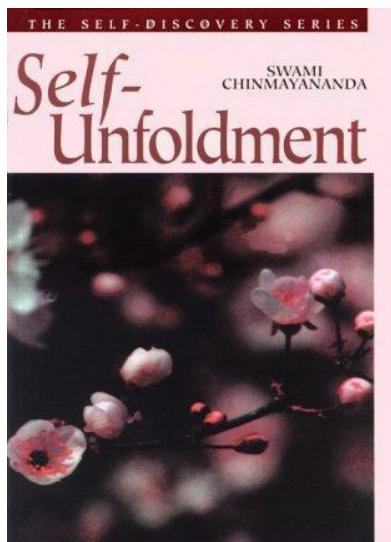
An Art exhibition was held on October 6, 2013, displaying the artwork submitted by all the participants. It was a feast to the eyes to see scenes of Ramayana, Navaratri festival and Lord Ganesha through the eyes of the artists. The hallway was vibrant with a colorful display of all the paintings, where participants had used various media like pencil sketching, coloring with pencils, watercolor, acrylic paint and bright markers. Spectators were amazed at the talent displayed by all artists.

“Chitra Pratiyogita” was a very successful event and the excitement during the two weeks of the contest was palpable. Many talented artists among our Chinmaya Somanath family members got an opportunity to do something they are passionate about and exhibit their work.



“Self-Unfoldment” Summaries

Chapter 8: Energy



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

required once one has developed the will, energy and the right attitude for action by practicing satyam, brahmacharya and ahimsa. Without this efficiency, a person will still be a failure in life.

Nature is ever prompt and efficient. We see efficiency all levels of life – in the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms. In human being alone we detect the possibility of a mightier power with the help of which one can explode into victories over the very forces of nature, and rise above the tyranny of his instincts and impulses.

Efficiency

Efficiency is the freedom to step up our own inherent abilities in the field of action. We express efficiency in the dynamism of our actions and in the cheerfulness of our work. Dexterity in action is Yoga – ‘yogah karmasu kausalam’. A genius is not born, but is the result of self-discipline, self-molding, and self-development. A genius evolves through a process by which the source of dynamism latent in oneself is discovered, tapped, awakened, poured-out, and utilized efficiently and to the best advantage. The process involves 3 steps: (1) generating dynamism; (2) conserving energy and (3) channeling energy into a chosen field of endeavor.

Generating Dynamism

We can generate dynamism in our work by choosing a higher ideal. But this may be short-lived. Thus right

actions done with the right attitude, enrich our vitality. However, actions done with the wrong attitude dissipate our energy. Actions that cause us remorse are called sins (paapa) and actions that do not cause regret but help integrate our personality are called meritorious or ‘punya’. Thus paapa and punya are reactions in mind of the actions we have performed. Action by itself is beyond good or bad. It is the attitude behind the action that matters.

Desire, jealousy, hate and passion drain our inner wealth and impoverish us. Affection, love, tenderness, peace and equanimity enrich our vitality. We must learn to redeem our lower tendencies with emotions of a higher order. Let us open our head and heart to the enduring perfections and noble thoughts preached and lived by the wise seers of old. Such consistent exposure is sure to strengthen and purify our character. Instead of repressing our false tendencies, we should learn to substitute those tendencies with healthy ideas. The best and easiest way achieving growth in our character is to study the scriptures and reflect on their meaning.

Conserving Energy

Leakage of energy takes place through (a) regrets about the dead past; (b) anxieties about an imagined future and (c) feverish excitements in the present. Instead of focusing on the action in front of us, we let our regrets of the past leak our current energy; or we start worrying about the results and consequences even before the present actions is completed. Lastly in our excitement of the present, we fail to perform our current action well. To focus our energy on what we are doing right now is the highest creative act in the world.

The Joy of an Artisan

When an individual has discovered new energy within himself, when he has learned the art of stopping the dissipation and is able to channel his entire energy on the piece of work at hand, a great joy starts welling up in the mind – the joy of an artisan. Such joy can only be understood by experiencing it. For an artisan, drafting something new – whether the design for a toy or for an instrument of high precision – brings great joy and fulfillment.

To a large extent, the mechanization of life in this technical age has robbed us of the joy of that the artisan of the past experienced. We can still have the joy of artisan if we change our perspective a little – by doing the right thing in the right way. That is, the joy in the precision and perfection of our work, no matter what it may be. Having done our work as well as we could, a silent stream of joy fills our heart, whether or not other recognize our effort and completion.

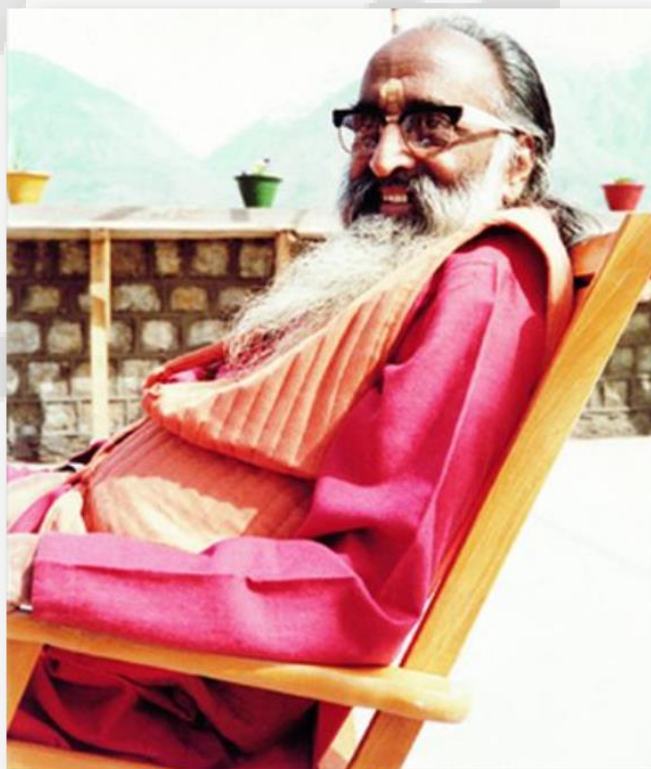
The artisan and the artist who have been able to put their head and heart where their hands are working have discovered the joy of deep inner peace, a joy of religious ecstasy, because when the physical, mental and intellectual personalities become integrated in an individual, he comes nearer to perfection. In that

atmosphere of joy, the individual is capable of achieving his best.

A person who can bring harmony in the physical, mental and intellectual personalities in one field of activity in an inspired manner, not only bring joy to the self, but becomes efficient and highly productive. To work in this way is the 'art of living', described in the Vedas and especially in the immortal poem called the Bhagavad Gita.

Channeling Energy

In summary, according to the great masters, we should first discover a goal from which to draw our inspiration. Once we have found that goal or ideal, a new enthusiasm floods our mind. With enthusiasm comes sincerity, ardor and consistency of purpose. Next, we need to channel our energy to achieve our goal without dissipating our vitality through unintelligent regrets of the past, futile imaginations of the future and frenzied excitement in the present. If we work on in the world with our head, heart and hands fully integrated, the very work gains a stamp of efficiency and beauty – and our reward is an indescribable feeling of fulfillment and joy.



A Place to Hide

Aziza Meer

As a baby its mom's lap and her arms
To hide from the world
We all need a place to hide
Can fight and fight, and happily fight
But we need that place to hide
Fight we need to, small and big
And fight we can
When we know we have a place to hide.

As an adolescent it can be a friend
Friend who is caring
Truly caring
Sharing joy and trouble
Silly and serious
Loving and naughty
To do mischief with
To chill and just feel the warmth

As an adult we are lost
We seek our spouse
Then we get on each others nerves
But spouse it is
Because no one else comes that close
Friends are there
And they have spouses too
Parents are there
But they need us more

Place to hide
A soothing light
Joy unspeakable
Bliss everlasting
Sheer ecstasy
Sometimes it still is people
But mostly it is us, the self
The self that has reached far
Reached a spot to hide within.

Red

Chetana Neerchal

Bala Vihar Teacher & Tilak Ceremony Coordinator

A red fire hydrant
still, quiet,
in its
place in the sun.
Harmony
with encircling autumn.

Red cardinals
take flight
from one bush
to the next,
busy in their
seasonal pursuits.
Unaware of
their red
mingling with
surrounding red.

Red leaves
traverse
to their beginnings.
Free, unconscious,
unquestioning of
where did I come from,
where do I go to,
and
why?

A lady in red
muses, questions,
why she wonders
about
"Why?"

I was watching the seasonal scenery as I waited for Siri's tennis class to end. Autumn was evident in the reddening landscape. I too was wearing a red patterned kurti. I wondered about existence around me that appeared unquestioning, accepting of its role, while the existence in me, conscious about itself, always questions its role.

grace

Deepa Krishnan

palm trees sway
in a warm breeze,
clear blue waters,
beckoning seas;

waves of thought,
surf my mind,
chains of vasanas,
weigh me down, bind;

crossing boundaries,
of religion, sect,
I try to reflect beyond,
body, mind and intellect;

there is no pot,
without the clay,
there is no night,
without the day;

be still,
breathe out strife,
be aware,
breathe in life;

a temple bell,
i hear from afar,
i reach for the moon,
I touch a star;

my path maybe weary,
the hours maybe long,
i feel His presence,
in this infinite song;

Thoughtless

Aziza Meer

When my thoughts troubled me in the past I thought they were valid and needed attention. I fed them, clothed them and nurtured them. Then each thought grew and established its space around me. I nurtured many such thoughts and thought processes, and before I knew, I disappeared and they took over my life.

I want to hit the reset button and go back to a time when I was 12. I was a very bright child for my age. I was in 11th grade, which is Intermediate in India, and was at least 4 years younger than my classmates. Most importantly, everyone loved my smile and I was a happy kid.

When I was 12, I lived without thoughts. Now, just like then, I want to be appreciative, wide-eyed, and caring. Above all I want to be thoughtless.

When Thoughts come, they come in bunches, chained together, noisy and distressed and very disturbing to observe. Did I say when thoughts come? Well, when is it that they don't come?

Thoughts always left a sense of deep discomfort which I tried to ward off by occupying the mind and body elsewhere. I ran from that which I did not know, day and night. I thought this was the proper way to live-- chasing or running away. I was so used to being in this state of discomfort that I accepted it and actively developed distractions to run from it. I chased thing after another, because in all reality, the company I was most afraid to keep was myself.

In meditation I found my soul in the silence between thoughts. As my meditation grew stronger, my discomfort with thoughts grew stronger and increasingly unbearable in contrast to the peace I felt between thoughts during meditation.

As a child, silence came naturally; I was a part of nature. Daily I watched the sunrise and the sunset. In

tropical South India, sunrise and sunset are treasures easily available with just the will to watch. The beauty of the sky, the shifting planets, the color in the clouds, clouds like maidens in frilled dresses waiting to dance on the floor of the vast sky.... Contrarily, I remember some evenings full of thick black clouds, racing wild, with coconut trees swaying in the winds. Those were experiences beautiful too. I was able to be a spec of joy and love, a bright part of the universe, because I did not think.

Being thoughtless was non-existence. I was not here.

Why is this beauty of non-existence scary to an adult? Because adults think we should think. If we choose not to think, then we die to something, and we are afraid to die.

What are we losing from embracing silence? The real question is what do we have left to lose when we are not enjoying silence?

As I grew older, I consciously filled myself with good, loving thoughts. But the problem was that I continued thinking. Anxiety, disappointment at imperfections-- my own and others'-- all of these thoughts began to fill me up. But no one told me not to think loving thoughts.

Looking back, as a child, I was giving and I was loving. But I was not thinking. The manner in which I gave and loved at that time were so much better than the manner in which I love and give now, thanks to my newfound sense of discrimination.

One thought automatically led to another of the same nature. They escalated in intensity, and before I knew it, I was submerged. Any intensity, good or bad, is very uncomfortable. There is an intense discomfort with

both good and bad, although the discomfort is deceptively attractive when it comes from the good.

I ran from this discomfort by sharing, talking, and acting. One talk led to another, one action led to another. I went farther and farther from silence. No one told me not even to think good thoughts—not to think—period!

Good and bad, before we know it, mix up, and although they may be in different proportions in different people at different times, they still are very noisy.

I stayed uncomfortable. I wouldn't accept that the discomfort was from my own foolish choice to run from my silence. So I blamed others and found reasons to prove to myself that I had concerns in life that were serious enough to keep me uncomfortable. And I also proved to myself that these concerns originated from the acts of others.

As a child when I spotted an issue, I looked at it, and slowly peeled it in layers and corrected it as I went along. Before I knew it, all that was left of the issue was a shiny spec of opportunity and growth. It never occurred to me that I could not take care of a concern, and that is because I didn't think that it originated from others.

Here's a short story--When I went to college at the age of 12, I was on campus and I missed my mom. When exams came along, I was very nervous and felt dysfunctional because I didn't have her to support me. I remember one evening when I sat in an empty study hall on the floor in a corner with my books piled up next to me. I sat there staring and didn't touch my books for a while. Then came a middle-aged man who sat next to me. I picked up my books and I studied, and since then never once have I questioned that the middle-aged man will sit with me and I can study without fear of exams. The man came every time, and he still comes to walk with me when I'm alone, or to sit next to me when I need him. As a kid, I thought this man was God, and today, I think this man is God.

My middle-aged man tells me that I'm still the same child from when I was 12.

Picking up on that child who still lives in me, one fine day, I left my thoughts. I am no longer nervous to see

the big boss, to speak in huge meetings, or worried about bullies in my social or work circles. I'm not even worried that my spouse may get into a crabby mood for something I may have done, knowing fully well that I should not have been doing it.

Thoughts are noise. Both good and bad thoughts are noise. You never know when you will shift from good to bad. They are made of the same stuff, and don't get fooled into thinking good thoughts are to be nurtured. I'm not afraid to lift both my feet and hop to the other realm; I'm afraid to remain here in this intense discomfort of disconnection with myself.

How does this thoughtless state feel? It feels like death. And I love it.

When we feed thoughts they develop into desires that prompt us to act. When we act, we come out with good and bad feelings. The good feelings make us want more of the same, and the bad feelings make us want to blame others, correct and fight, or agonize. Yet both good and bad thoughts are noisy and ugly: taking each branch of thought, we can keep climbing the monster tree and before long lose ourselves in the foliage. When we lose ourselves this way, we are completely unaware that a more wholesome living is possible.

From thoughts and actions we gather memories of sounds, smells, touch, and a sensation lingers on. This is cell memory, strong and persistent, otherwise called Vasanas in Sanskrit.

Intense discomfort is what the Vasanas leave behind. Trying to ease that discomfort, we gather more sensations, memories, and Vasanas. It's an ugly dance.

Let thoughts die. Live the real you.

‘Tis The Season

Sitaram Kowtha

The New Year sped by and the season of expressions of gratitude, joy and renewal is upon us again. This season reminds us that our own inner nature is to always move upward – to the higher and nobler. What better way to begin the season than with ‘Thanksgiving’, followed by sharing of love and joy during the holidays, and finally an anticipation of a new beginning with the new year and new sets of resolutions, so that we move upward.

It is interesting to note that for those who celebrate Deepavali in America, this season begins a little earlier, with the festival of lights. The festival reminds us of victory of knowledge (Deepa – light) over ignorance (darkness). The ‘avali’ - rows and rows - of deepas (lights) lit during the festival reminds of the presence and the vital touch of the Lord in everyone and everything – sentient or insentient. The knowledge and reminder of the omnipresence of the Lord prepares us well for the start for the ensuing seasonal expressions of gratitude, joy, sharing and renewal.

Sri Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda said, “What we have is HIS gift to us”. Thus the thought of gratitude and thanksgiving permeates: ‘We are thankful to ...’ ‘We are thankful for....’ At Chinmaya Mission, we have lot to be thankful for – our center is where our children are studying and absorbing the Sanatana culture. Where we are slowly and steadily growing to love and learn the pregnant messages of Sanatana Dharma – from such holy texts as the Gita. It is also where we learn to put that knowledge to practice.

Sri Gurudev, continued, “What we do with what we have is our gift to HIM.” In the spirit of gratitude, with our thoughts of dedicating to HIM what is HIS,

and that we are mere instruments in HIS ways, our expressions of love, joy and sharing are only natural. Chinmaya Mission is a volunteer run organization. Many sevaks devote themselves to the upkeep and smooth running of the chapter activities and facilities. While some work and workers are visible, most service is performed without much fanfare and without drawing much attention. These sevaks dedicate themselves to the vision laid out by Sri Gurudev and see themselves as mere instruments of His grace and blessings. Some sevaks perform teaching duties, some tend to financing and executing capital projects, some tend to upkeep of the mission facilities, and many others tend to the organization and execution of chapters activities. They all lend their talent and energies in the areas they are best able to contribute and serve. Also, many of the same sevaks double up as key financial contributors to support the growing needs of the center. In other words, they give and then they share even more, all in joy and love.

The attitude of gratitude, the welling up of joy and the sense of sharing give us a real opportunity to uplift ourselves. That is why we look forward to a new year, hoping to correct our ways and take on new challenges. We think about adopting New Year resolutions. It is very rare for us to completely follow through on our resolutions, however. One of the difficulties with keeping New Year resolutions is that we have enslaved ourselves to habits and are unwilling to give them up totally. Imagine a monkey jumping from one tree branch to the next. The branch that the monkey is holding onto is our current habits. The branch we want to jump to and grab is our New Year resolution. Only when we let go of the

current branch can we hope to make the leap and grab the next branch. Thus to uplift ourselves, we have to be willing to let go of our current habits, desires and comfort zones. When we do make the leap, HE pays attention, and is there to help us. Thus if we take up New Year resolutions with determination and take the leap, we will surely gain HIS interest and help.

Happy Deepavali! Happy Thanksgiving! Best Wishes for a joyous holiday season and Excelsior (Ever Upward) in the New Year!

Jnana Yoga and Self Realization - XVI

Acharya Sadananda

Sarva karma sanyaasa

We are addressing some of the questions raised in the course of these presentations. One question pertains to karma sanyaasa. Some of these questions were raised on the advaitin listserve where these series were initially posted. If any of the readers have any questions that need to be addressed in relation to the postings on these series you can send them to the smRiti editor. They will be collected and addressed in sequence.

Q. *Sir, what your good self explained earlier pertains to 'karma phala tyAga' with ahaMkAra & mamakAra tyAga...But story does not end there, shankara at various places without any ambiguity insists on 'sarva karma saNyAsa' too i.e. nivrutti mArga. If time permits kindly share your thoughts on these two points.*

Here is my perspective on the above topic.

Karma phala tyaga is what it says – I am renouncing the results of an action – What does that mean or what does that really involve. Let us take an example. I worked very hard for a month and as a result I got paid, the salary that is due to me. Now scripture says I have to practice karma phala tyaga for my chitta suddhi or for purification of my mind. Does that involve renouncing my salary? If so, pretty soon I will be on the streets begging for food. In addition, I will be dragging all others who depend on that salary. Obviously that is not what karma phala tyaga implies. When it says that I have to renounce the results of my action, I can do so only if there is feeling that the results are mine. That is, there is a mamakaara associated with the results. I cannot definitely renounce anything which does not belong to me. There is a famous saying in Telugu – attagari sommu

alluDu daanamu cesinaTTu – that is it is like mother-in-laws wealth the son-in-law is readily and freely donating to others. Hence, I have to own it for me to renounce. The salary belongs to me since I worked hard and earned out with my sweat; we say. That is our attitude when we perform an action and gets the results of the action. We think we deserve. By the by, there is a booklet with the title - Serve & Deserve - by Swami Tejomayanandaji glorifying Hanuman who serves without any expectations and returns; hence deserves to be revered as God himself. The essence of the teaching is - I have to serve in order for me to deserve.

The renunciation of fruits of the action, therefore, involves a change in the attitude with which I receive the fruits of my actions. In addition, it involves an attitude with which I expend or dispose off the fruits of action. First, the purpose of karma yoga is to prepare my mind for jnana yoga, the very karma has to be done with Iswara arpita buddhi, or an action performed with an attitude of offering to the Lord. Lord will accept only if it is offered with devotion – **yat karoshi yadaShNaasi yat juhoShi dadaasi yat| yat tapasyasi kounteya tat kuruShva madarpanam** – whatever you do, eat etc offer it to Me – says Krishna. Before that He says, - I will accept whatever you offer – **patram, pushpam, phalam, toyam, yo me bhktyaa prayacchati**– who ever offers me a leaf, a flower, a fruit or even little water, I will accept it if it is offered with devotion. Therefore, it is not what I offer, but with what attitude I offer counts.

Since the Lord is everywhere, including in the field of action that I am involved, in order for me to offer the action to the Lord, the action should be offer-worthy. That means, first it should be dhaarmic action, and second the action should be complete and well executed to the best of my ability, taking into consideration all the factors that go into the action. Dhaarmic actions could be those that are obligatory. They are obligatory because of my status in the family, in the society, in the organization that I am

involved; or they are actions that are done for the benefit of society at large. We say Lord is omnipresent, that is present everywhere or there is no place where He is not. However, when I recognize this fact and recognize His presence in every field of action or set-up that I am involved, I cannot but be a devotee all the time. Hence I am not a devotee only in the temple; I have to be a full-time devotee, if and when I recognize the truth of the statement that He is omnipresent. That is jnaana part of the karma yoga, that is, the recognition of His presence everywhere, in every field of action.

Hence karma yoga involves performing all obligatory actions while remaining as a full time devotee of the Lord. Hence as a father, I am a devotee + a father thus becoming a devoted father, as a husband I become devoted husband, similarly devoted wife, devoted son/daughter, devoted student/teacher, devoted employee/employer, devoted citizen; thus the seal of devotion goes with every action, since in every action He is there. Hence Krishna says **yogaH karmasu koushalam** – the dexterity in action becomes a norm for a karma yogi. This is what is involved in offering action as a prayer to the Lord, as a devotee. All the obligatory actions become the best that I can perform with as much of perfection as possible. In that perfection, the Lord Himself manifests in the action or the action itself becomes an inspired action. The second aspect is to recognize that Lord is karma phala daata – the one who gives the results for the action taking into consideration innumerable factors that are involved in framing the results. Let us take a simple action of throwing a stone. Once I throw a stone or once throwing action is completed, the trajectory of the stone does not depend any more on me but on the gravitational laws, frictional laws etc which are authored by Him. In addition, other factors can come in, such as someone or something coming in between the stone and the target thereby undermining the result of the intended action, for which I have no control. Hence all those factors that I have no control in formulating the results of the action are together called daivam, discussed in 18th Ch. of Gita. In essence, the results for my action come from Him and I have no control on the result. Another way of looking at this is, I can only perform an action in the present and the result is always in future to the action and I have no control on the future. Hence Krishna's statement –

karmani eva adhikaaraste maaphaleshu kadaachana – to be translated as, one has only choice in action but not in the results of the action. I cannot **will** the result of an action. Thus I have recognized His presence in the set up and perform the action as best as I can and offer the action with devotion as a prayer to the Lord. Since the result of action comes from Him, I accept the result as prasaadam (I do not know an equivalent word in English) that is with reverential attitude, since it comes from Him. This means there is no mamakaara in the result when I accept the result as His prasadam. I have no attachment to the result. In the temples, when someone offers as Lord's prasaadam, my attitude in receiving it is an attitude of reverence, since it comes from Him. Irrespective of whether it is a sweet, hot, or bitter; food, flower, or water, I accept it without questioning why or why not –thus only with a reverential attitude without any likes and dislikes superimposed on it. Thus the result is accepted without a reaction. If the result is not what I wanted, then I learn from the result and formulate or refine my next course of action, and now perform with greater skill. The action again is offered to the Lord as kaikaryam or as a prayer. Krishna says when everyone performs their allotted action cooperatively for the benefit of the totality, it forms a yagna and the gods which are deities of the phenomenal forces have to shower the results when they are pleased by the action (that is when the action is perfect). Thus we please the gods in performing our action in unison, and gods have to please us by giving proper results; and we perform again, and thus setting the eternal wheel of action and results. In the cooperative action, I have to share the results with those who participated in the yoga of action, in proportion to the input. That is the wheel of dharma that is set into eternal motion- says Krishna.

Coming back to the main topic, the karma phala tyaga involves 1. performance of action as a duty (which is called service) and accepting the result as prasaadam – without reaction, only with a reverential attitude. In the process, mamakaara or notion that this is mine goes away – **What I have is His gift and what I do with what I have is my gift to Him**- says Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji – this continuous exchange of gifts forms dhaarmic wheel of action set forth by the creator himself in the beginning of creation, says Krishna. This is the essence of karma

phala tyaagam. In the process, from the result, I utilize part of it for my and for my family needs, and the rest I will put back into the field of action for the benefit of the totality. Thus whatever I have is His gift and that has to be properly utilized in giving back to the totality or to the Lord Himself as my gift, after taking care of my needs as well as those who depend on me. Living within that frame of mind will purify the mind and prepare it for the jnaana yoga. That is in essence is what is involved in **karma phala thyaga**.

The next level of understanding comes with jnaana where I understand that I am not even a doer, to claim the result. Here there is no karma phala tyaaga since karma itself does not belong to me. It is clear understanding that I was and I am never a doer to begin with. This understanding comes with jnaana where I understand that I am akarthaa – in spite of actions being done by the body, mind and intellect, BMI. This understanding comes only when I recognize that they (BMI) are in me and I am not in them. They are part of prakRiti which is my lower nature. My true nature is I am pure existence-consciousness-limitless that enlivens this prakRiti. I pervade this entire universe of beings and objects in an unmanifested form –

maya tatam idam sarvam jagat avyakta muurtinaa |

mastaani sarva bhuutani na ca aham teshu avasthitaH | | says Krishna.

I pervade this entire universe in unmanifested form. In Me only all beings are there, but yet I am not in any of them. When jnaani understands that I am that – **tat tvam asi**- any claims that I am doer gets transcended in that understanding – He may scream with ecstasy – **akartaaham abhoktaaham ahameva ahamavyayaH** – I am neither doer nor enjoyer, I am that I am eternal and inexhaustible. When that understanding sinks in, I recognize that BMI belongs to the prakRiti which is nothing but maayaa only – **maayantu prakRitim viddhyaat**, says swetasvatara Up. I recognize that I am pure saakshii, and prakRiti becomes dynamic in my presence and performs an action. Sat-chit-ananda that I am is never get affected by the actions or inactions of the prakRiti. Hence, Krishna says:

prakRiti eva ca karmaaNi kriyamaanaani sarvaShaH |,

yaH pasyati tat aatmaanam akartaaram sa pasyati | |

– All actions are done by prakRiti alone and who ever recognizes that I am never a doer – he alone sees the truth. Hence jnaani understands that actions do not belong to him but to prakRiti but that prakRiti acts in his presence only. He remains akarthaa or non-doer in spite of any action that is being done in his presence. Krishna discusses action, inaction and unaction exhaustively in Ch. 4 saying that many have misconceptions about it.

With this understanding we can look at the question – what does the sarva karma sanyaasa – renunciation of all actions implies. This cannot be done by giving up the action as Krishna discusses in the 18th Ch. Gita. He starts the Geetopadesha with the statement that no one can remain even for a second without performing an action. If so, how can I give up an action? However if I understand correctly that I am never an actor in spite of the action that is being done at BMI level, then I have – as though – renounced any notion that I am actor – that forms the essence of sarva karma sanyaasa – giving up all the actions without any exception. Hence the statement essentially means there is no more kartRitva bhaavam, that is, the notion that I am doer is gone in the awakening of the knowledge that I am pure saakshii swaruupam. Clear understanding of this fact is **sarva karma sanyaasa**. It is essentially renouncing the wrong notions that I am doer and therefore I have to give up the doing. If I am never a doer, where is there then to give up. Therefore karma sanyaasa should imply I am renouncing the notion that I am a doer. That can happen only when I understand the fact that I am pure sat-chit-ananda swaruupa. Hence Krishna says:

naivakinchit karomiiti yukto manyeta tattavavit |

pasyanshRinvanspRishan jigran ashnan gacchanswapansvasan | |

pralayan visRijan gRahanan unmiShannimiShannapi |

indriyanindriyaartheShu vartanta iti dharayan | |

All activities are being done by the senses as they are programmed and jnaani understands that he is never a doer –Krishna lists all the activities at BMI level as being performed by the prakRiti itself.

That understanding is sarva karma sanyaasa – it is not really renouncing actions that I never did or do, but renouncing the notion that I am doer. Notions will get removed only in the awakening of the true knowledge.

