

Chinmaya Smrithi



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

Volume 24, Number 2, March 21, 2014

HAPPY UGADI, GUDI PADWA, TAMIL NEW YEAR

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Calendar and Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

- Sat, Mar 21, 'Thyagaraja and Purandara Dasa Aaradhana hosted by Frederick Chapter
- Sat-Sun, Mar 22-23, 1st set of Bala Vihar Class Performances
- Sat-Sun, Mar 29-30, Gita Chanting Competition
- Sat, Mar 29, 'Vinaya Poorva Aaradhanam' Jugalbandi by CHYK at Chinmayam
- Sat-Sun, Apr 5-6, Sri Rama Navami Celebration
- Mon, April 14, Hanuman Jayanthi Puja & Celebration
- Sat-Sun, Apr 19-20, Spring Break, No Classes
- Fri-Sun, May 2-4, 'Understanding Marriage' Retreat conducted by Acharya Vilasiniji and Acharya Vivekji in Pennsylvania
- Sat, May 3, Adi Sankara Jayanti
- Sat-Sun, May 10-11, Chinmaya Jayanti and Mother's Day celebration
- Sat, May 17, Bala Vihar Graduation Tilak Ceremony
- Sat-Sun, May 24-25, Memorial Day Spiritual Camp by Acharya Sadanandaji

Study Groups

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

Bookstore/Library

- Please contact Sri Vijay Singhji by email at publications@chinmayadc.org to order any books, CDs, DVDs, etc.. Browse online at www.chinmayapublications.com

Next Issue

- Articles for the next regular bi-monthly issue - May 2014, are due by May 1st, 2014
- Email submissions to smrithi-editor@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 Courses 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

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

News, Notes and Flyers

CMWRC Events Held

- Makara Sankranti was observed during common time on Jan 11-12
- Maha Shivaratri was celebrated both during common time on Feb 22-23 and on Feb 27th. See article in this issue.
- A memorial service was held for Sri Narain Sharaf on Mar 1 at Chinmayam

Announcements

- 2014 Summer Camp Registration is now underway. The theme of the camp this year is ‘www.yoga.path’ – Work – Worship – Wisdom; Serve – Love – Think: Serve with Kindness – Love with Compassion – Think with Creativity. Camp Dates – Frederick: June 16-27; Silver Spring: Jun 23-July 18; Northern VA – July 21-Aug 15. Visit www.chinmayadc.org to register.
- Visit Gift Registry webpage to take advantage of new ways to donate to CMWRC Capital Projects

Current/Upcoming CMWRC Events

- Gita Chanting Competition – March 29-30. There is still time to register and practice.
- Youth Seva Day # 2 –Sunday May 4.
- “Vinaya Poorva Aaradhana” – CHYK Jugalbandi concert by Vinay Mallikarjun and Poorvi Nanavaty on Sat Mar 29. See Flyer.
- Hanuman Jayanthi – Monday April 14 at Chinmayam. The program this year includes Hanuman Chalisathon by CHYK fundraiser for YEP: Youth Empowerment Program, and Chinmaya Somnath.
- “Understanding Marriage” – A Retreat conducted by Acharya Vilasiniji and Acharya Vivekji in Pennsylvania, May 2-4. See Flyer.
- Bala Vihar Graduation Tilak Ceremony – Sat May 17 at Chinmayam. All are welcome.
- Grand Opening of Chinmaya Somnath Complex. See announcement for key dates and more details.

Obituary

Sri Vikram Prabhu

It is with profound sadness we inform you that a dear friend of many of us and a dedicated member of Chinmaya Mission family for over 25 years, Sri Vikram Prabhu, left us for heavenly abode. He passed away in his sleep on December 29, 2013, while on a trip to India to visit his family, friends, and participate in his college reunion.

Vikram Ji, as we all would like to remember him, was a selfless person who always cared for others and shared his insight in Vedanta with all his fervor and sincerity at all times. He taught Balavihar classes and led the adult study groups for over two decades. Even little things mattered a great deal with him. He would meticulously bring his cloth bag of Gita chapters and prayer pages every time he walked in for these sessions. He would anticipate the needs of others and bring them books and other printed material. He would accompany others to Poojya Gurudev’s out of

town camps, and gave rides to others countless number of times going out of his way to pick up and drop them. During these trips, he would enthusiastically engage in conversations and share his knowledge and wisdom. He was well read in many areas of endeavors with much depth and knowledge which he selflessly shared. Acharya Sadaji called Vikramji his parathasarati for giving him rides to Gurudev's international camps and Sunday yagnas. It couldn't be said any better about this great soul. We will dearly miss Vikram Ji.

Sri Narain Sharaf



With profound sadness, this is to inform that Sri Narain Sharaf, one of the founder members of CMWRC, passed away on Jan 31st, 2014. Sri Narain Sharaf had been associated with CMWRC from the time the Mission started in Silver Spring in the late 1980's. He served on the Executive Committee and was Vice President of CMWRC for many years. He attended the first two camps of Puja Sri Gurudev at the

Mount Vernon College. Chinmayam Building was constructed under his able supervision and guidance. He was in charge of building the pedestal for Lord Shiva at the Silver Spring Center. The original building (Kailas Niwas) being old, needed constant maintenance and he was there day or night, to support these maintenance tasks. He also took care of all the engineering works and maintenance tasks of Chinmayam building for many years. He was a true selfless Sevak. We will miss him dearly. Our salutations are to that noble soul who could always be counted on for any help at any time.

Sri Krishna Kumar

It is with deep regret and sadness that we inform you of the passing away yesterday evening (March 19) of Dr. Krishna Kumar at the Johns Hopkins Medical Center in Baltimore, MD. Krishna was the husband of Latha Kumar, and the father of Vandana and Varun (both, Bala Vihar alumni). Professionally, Krishna served as the Benjamin Franklin Professor of Accountancy at the George Washington University School of Business. The family has had a long and close association with CMWRC. Latha has served CMWRC in several capacities over the years, including Bala Vihar teacher and Bala Vihar Director at Chinmaya Somnath in 2012-2013. Several Chinmaya Somnath families will also fondly recall the special seminar on College Education Financing that Krishna presented during the 2012-2013 program year.

Krishna was first afflicted with Myelodysplastic Syndrome (MDS), and then Acute Myeloid Leukemia (AML). He fought long and valiantly against the diseases, undergoing two bone marrow transplants in the process, but succumbed yesterday evening to infection. He will be dearly missed by family and friends.



Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center



Frederick Chapter

Celebrates
Sri Thyagaraja & Sri Purandara Dasa Aradhana
Music Festival

On March 22nd, 2014 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM
at Dr. Sally K. Ride Elementary School,
21301 Seneca Crossing Dr, Germantown, MD 20876



Sri Thyagaraja, is the most celebrated Carnatic Music saint, was a great devotee of Lord Sri Rama. His songs are filled with an intimate devotion to Rama, all through revealing his deep understanding of the tenets of Vedas and Upanishads. His aradhana is celebrated all over the world by singing his songs and paying tribute to the great saint.

Sri Purandara Dasa is rightly called as the Pithamaha of Carnatic music. His songs, written in Kannada, are thousands in number and rich in Vedantic Philosophy.

Program Highlights

- **Pillari Geethams** - Paying tribute to Sri Purandaradasa and Thyagaraja by Balavihar children, Chinmaya Mission Frederick chapter
- **Pancharathna Krithis** by "Ragasudha" - DC Area Pancharatnam Group.
- **Participation by local music teachers:**
Shashi Nanda, Director, Swaralaya School of Music and her students,
Geetha Rangachar of Swara Music Academy and her students,
Lavanya Subramanian of Sangeetha Sharada Music School and her students,
Supraja Srikanth of Malola Vihar music School and her students.
- **Concert by well known musicians Deepa and Divya sisters.**
- **Concert by Sri Komanduri Seshadri garu.**

Admission is free

Coffee, tea, snacks and Lunch will be served.

For more information please contact:

Sukanya Sathya at 301-694-5010/ sukisathya@yahoo.com, Balaji at 301-326-6574/ rbalaji@gmail.com
Aparna Paranadapalli at 240-575-1669/ apsara_us@yahoo.com

Please visit www.frederick.cmwrc.org

CMWRC® presents ...

Vinayapurva Aradhana

A CHYK Jugalbandi Concert

Vinay Mallikaarjun, Carnatic vocal
Purvi Nanavaty, Hindustani vocal
Ajay Ravichandran, Mridangam
Souvik Ghosh, Tabla



Saturday, March 29, 2014 6-8 PM
Chinmayam Auditorium
46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905

Tickets based on Seating Area

\$108, first two rows; \$54, next two rows
\$27, next two rows; \$11 remaining ten rows



Hari OM

Understanding Marriage

A Unique Weekend Retreat, for 25 - 45 Year Olds.

Register Now

Retreat Guided by Acharyas VilasiniJi and VivekJi

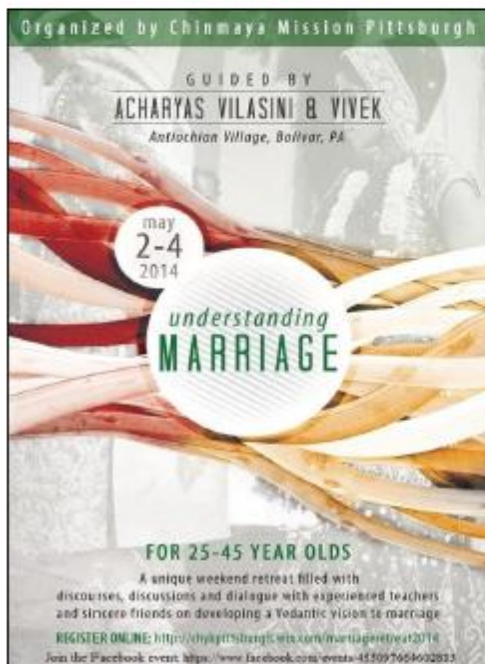


Do you understand marriage?
Does the person next to you understand marriage?
Is this alright?

Please pause to reflect on the amount of inner and outer damage taking place in the hearts of endless individuals, endless families, endless communities, endless societies by a lack of understanding of this enlightening training in Love.

Join us for a unique weekend retreat filled with discourses, discussions and dialogues with experienced teachers and sincere friends on developing a Vedantic vision to marriage.

Register Now: <http://chypittsburgh.wix.com/marriageretreat2014>



Retreat Dates: Friday, May 2 to Sunday, May 4 2014

Location: Antiochian Village Bolivar, PA.

Join the Facebook event:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/455097664602813>

The first 40-50 registrants will receive a hotel room with towel and bed linen services. Because of a limited number of hotel rooms, later registrants may be accommodated in cabin lodging, with 8 individuals of same gender in a single large room.

Please note that the hotel room registrations are quickly getting booked! Hurry to reserve your spot by registering along with payment.

SAVE THE DATE - Chinmaya Somnath Opening

Dear CMWRC Family, Hari Om !!!

We expect the **Chinmaya Somnath** facility, in Chantilly, Virginia, will be ready for occupancy by May. **This is an advance notice to everyone to save the date for the special programs planned for Summer 2014.** We are delighted to inform you that **Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide**, will grace us with His presence, to dedicate the facility and enlighten us with His discourses. We are fortunate that Pujya Guruji will be visiting both **CHINMAYAM** and **CHINMAYA SOMNATH** facilities during his visit.

While full details will follow soon, please save the following dates and plan to attend all programs.

Sunday June 15th (5.30 AM - 2.00 PM): Chinmaya Somnath Consecration Ceremony

- **Dvara/Grahapravesha Puja** to consecrate the Chinmaya Somnath building
- **Ekaadasha Rudra Puja** with Mahanyaasam, Ekaadasha-Rudra Abhisekham, Rudra-Homam and Archana to Lord Shiva

Guru-Purnima, Saturday, July 12th (6.00 PM): Chinmaya Somnath Dedication Ceremony

Pujya Swami Tejomayananda will dedicate the new **Chinmaya Somnath** facility on the auspicious day of Guru Purnima. This will be followed by the inaugural discourse on **Shiva-Sankalpa Suktam** (Divinizing the Mind) by Pujya Swamiji.

July 13 - 16 (7.30 - 8.30 PM): Jnana Yajna, Evening Discourses by Swami Tejomayananda

Pujya Swami Tejomayananda will conduct discourses on the **Shiva-Sankalpa Suktam**. This Vedic text is a praise of the extraordinary mind and a prayer for divinizing its thoughts - *Shiva Sankalpam Astu*. Pujya Guruji's commentary on this text explores its beauty and depth, and concludes on a sweet note of surrendering the mind to the will of Lord Shiva.



CHINMAYA MISSION TRINIDAD

hosts

21ST SHRI CHINMAYA MAHASAMADHI ARADHANA FAMILY CAMP



Chapter 18:
ESSENCE
OF
BHAGAVAD
GITA

By His Holiness,
Pujya Swami Tejomayananda
Head of Chinmaya Mission, Worldwide

July 29th - Aug 3rd, 2014

HYATT REGENCY
TRINIDAD

"Ancient Wisdom
In the
Land of Rhythms"

~ RELAX...REFLECT.....RE-ENERGIZE ~



WELCOME

CHINMAYA MISSION TRINIDAD is blessed and privileged to host the 21st Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Aradhana Family Camp in 2014.

Adults, CHYKS and Bala Vihars can look forward to an engaging schedule filled with yoga, meditation, scriptural study, satsang and discourses by our beloved Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji.

Join Chinmaya Mission Families, from across the globe, travelling to Trinidad, to participate in a week long retreat. Seize the opportunity to immerse yourself in worship and reflection on the teachings of our Hindu Scriptures and of our revered Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda.

What is a Chinmaya Family Camp?

Chinmaya Mission camps are a wonderful way to introduce new Mission members to the beauty and vastness of the Chinmaya Family, to meet like-minded persons and share ideas in the spirit of satsang and teamwork, and to dive into the timeless wisdom of Advaita Vedanta, which teaches universal Oneness.

A family camp is designed to develop and strengthen our faith and spiritual values in multiple ways. One, by bringing families together in a setting in which kids see their parents involved and having fun. Second, is by being with peers who share spiritual values. A third is by seeing other families who value their faith and have integrated it into the family's life.

Of utmost value is the privilege to personally meet and learn from Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, the Head of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide. All are welcome to come and share in the profound spiritual experiences of CM camps and retreats worldwide, to learn, grow, and serve in divine love and light.

What Is Chinmaya Mahasamadhi?

Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Day is a day of homage to H.H. Swami Chinmayananda. August 3rd, 1993 marks the mahasamadhi of our Pujya Gurudev. Annually, the day is recognized as the day when He left His body and merged with Pure Totality. The Mahasamadhi Camp is held once a year at a selected Chinmaya Mission location to commemorate this anniversary.

Visit <https://www.chinmayamahasamadhi.org/> for more information and registration

Chinmaya Somnath Construction Progress

As of March 12, 2014

Chinmaya Somnath is a new facility taking shape in Chantilly Virginia to serve growing needs of CMWRC membership in Fairfax and Loudon counties (Northern VA). As of March 12, 2014,

- Work is progressing at full swing
- Elevator installation has started
- Laying of floor tiles in class rooms and kitchen area has been started
- Painting of walls and ceiling is in progress
- Installation of toilets etc in the rest rooms has started
- Lights and ceiling tiles in the class rooms have been installed
- Enclosure for Trash Bins has been constructed

The estimated date of completion is April 2014.

Attached are some of the pictures as of March 12th:





CHINMAYA MISSION®
WASHINGTON REGIONAL CENTER



CMWRC CAPITAL PROJECTS
a new beginning

Chinmaya Somnath
Our Children, Our Future



Gift Registry is OPEN



**Donate generously towards the purchase
of Chinmaya Somnath furnishings and
equipment**

**To donate, visit CMWRC chapter websites and
click on the DONATE button**

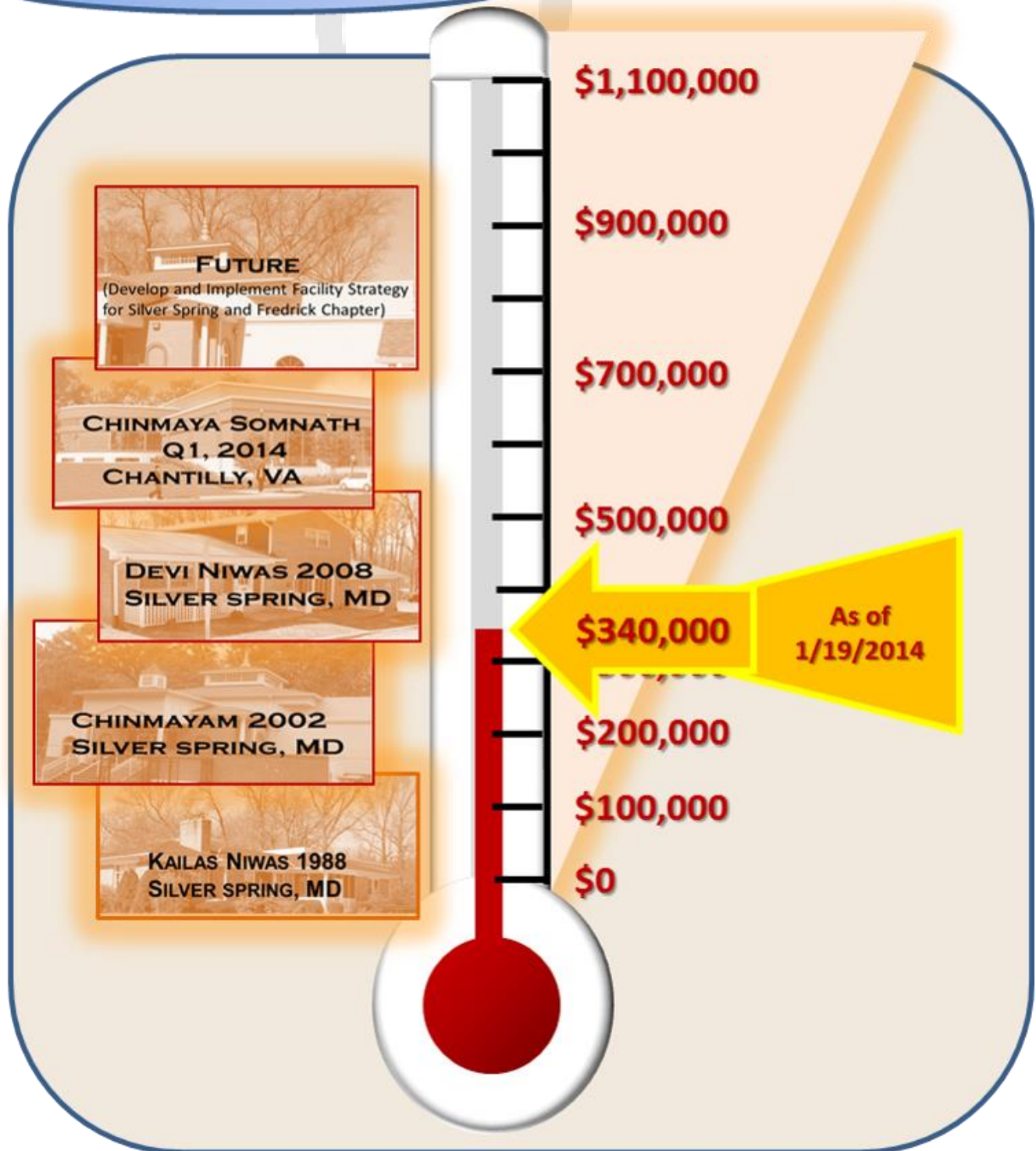
For more information, contact: giftregistry@chinmayadc.org

Chinmaya Somnath
Chinmayam Chapter
Frederick Chapter

<http://www.chinmayasomnath.org/>
<http://www.chinmayadc.org/>
<http://www.chinmaya/frederick.org/>

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

Fundraising Goal: 1.1 Mil





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

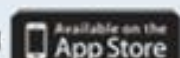
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Maha Shivaratri 2014 Celebration

Event Summary

Ananya Krishnan

Shivanandam Class, Silve Spring

Mahashivratri 2014 Celebrations in Chinmaya Mission

Maha Shivratri is an occasion of prayers and celebrations for Hindus. Shivratri always takes place on the 13th night/14th day of the Magha (February/March) month of the Hindu calendar. There are different legends that explain the significance of Shivratri and why people pray to Lord Shiva on Shivratri, the most well-known being the story of Shiva becoming Neelakantha (the blue throated one). In this story, the Devas and Asuras churn the Kshira Sagara Ocean in their quest for amritam, or the nectar of immortality. Their churning brings up a multitude of objects, both good and bad. Early in their churning, the devas and asuras are horrified as one of the items that comes out of the ocean is some deadly poison. In great fear, the devas and asuras prayed to Lord Shiva to save the three worlds from destruction by the lethal poison. Lord Shiva decided to swallow the poison to prevent it from spreading and destroying all creation. As he swallowed the poison, Lord Shiva held it in his throat and it turned blue. So every year on Shivratri, devotees recall Lord Shiva's selfless act of saving the world and pray to Lord Shiva with devotion and gratitude. Other stories include Shivratri being the day Parvati and Shiva got married, and at midnight exactly, Sadashiv, the formless God took the form of a Shivalinga so we stay up the whole night and do Shivalinga Abhishekam to pray to Lord Sadashiv. It is also an especially auspicious day for women because they pray for their husbands and sons, and unmarried women pray to have an ideal husband

with the qualities of Shiva. Another story describes how a hunter unknowingly showers a Shivalinga with bilwa leaves all through the night and Lord Shiva appears and absolves him of all sins. Similarly every Shivratri, devotees pray to Lord Shiva through the night to erase all their sins.

This year Shivratri fell on February 27, 2014, and in Chinmaya Mission, we celebrated the festival in common time as well as during the evening of Shivratri. In common time, Chinmaya students performed a short skit about the boon Shiva granted Bhasmasura. It shows that Shiva is innocent and loves his devotees and would do anything for them, but you should not abuse that power. Then Chetana Neerchal, the Sundaram teacher for Sunday, came up and showed us a PowerPoint on the importance of Bilwa leaves. Each bilwa leaf has three parts. Chetana aunty explained how the number three is significant in Hinduism. In this case, the three leaves symbolize Shiva's three eyes. His third eye is on his forehead, and opens up when he wants to destroy evil and preserve good. After learning about the bilwa leaves, we did a short activity where we wrote something nice and sweet on a bilwa leaf. All the leaves were collected and given out after common time so we all got a special note with a nice message. Everyone wrote something that would make someone's day, and it revealed the true spirit of Maha Shivratri. Along with these activities, a beautiful portrait of Lord Shiva was displayed in the lobby to greet everyone who entered and remind them of the Lord. There were also three handmade lingas, made by our very own member Debabrata

Das, which was placed in front of the picture of Swami Tapovan Maharaj, Sri Gurudev and in the lobby.

Devotees came back to Chinmaya Mission again the following Thursday, in the early morning, to pour water over the sphatika (crystal) Shivalinga, then meditate in front of it with Shiva Manasa Puja song playing in the background; a beautiful and peaceful way to begin the day. As the evening neared, devotees and volunteers readied the building for the exciting evening head. The altar and portraits were illuminated by many deepas (lamps) and bathed in bouquets of flowers providing a peaceful and sacred atmosphere. It was time for the Sri Rudram chanting. Devotees chanted the different names of the Lord in the form of the Rudram Stotra. The celebration continued with divine chanting by kids from all three Chinmaya centers. The evening's main event arrived. The Lord Jagadeeshwara Pooja was performed. Vishnu Dharmaraj and Hema Balaji offered their devotion to the Lord with a song and a dance. After that, a skit on the twelve jyotirlingas, performed by our very own Bala-Vihar students kept us entertained, all thanks to the director Prabhu Maruvada. When the skit completed, Maha Prasad was distributed to sustain the body, while meditation sustained the mind.

The Hema and Chandresh Bhajan group continued the musical streak with an assortment of wonderful bhajans, which led into the night's next event. At midnight, when everyone was in a divine state of mind, Swamiji brought the day to a culmination by blowing the

conch, which made the sound of an eternal OM. Over 150 devotees attended the ceremonies throughout the day, making Shivratri 2014, one of the best celebrations Chinmaya has hosted. We can't wait until Shivratri comes knocking again next year!





Lord Shiva emerging from ice into spring

A beautiful decoration of Lord Shiva placed in the lobby of Chinmayam welcomed devotees on Maha Shivaratri Day

(Display conceived by Chetana and Nagaraj Neerchal)

Canvas Art

Vaishali Sukumar
Shivam Class, Silver spring Chapter

Rainbow Peacock



It all happened when I was trying to make a sunset scene during indoor recess at school. I had used all the colors that came to my mind to make a sunset scene. It did not look anything like sunset but it looked more like a rainbow than a sunset. I did not want to just draw a rainbow and waste the paper and the time I put in to it. I thought and thought and finally I had an idea!! I quickly made a peacock like head and was surprised to see that it actually looked like an abstract peacock. Everyone loved this idea I had scribbled on paper and that inspired me to paint it on canvas.

When Rangoli Meets Mehendi



Rangoli and Mahendhi are two of my favorite art forms from India. On my first painting on a canvas,I wanted to paint my favorite flower,lotus.I wanted to combine two of my favorite art forms from India to make a bright colorful painting. That is the inspiration behind this colorful abstract lotus.

Shivaratri Word Search

Anusha Krishnan

Shivam Class, Silver Spring

V I U L P O M G A N G A N M X K C B A W
T N B Y B A G Y N C L U R A J S D H N E
A D X V Y Z R Z Z I P X P G X S E H X X
D S P Y Y T J V D Y T I G N B S U V N C
R N U Q H D Y I A X Q S T I H C C M B H
S H I V R A T R I T B B A L Z Q Z T U Z
A Q L I B P N H X T H F C F Z N J L V R
C A Y J B C T A Z V I I H N K L N F I S
W B F R Y O G M C N E J K A V L N S Q M
I H Z D F N J I C A Y H G C Q H F X S Z
Q I G Y V W P Y V T Q C M F B O D M X Z
X S E C E O W I E O U J N K B V S K F G
X H L I F N H M V M W F P I I B S X C U
S E X N U S I M U C B N L K H W G T U W
W K J X U J E S B W B V G Z T T F D O X
N E Q H O R N P F M A C A N A L O L Z P
E U N Q N O C H O L M F K Y R C V Z T J
Q O A R O T D U E K Y P M F E C K F U O
L I D R X T S A H S A L I A K T M V M S
Z G M H V J F Q C Z R Z Q A W S S W D S

FIND THE FOLLOWING WORDS!

- SHIVA
- SHIVRATRI
- PARVATHI
- ABHISHEK
- BILVALEAF
- FASTING
- GANGA
- KAILASH
- LINGAM

Kindness Pays

Dakshesh Nimishe

Kindness is a choice. We can all be either kind or we can all be unkind, selfish if we want to. When you're kind though, you tend to have a happy atmosphere around you because you are happy from within. Everyone will accept you and people will want you around. When kindness pays, it is not always in material payment. Most of the times, when kindness pays it is by making you happy. You get the will to do more kind things. As an added bonus, you are liked by people around you. These random acts of kindness can define you, it can make a person a dynamic selfless leader.

There are lots of different examples of kindness in our daily lives. A couple of years ago, in Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C., 13 patients had kidney failure and needed a kidney transplant. Their 13 corresponding relatives were willing to give their own kidneys to their relatives in need, but unfortunately, their kidneys were not a good match for their relatives. So, what doctors did was they did a kidney "swap", where the kidney from a donor was given to a random patient and that patient's relative donated their kidney to another random patient forming a chain of donors and recipients. When all the kidneys were swapped this way, each patient got one kidney from one of 13 random donors from other families. This kind of selfless service, to give your kidney to a complete stranger is, in my opinion, true kindness. These donors didn't get anything materialistic in return, but what they did get was the knowledge that one of their loved ones who needed a kidney was functioning quite well now.

But if kindness is not used wisely, then it can be a problem. In one of China's dynasties, the prince of

the monarchy felt it would be good if he gave coins to everyone on the streets who needed more money. So, he did just that. Whenever he found a mendicant on the street needing some money to fulfill basic needs, he would hand them some coins, and in return would be met with immense gratitude. However, he did this for so long that eventually even he was forced to live in poverty, and was finally unable to give any more money out. When he lived in poverty, once he stared at the sky and asked god, "Why, God, would I, a prince who gave away all of his money to the poor, now not even be able to have my own money?" In my understanding what is the point of being kind and generous if you don't have the intelligent mind to use it wisely? There is a saying: Give a man a dollar, and you will feed him for a day. Teach the man how to make a dollar and you will feed him for life. The Chinese prince could've instead gave them jobs in his kingdom.

In conclusion, kindness is, essentially, selfless dedicated service. It's giving, in some way, to others around you who need your help. When you give away something, such as food, to those who are starved, you are being very kind. That action was not something you had to do. You could just keep all of your food to yourself. But helping others without you having to do so is true kindness. But when you are kind, it is imperative to be smart about it. In the case of the Chinese prince, he gave away so much money that he had no money for himself! Do you think it would be called kindness if someone kindly helped a thief steal something? Using your mind and hands for kindness are fine, but only with the correct understanding and right intentions.

Chinmayam Bala Vihar Class Summaries – Part I

Students of Sunday AM Class at Silver Spring

Class Summary Keshav Kowtha Sept 15, 2013

On September 15th, the Chinmayam class had its first real class of the year. After the teachers reintroduced themselves and the basic information for the field trip was given, Aniket Uncle explained to students that if we do not know what we want out of the life, we will not gain much from the Bhagavad Geeta. He explained that only a person who wanted to improve themselves will receive any benefit from the Geeta.

So the first task given to the class was to write what goals each student had for the next three to four years. These goals were split into three categories. The first category was personal, the second category was academic or professional, and the third category was spiritual.

The following chart is a list of goals we proceeded to compile as a class for the upcoming three years.

Goals		
Personal Goals	Academic / Professional Goals	Spiritual Goals
Less Procrastination	Good GPA	Meditate Daily for 5- 10 minutes
More Organization	Get Internship	Find ways to apply Geeta to life
Optimization of time	Get into College	Be more thankful for all the things in life
Study Daily		

The class then looked for certain traits that will help make the process of achieving these goals easier.

Personal- these require patience and communication.

Academic/Professional- these need hard work, commitment, and reasonable expectations.

Spiritual- these require presence of mind and removal of procrastination.

Other things we noted were that we need to make time for homework and meditation each day and that Discipline is key to finding that time. Also work that is “due” will never go away, so it is never helpful to procrastinate. And finally, multitasking is never that helpful and it is easier and more efficient to work on one task before moving to the next.

Class Summary - Mahabharata **September 22nd, 2013** **Nirav Shah**

The two primary topics discussed in class were the background of the Mahabharata and the “Seven Steps to Positive Attitudes by D.C. Rao and Acharya Vilasiniji” (as per a handout passed out by Anil Uncle in class).

- I. Question brought up by the teachers: What is the background of the Mahabharata epic?
- 5 Pandavas & the Kauravas
 - Fighting over the kingdom that the Pandavas inherited

C. Dhritarashtra & his wife were blind (Dhritarashtra was born blind but his wife chose to be blind)

- His wife symbolizes ignorance for wanting to be blind

D. Story took place in Hastinapur

E. Dhritarashtra had the 100 bad Kauravas with his blind wife

- Food for thought: Notice how the only bad children Dhritarashtra had was with his blind wife

F. The War between the Pandavas and Kauravas occurred in Kurukshetra

- Krishna, his army, and the Pandavas vs. the Kauravas & their army

- Duryodhana chose the large army over Krishna because he believed he could win through numbers

- Arjuna actually had the opportunity to choose first, and he chose Krishna because he believed in quality over quantity

- Anecdote of the War: Karna gets stung by Parusharama before the war, but he withstands the sting, and Parusharama curses Karna that he will forget everything he knows when he needs it the most. When Karna is fighting Arjuna during the war, the curse activates and Arjuna kills Karna.

G. The Bhagavad Gita

- Krishna was giving Arjuna motivational advice during the war. Arjuna comes to him for help because he is broken down. He is wondering why the war is happening, how it can end, etc. Thus, the Bhagavad Gita was produced based off of this conversation.

- Fun Fact: Oppenheimer used the Bhagavad Gita to make the atomic bomb because he was feeling indifferent towards making the bomb that would fall on Japan

- The 5 Pandavas needed to have a strong mentality because they were so outnumbered

- Initially wars were BETWEEN nations (ex: Ramayana), then wars were WITHIN nations (ex: Mahabharata)

II. Seven Steps to Positive Attitudes by D.C. Rao and Acharya Vilasiniji

A. Why do we need to be fearless?

- Driving Test Example: Students fail the test sometimes because they are fearful before the test

- Being fearless cuts out the obstacles that are in your path to success

B. Why do we need to be enthusiastic?

- Lack Of Enthusiasm = Bad Work, Inefficiency

- Enthusiasm does not mean tempering the disappointment, but adding happiness to what you're doing

Karteek Pakalapati

10/6/13

Today in the class, we have talked about "Arjuna does not want to fight". We have covered the slokas from Chapter I (Arjuna's Grief). As Arjuna stood in front of enemy-lines, he was confused with the purpose of the war and started talking to Krishna on his supporting ideas of not to do the war.

Arjuna wanted victory, but seeing the Kaurava forces and the great warriors standing ready to fight, shattered his hopes and self-confidence and slowly developed the well-known 'Arjuna-disease'. He started his arguments with Krishna against the war between the two factions of the same royal family. He went on saying he would not fight the war, even if he were to win all the three worlds of the universe, for the mere Hastinapura-kingship. Krishna was silent while Arjuna was expressing his grief.

Krishna allowed Arjuna to bring out everything in his mind and exhaust himself. In short, anxiety for the victory in battle demoralized Arjuna and he got himself into 'anxiety-state'.

One of our classmates said that some people in today might be in the same position as Arjuna. We all do face the situation while accomplishing our goals, deviate from it and try to convince ourselves against of not achieving those goals. Day to day with our own situations, we struggle between subjective and objective aspects of the mind as Arjuna went through

Class Summary - Ch 2

10/13/2013

Atman Panigrahi

This class we focused on Chapter Two of the Gita. In this chapter, Arjuna is introducing his inner conflict to Krishna and seeking Krishna's advice.

Although he asks Krishna to "tell [him] decisively" what to do, we discussed various interpretations of Arjuna's request.

A. He asked for advice but in reality, his mind was already made up: in a sense, Arjuna was simply looking for Krishna's approval and confirmation. However, there is merit to the idea that Krishna would not have proceeded with the rest of the Gita unless he knew Arjuna was still indecisive.

Ex: Mom tells you to study for a test. Even though she says it is your choice, there really is no choice; you have to do it. In the same way, even though Arjuna is creating doubt about his potential path of action, it has already been determined.

B. Maybe Arjuna doesn't want consent/confirmation because he respects Krishna so much. He isn't looking for consent, as consent is for equals. Krishna is at a much higher level than Arjuna, and as such Arjuna is hoping for guidance.

After this discussion, we split up into five groups to determine what we personally would advise Arjuna: to fight or not to fight, and how we would convince him to do so.

Group 1: Fight

Reason: The armies will already fight regardless of Arjuna's presence. He might as well help them. Additionally, he doesn't necessarily have to kill his friends and family—he can just imprison them.

Group 2: Fight

Reason: The whole situation is more of a battle between good and bad values. The conflict is greater than Arjuna and his desires and worries. He should fight for the greater good, especially because the terrible actions of the Kauravas that led to the war warrant retaliation.

*In response to this point, we determined that the battle was more of a battle between just/unjust, rather than good/evil.

Group 3: Don't Fight

Reason: The Pandavas can simply find new land and disregard Hastinapur. They should be the "bigger men" and "let go."

Group 4: Fight

Reason: If the Pandavas don't fight, they might die anyways. Therefore, they should give the battle a chance and if it comes to it, die trying. To rebut this point, we made a connection to the previous class, we noted that Arjuna and co. would "lose ego" if they abstained from fighting, and it was necessary to "massage the ego."

Group 5: Fight

Reason: The Pandavas needed to avenge the humiliation of Draupadi. Even the great teachers had compromised their principles, and they needed to be taught a true lesson. On another note, Bhishma and Drona probably faced the same internal conflict that Arjuna did in terms of killing their beloved. However, they had the resolve to fight Arjuna. Arjuna should return that show of respect as a Kshatriya.

After this debate, we moved onto the core of Krishna's initial response. He tells Arjuna that one should not grieve for that which does not deserve it: the wise grieve for neither the living nor the dead, because everyone is always present, in whatever shape/form/state of being. Change will always happen, and the switch from life to death is just one type of change. The soul is constant, and it merely takes new bodies. To make his point more understandable to a simple man like Arjuna, Krishna compares the situation to that of growing up: although a person himself stays the same, he undergoes changes as he turns from a baby to an adolescent to an adult.

Class Summary - Ch 2**Prateek Sayyaparaju****10/20/2013**

We started class with the familiar opening prayer including the new verses for this year. Then we proceeded to a brief recap of last class where we came up with our own advice that we would have given to Arjuna. Afterwards, we read verses 18-48 from the Bhagavad Gita to discover the real advice Krishna gave to Arjuna.

Krishna's answer

- The self is everlasting, only the body will die
 - The self is unmanifest, unthinkable, and unchangeable
 - You should not grieve over this inevitable change because the self will always be the same
- If you stop now, you will forever be dishonored
 - It is your duty as a Kshatriya to fight for the righteous cause and if you don't fight then you will have sinned
 - Dishonor for someone honored like you is worse than death
 - People in the future will recount on this day and think that you were scared to fight
 - o When you fight: If you die, the you will go to "heaven," If you don't die then you have won the war
 - It's a "win-win" situation
 - Analogy to college: If you get into two of your dream schools like Harvard and Yale, you won't really be worried too much about which one you go to so you should make the decision to go to college.

The class then proceeded to drift into a discussion about college. Anil uncle told us there were three possibilities and related it to the war: you don't apply (like not fighting), you apply and you get in (like fighting and winning the war), or you apply and you don't get in but get in somewhere else which is just as good (you win either way, like fighting and dying). We also discussed how Arjuna's current state is defined by paralysis. As a class, we decided that inaction can never be an option as action is crucial to survival. After evaluating Krishna's advice, the class concluded that Arjuna should fight.

Memorable Quotes

- "Paralysis is never an option. That's why we have the fight or flight response. If there's a tiger in front of you and you freeze, then you're ... gone
- o "Someone told me that they didn't get into University of Maryland when they really wanted to. I asked them why? They said it was because they never applied. WELL DUHH!"
- o "Being Indian is a detriment to getting into college."
- o "The grammar's a little weird, but I agree with Krishna."

Isha Darbari**10/27/13**

This class we first reviewed Chapter 2 of the Gita and then went on to Chapter 3. As a recap, Chapter 2 focuses Krishna's advice to Arjuna. He explains that Arjuna should fight for the righteous cause because to not do his duty as a Kshatriya would be dishonorable, something that would be far worse than death for someone who is already so honored. Krishna also explains that death is inevitable, so it is better to take action and die than to not do anything and die anyways.

In Chapter 3, Swami Chinmayananda explains that a large part of Vedantic philosophy is the questions the students ask that may sometimes contradict with teachers. Accordingly, the class discussed questions that came up when reading the previous chapter, such as "What is the path of knowledge that Krishna keeps mentioning?" or "Yeah, that's a lot of advice, but no instructions; how do you actually use it?" We then compared these to Arjuna's own questions which reflected the confusion he felt, like when to follow the path of action versus the path of knowledge.

To answer these questions, we first defined the two paths. We came to the consensus that the Path of Knowledge is the contemplation of what the higher is, or spiritual knowledge. The Path of Action is acting without attachment to the fruits of action. However, this path is much easier said than

done. One must maintain a goal, because without a goal, there is no directed action, which leads to inaction and lack of learning. However, one cannot be so attached that it leads to inaction or an obsession with the result. Shankaracharya explains that one must pursue action and renunciation serially, or sequentially.

Swami Chinmayananda points out that it is human instinct to act based on one's ego and egocentric desires, which leads to fleeting happiness and vasanas (inexhaustible mental impressions). The way out of this cycle is the path of Right-Action, such as doing God-dedicated selfless actions in a spirit of devotion. For example, work (Karma) pursued for a long enough period purifies the heart and brings about a single-pointedness of mind. A lack of focus and goal can lead to illusion, as can confusion such as Arjuna's uncertainty. This can cause one to lose contact with reality and live in a dream world. It is therefore important to remember Krishna's advice to Arjuna: "Let not thy attachment be toward inaction."

Class Summary

Chapter 3

Karthik Nathan

11/3/13

Today in class, we discussed several lessons from chapter 3. We started by referring back to last week's discussion on Path of Knowledge versus Path of Action. We discussed how it is easier to go down the path of action, but it may have bad consequences. For example, most people act before they think, and it's much easier to act without thinking. If you contemplate all of the consequences, you will end up wasting time. If time allows though, it is always better to follow the path of knowledge, as you can think about what will happen if you go through with your actions, instead of blindly following the path of action, without realizing where you are going.

We then read Chapter 3 verses 8-10, and 17-21. We discussed Action without anything in mind, and the importance of goals. Goals set purpose to our activities, and some examples of this

are brahamarpanam, studying, and going to work. We eat to sustain our bodies, so that we may fulfill our duties. We study to do well in school, so we can go to a good college, so we can become better, more knowledgeable people. We go to work to support our families, and to leave our mark in this world.

We then read the commentary after verses 21 and 22. At this point, we went back to the point of Path of Action versus Path of Knowledge. Along with the previous points, understanding purpose is important, so that you don't act blindly. Aniket Uncle gave us the example of his daughter doing the 2 times table. She was able to complete it successfully, (Path of Action), but didn't understand what it meant, (Path of Knowledge). He stated that sometimes you just learn things, but don't grasp the deeper meaning.

We discussed what Krishna meant in verses 21 and 22. Krishna wanted Arjuna to follow him, as if he was a role model. We discussed how everyone is a role model to someone else.

There was a discussion on eating for goals (brahamarpanam). Eating is not always for fulfilling goals, sometimes we eat for the pleasure of eating. We compared granola to yummy food, as in what we would prefer. If there was just granola to sustain us, we should still be fine, but we aren't. We want to have the pleasure of eating foods we enjoy. Basically, if you have the choice, eat what you want, but if just one choice is there, you should still be fine (to sustain yourself).

We discussed selfless work, and how it gives you inner poise and a feeling transcending your ego. Going around the room, people discussed their volunteer experience, and whether they felt it was important, and if they felt inner poise. One student talked about how he volunteered at a hospital, and how helping people gave him a such a feeling. Another student talked about how she tutors, and how it not only feels good to teach, but to know that now the pupil will fully understand the concepts reviewed in the session. We concluded that you volunteer to feel as if you are part of something bigger than yourself. With the examples, volunteering at a hospital makes you part of the bigger picture of helping people, and tutoring helps the student understand the concepts.

Class Summary - Ch 3**Abir Muhuri****Bala Vihar-Chinmayam****Sunday, November 10th, 2013**

Chapter III, verse 30 began last Sunday's discussion. We defined renunciation of action as giving up the wrong motives and replacing them with "constant feelings of the Lord." Although this is a sensible and ideal definition, to apply this to our daily lives required further reading. To achieve this renunciation of action, the requisites of "without hope" and "without ego" need to be simultaneously followed and not misinterpreted. Not dwelling on hope doesn't connote having a lack of motivation, but rather, not dwelling on the unborn future. Creating expectations is already a path of inherent disappointment. Without Ego, on the other hand, simply means that the shadow of the past is dead and shouldn't be treated a source of fear or limitation. Simply put, one MUSN'T give up on actions. Redirect the purpose to fit the present, not the future, nor the past.

In further specifying the voice of the chapter III, we came to a consensus that it was obviously Krishna. But who is he? We identify his perspective as "me" and "me" being the "self." The self is almost a disposal for the fruits of actions, such that our perception of "me" doesn't get weighed down by the ups and downs of success and failure. We agreed that instead of expecting fruits for the ego, do your best, have the right goal, but more importantly, learn from the process. A common example of this is going into Mondays (oh yes, how dreadful are Mondays). Does complaining, crying or stressing chase our circumstances away? No. Instead, jump into the week with composure, and a positive outlook, accepting anything and everything that comes your way.

Although common agreements were held together from the text, a confusion was generated in both me and other classmates. Although we are told not to be attach to future anxieties and past failures, do we really do anything WITHOUT expectations? If so, how do we live completely in the present? The answer is that you want to have a goal. With hope (not the previous definition) and inspiration, you go

thorough the PROCESS TOWARDS the goal and not just simply chasing after the goal as a DESTINATION. A goal as a cause for the process of self-improvement is the ideal.

A somewhat separate topic with which we concluded class was Enjoyment. Krishna says to enjoy and by no means condones it. He simply says to not attack stigma or "likes and dislikes" to these objects. One must enjoy but not be attached. In order to these, the intellect must guard the mind. This may seem vague, larger than life and very impractical in our daily impulsive lives. The truth is, we ALL have preferences. So, the key is to not let the mind be perturbed if the preferences are not met. Thus although we create *vasanas* (tendencies), we can also exhaust them. To contextualize preferences, simply change your mindset towards the circumstances. You can't change the circumstances, but you can ALWAYS change your mindset and attitude.

Class Summary**11/24/2013****Anuj Mehta - Ch 4**

Today we began the class by reading from Chapter 4 of the Gita. In this chapter, Krishna is providing his credentials in giving this advice about the war. Krishna says that he imparted the knowledge of the Vedas to the sun, in the very beginning. To this, Arjuna asks how it is possible for Krishna to have passed this knowledge if his birth was so much later than that of the sun. Krishna responds by saying that they both have had many births; the difference is that he remembers each of them whereas Arjuna does not.

The chapter of the Gita led us to the discussion of reincarnation in which the class posed various interpretations of reincarnation. Students posed various theories such as each new life being an upgrade or down grade from the basic life of an animal to the powerful life of a human being, some decided reincarnation was a theory meant to give people a reason to live a noble life, and some decided it was simply an unproven theory. Reincarnation may

also occur in one lifetime, from the different stages of our life.

We ended by viewing Swami Chinmayananda's explanation to reincarnation, which is that no organism on the planet simply appeared. Each life is one of its own; we live it, and then move on with no recollection of the past in our next life. We are all products of our experiences.

Class Summary

Vishnu Dharmaraj

1/12/14

Today in class, we were given time to write the answers to the following questions:

What is Hinduism?

What is Vedanta?

After 15 or 20 minutes, our answers were collected and we discussed the two questions in depth. We started by defining Hinduism as a way of life and a set of values that one should follow. Some values that were mentioned were detachment, devotion, equanimity, and doing one's dharma. However, most of us agreed that Hinduism is a less dogmatic way of life and a more unorganized religion, where one has to make an attempt to practice these values. Aniket Uncle then asked the purpose of practicing Hinduism. The idea of moksha, the release from the cycle of rebirth, was brought up. We defined moksha as the ideal goal for a Hindu, where one is liberated from the materialistic world and is close to God. We reasoned that if one leads a good life, he/she attains moksha.

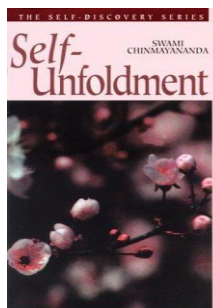
Aniket Uncle then explained the literal meaning of Vedanta. Vedanta can be split in to two parts, veda and anta. The former refers to the 4 Vedas and the latter means "end". Vedanta is the study of the philosophical descriptions that are found at the end of the Vedas. These particular philosophical descriptions are called the Upanishads. The set of values that we, as Hindus, practice comes from the Upanishads. Then, Aniket Uncle told the class to refer back to Self-Unfoldment, a book by Swami Chinmayananda that had been previously

taught in Chinmayam (sophomores have not gone through this book). In this book Swami Chinmayananda discusses the 3 pillars/values of Hinduism that came from the Upanishads. They are self-control, truth, and non-violence. If one possesses these three qualities he/she attains freedom, which is defined by Swami Chinmayananda as the complete clarity of thought. We are not able to have this clarity of thought because of our materialistic desires, which is why one of the intermediate steps to attaining freedom is to reduce the number of desires that we have.

Finally, we read from verse 33 in the fourth chapter to the end. We discussed verse 34 in depth. This verse states that "by long prostration, by question, and service, the 'wise' who have realized the Truth will instruct you in (that) Knowledge." Aniket Uncle then asked the class about the purpose of prostration. We concluded that it was a sign of humility and a metaphorical surrender to the knowledge of the teacher. After all, one can't learn without being humble and accepting the guidance of his/her teacher. Aniket Uncle then highlighted the fact that the student is supposed to question his/her teacher. This is something that is unique to Hinduism and is a sign of respect rather than disdain.

“Self-Unfoldment” Summaries

Chapter 11: Vasanas & Chapter 12: Gunas



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.

Chapter 11 – Vasanas

The exhaustion of vasanas must be the main scheme in rendering our minds calm and happy. If we are driven by vasanas, whether they are coarse or noble, we are not free.

Vasanas are our unmanifested tendencies. Once these tendencies manifest, they become our personality, which drives our activities in the world. At the thought level, when vasanas manifest, they become desires. When desires are manifested they become our actions. Thus, one can say that in the gross manifest form, our vasanas create our very lives.

When vasanas are exhausted, then there are no desires, then no desire prompted actions. When we reach desireless state, we will awaken to the pure plane of awareness; we realize our identity with the supreme reality, our own higher self. Our goal then becomes exhaustion of our vasanas and no accumulation of new vasanas.

Ego Centered Actions

Vasanas are created during the contacts of our body, mind and intellect (BMI) equipment with the fields of its play in the world. Since vasanas are created when we transact with the world, they can only be exhausted by

our contacts with the world. Hiding in a isolated cave in Himalayas will not exhaust our vasanas. We will only suffer from the suppression of urges.

When we act in the world with egocentric desires, the activities leave a footprint in our mind and propel us to repeat the action again and again.

An act by itself does not leave an impression, it leaves one when the act is coupled or driven by egocentric desire (or selfishness). When egocentric desires prompt us towards an object again and again we form an attachment with that object. Thus all our attachments to the world are created by our continuous thoughts.

Attachment (sanga) leads to desire (kama) to possess or protect. When a desire is thwarted, it leads to anger (krodha). In anger our logic gets clouded and that leads to delusion (moha). In delusion we see things that are not there. We make up stories in our mind. Delusion leads to loss of memory – our perceptions false, our estimates vague and our judgments wrong. Loss of memory leads to loss of discrimination (buddhi) of what is right and what is wrong. With loss of discrimination, we court disaster. Thus, what starts as a simple attachment, can lead us to a great misery.

In contrast, when we act with a higher purpose (an ideal, a higher nobler goal), we do not create impressions in our minds. Thus no new vasanas are created. In addition, they also become the source for exhausting our vasanas.

Gita Chapter 3, Verse 19: Therefore, do you always without attachment perform action that should be done, for by performing action without attachment man reaches the supreme.

Karma Yoga

The secret of purging our vasanas is Karma Yoga, the path of action. If we fix our vision high (higher, nobler goal, ideal), and in a spirit of surrender and dedication, and act in the outer world, the mind becomes purified and the vasanas automatically exhaust themselves. The path of action is a way of life that anyone can easily adopt.

The essential message is “Work. Don’t stop working. Continue working, but change the mental attitude. “ Instead of working only for personal gratification, continue working as vigorously as before, but selflessly.

Gita advises us to direct our energies wisely in appropriate fields of activity. The main precaution is: Act without attachment, that is, without egocentric desires.

Satisfaction and Contentment are two wheels of our life chariot. We strive to earn and save, hoard and spend. However, we only get fleeting moments of satisfaction or contentment. But, when we dedicate ourselves to selfless work, we gain an ever increasing amount of inner peace and deep satisfying calm. When such a calm, single-pointed mind is brought to the seat of meditation, the meditator gains the experience of transcending his limited ego. A karma yogi is one who has transcended his ego, no longer has to work to train his mind, but he works as a fulfillment of his self-realization. The work by such a person becomes a blessing for the mankind.

Fruits of Action

The Gita further illuminates the path of Karma Yoga: Your right is to work only, but never to its fruits. Let not

the fruit of action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction (Gita 2:47).

What the verse teaches is (1) for us to be concerned with work itself; (2) but not the results of our work. We should not have particular result in mind. We should always know that our work will have a result, because future is past modified in the present; and (3) not to delude ourselves that giving up fruits of action means to actually giving up action.

A Path for Everyone

The physically inclined people live at the level of their sense organs. They are happy when their organs are properly fed and sorrowful when they are starved. They have little capacity to enjoy emotional or intellectual satisfaction.

Emotionally inclined people are those who are prepared to sacrifice their physical needs to experience joys of the mind. While a physically inclined person may find satisfaction in an object, an emotionally inclined person would get sacrifice physical satisfaction by sharing it with or giving it away to another person she loves.

Intellectually inclined people readily sacrifice physical and emotional needs for the sake of an ideal they cherish. By doing so, they enjoy a far superior state of contentment and joy than the above two types.

Since vasanas drive thoughts, we can effect a change in us by (a) reducing the quantity of thoughts; (b) improving the quality of our thoughts; and (c) changing the direction of thought flow. Three yogas prescribed for this purpose:

Karma Yoga, the path of action, is best suited to those who are active, and have the temperament of intellectual and emotional orientation. This path allows us to reduce the quantity of thoughts.

Bhakti Yoga is the path of devotion, best suited to emotionally tempered people. It helps us to improve the quality of our thoughts. Singing hymns, prayers or reading the lives of other devotees helps improve the quality of the thoughts.

Jnana Yoga is the path of knowledge, best suited to those who are predominantly intellectual. This path helps direct the flow of our thoughts. They are motivated to know by pursuing questions such as “Who am I?” “Where did I come from?” “What happens after death?”

These yogas cater to the demands and personalities of entire cross-sections of humanity. They are as relevant today as they were when our ancient rishis prescribed them.

Chapter 12 - Gunas

We are essentially divine, but our thoughts veil the divinity in us. The texture of our thoughts give rise to the variety of human beings we see in the world.

These thought textures are called Gunas:

Sattva: thoughts that are pure and lead to noble acts

Rajas: thoughts that are passionate and agitated and lead to actions for satisfying the egocentric desires.

Tamas: thoughts that are dull resulting in inaction or procrastination.

These gunas in various permutations, determine an individual's personality. Any of these gunas may predominate in us during each part of any given day. Before we fully awaken in the morning, tamasika texture may predominate as we are sluggish and sleepy. During a busy day at the office, we may be predominantly rajasik. While intently listening to a Gita discourse, sattvik thoughts may permeate our mind.

Sattva

It is a state of mind filled with equanimity, serenity and creative poise, and therefore best suited for contemplation of the Higher. Sattva binds by attachment to happiness and knowledge (Gita XIV.6). Even though it gives the appearance of no activity, sattva is characterized by maximum activity.

Rajas

It is the condition of the mind when it is agitated, stormy, ambitious, riddled with overpowering desires, bursting with emotions, and restless with desire prompted activities. Once a rajasik person fulfills a desire, the next one is not far behind, robbing him of peace and joy. Always anxious to have more or is fearing to lose what he has gained, he is whipped onward from action to action.

Tamas

It is the state of mind in complete inertia, filled with indolence and carelessness; it describes a condition that reveals no consistency of purpose, amiability of emotions, or nobility in actions. In tamas, one's ability to discriminate between right and wrong is veiled. It binds us to our lower nature by providing us with endless misconceptions about the true purpose of life, which leads to a life of indolence and heedlessness.

The Caste System

The four gradations in the caste system of India are nothing but varying degrees of combination of these thought textures. The historic misrepresentation and misuse of those gradations comprise what is generally known as the caste system today.

The castes were originally determined neither by ancestry or by vocation, but by a person's inner temperament. The Brahmin (thinker) is predominantly sattvika, exhibiting only minimal traces of tamas and only a little rajas. Priests, ministers, great thinkers and subtle poets belong in this category. The Ksatriya (leader) class exhibit mostly rajasika qualities with a little of sattva and tama mixed in. They are characterized by prowess, dexterity, splendor, generosity and lordliness. National and local leaders, community activists fall into this category. The Vaisya (trader) class has less of sattva and rajas and more of tamas. In this category are traders and business people. The last is Sudra (laborer) with predominantly tamas, with a little of rajas and traces of sattva. The people in this category work on simple and menial tasks and are motivated largely by direction given by others.

Anyone could move from one category to another by transforming themselves. A true Brahmin is not one born to Brahmin parents and performs priestly services in a temple. A true Brahmin is one who is highly evolved in mind and intellect, has studied and assimilated the

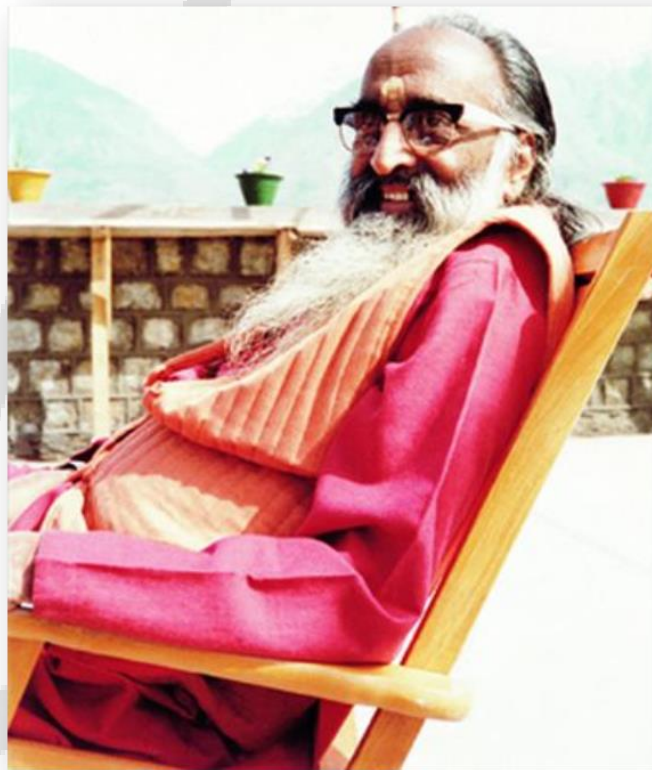
scriptural teachings, and daily practices the noble qualities that he has learned. Such a person can be found in any country, religion or community.

A tamasika person has to put a lot effort and time to shake off his lethargy and inertia, and burst into activity, before he can even dream of reaching the sattvika state. A rajasika person is already active, but the activity is directed towards acquiring and enjoying the sense objects of the world. This person has to redirect his energy towards self-purification instead of self-gratification to reach sattva state. The sattvika person is at the portals of truth. She needs only to contemplate and meditate on the supreme self.

Sattvika person has desires, but a little prayer and meditation can remove them. A rajasika person can

remove desires by following the paths that exhaust vasanas. For a tamasika person, time and patience are needed to himself out of inertia.

The three gunas are expression of our ignorance of our pure Self. One who has crossed the three gunas, has transcended the mind-intellect equipment and is no longer affected by any mental condition. He lives in the infinite joy of the Self. Every steady and balanced, such a Self-realized person lives beyond the storms of the mind, ever peaceful and blissful.



Invisible Presence

Chetana Neerchal

It was time for the low light in sky, marking the entry of shadows. I noticed a deer nibbling on the lawn. I busied myself with my dinner in the car, as I waited for Siri to return from her class. When I looked out the car window again, there was one more deer, and in a few minutes still another. All silently busy with their dinner, not looking up. As I observed them in the silence of my car, another one came on to the scene. I wondered if they had already been there and I had not noticed them before and this time deliberately looked to see if there were any more of them. Sure enough, one more, on the far side of the lawn, its brown grey barely visible against the brown grey of winter lingering in the background. Like that truth, invisible, ever present, dawning in the mind in a flash. Ever present, just invisible, until I look for it with a single mind.

Words That Inspires Me – “Divine Self”

Anu Prabhala

[Editor's Note: During common time period recently, Puiya Swami Dheerananda asked the congregation to contemplate on a word or words that inspire them.]

The words that inspire me every day are: “Divine Self”

4, 9, 22, 9, 14, 5, 19, 5, 12, 6 = 105

It's all in you, and it always has been. Just shrouded over the years with layers of egotistic fluff, meaningless noise that you come to realize after all does not matter. It's a matter of recognizing it, acknowledging it, and practicing it. The ability to be pure love is within you, seated as the Divine Self. I find it refreshing to wake up every day, sometimes jittery, but always optimistic at discovering yet another layer of this Divine Self that I thought never existed. At practicing compassion and kindness in the form of a noble thought or a good deed. Or simply be able to teach my son about the difference between pear and pair. I thought I had it in me to be a grumpy troll upon waking up, not a patient mom...especially before the first cup of tea. The divine self teaches me that the trek towards the better and change is always possible. Incidentally, the alphabets in Divine Self totals to 105, it's what makes you try harder to reach that goal just beyond a 100. 105 is not just attainable, but it beckons you every day. So journey into it, within yourself, to be the best mom, friend, wife, daughter, and daughter in law, whatever that role is that you want to assume.

PS: Each alphabet is assigned a numeric value corresponding to the order in which it appears in the alphabet trail. For example, a = 1, b=2, etc. This is based on a lecture by Swami Dheerananda during common time in January 2014.



My Favorite Gita Verse: Chapter 5-Verse 18

Sudhakar Kalakonda

One of my favorite shlokas in Bhagavad Gita is Verse 18 in Chapter 5.

vidya-vinaya-sampanne

brahmane gavi hastini

suni caiva sva-pake ca

panditah sama-darsinah

The simple but powerful words in this verse mean the following: *Vidya= Knowledge; Vinaya= Humility; Sampanne= Wealthy ; Brahmane= Person who is wealthy because of knowledge and humility; Gavi= Cow; Hastini= Elephant; Suni= Dog; Caiva= Also; Svapaka= Person who eats dog meat; Panditah= Person who Analyze, Synthesize and apply to himself; Sama-darsinah = Equal vision.*

In this shloka Bhagavan Sri Krishna emphasizes equal vision of Pundit in spite of different forms of life and conveys the message that every man's goal in life is to achieve equanimity like Pundit and experience the bliss through equal vision. Our true nature is "Sat - Chit - Ananda" (Existence - Knowledge -Bliss). Since we forgot our true nature we are searching for permanent happiness in external things and beings.

Pundit is the one who has equal vision in five different forms of life i.e. write those forms. His focus is on the essence or common factor in all life forms in-spite of different appearances. The life principle that is common among all living beings which is dynamic and not static in nature. That life principle is consciousness or GOD. The moment we focus on

common factor, instantaneously we become equipoised. If our attention is on appearances, it brings agitation and becomes obstacle for our ultimate goal i.e. bliss.

Pundit's mind is mostly satwic. Satwic mind alone can see the equanimity. Word Sat represents Truth and Wic represents knowledge. In addition, Pundits also know if they hold Rajasic and Tamasic gunas, they become sick because "sic" is an integral part of these two words. Since Pundits hold-on to the Truth steadfastly, they develop Trust to themselves and to others as well. If they forget to adhere to truth they become rust instead. Word Trust reminds us to follow principle of truth; if we remove T, the word rust remains.

The life application of focusing on "common factor" is daily life is a challenging and uphill task. Following example illustrate our agony.

To add the fraction : $1/2 + 1/3 + 2/3$, is difficult. But, if we change the same fractions to another form: $3/6 + 2/6 + 4/6$, it becomes easy to add.

Without finding the common denominator it is not possible to add. Once we know the common denominator, we can either add or subtract depending upon the symbol. During our elementary mathematics classes teachers and elders have taught us how to find the common factor to solve this mathematic problem. Similarly, through gurus' teachings and individual efforts (or sadhanas) we can seek to identify the common factor in our lives.

The realized masters focus on common factor which is the "life principle" in all the living beings.

Instead of carrying the load of collected information in our minds, it is better to connect the common factor i.e. Consciousness or Lord. As the saying “Collect to connect if not Correct” goes, if we are not able to connect the common factor we have to correct the process. I learned to focus on the common factor through my teachers like Swami Chinmayananda, and Swami Dheerananda.

This shloka brought back my memories of the popular songs composed and sung by Sri Annamacharya, a great philosopher, composer and devotee of Lord Venkateswara from Andhra Pradesh whom I idolized early in my childhood. One of his popular compositions include,

brahmamokaTE para brahmamokaTE
brahmamokaTE para brahmamokaTE

tandanAna Ahi tandanAna purE tandanAna bhALa
tandanAna bhaLA

brahmamokaTE para brahmamokaTE
brahmamokaTE para brahmamokaTE

Sri Annamacharya in his songs emphasized common factors among living beings such as sleep, earth, sunlight, life principle etc. These masters possess equal vision and following the principle of equal vision gives instantaneous bliss in their life.

Let us develop equanimity by focusing on common factor to experience the bliss like pundits’ and share our knowledge with others to experience the same.

The Making of Maha Shivaratri Display

“Lord Shiva Emerging From Ice into Spring”

Chetana and Nagaraj Neerchal



"And how shall we adorn thee tonight?"

Chetana Neerchal

A “shining austerity” seemed the ideal theme for the Maha Shivaratri decorations. An image of Shiva surrounded by lights reflected in mirrors would remind us of his serenity in the snow capped heights, magnificent in his unadorned majesty.

Ideas and partnerships

Now, what image of Shiva should be used? Perhaps a linga? But that would be difficult to make. Perhaps,

a photograph. While my ideas were taking shape, I asked my husband Nagaraj to construct a set of mirrors. He agreed - my eternal, enthusiastic partner and advisor for all creative projects.

In the meantime, Andrea Beri, the wonderful coordinator for Maha Shivaratri, had casually mentioned the lingas to Rajashree Das and found out that her husband Debabtata Das had already crafted a linga from wood for their daughter for last year's Maha Shivaratri pooja! She shared a photograph - the linga looked perfect. Debabtata agreed to make two more lingas! These lingas were placed in the foyer and in Gurudev's and in Tapovan Maharaj's

altars. No mirrors were used in this decor because I realized that a reflection of lingas would be a mirror image and not an identical image. I wanted an identical image to be reflected in the mirror, not a transposed image.

Playing with mirrors

By the time Andrea had talked to Rajashree, the photo of Shiva reflecting in mirrors had taken root in my mind – I simply had to bring this delightful thought to fruition. I had found a beautiful picture of Shiva on the internet and was wondering how to reflect it in a mirror behind it and decided to use a steel gray floating frame. Perhaps two photographs could be placed back to back in the floating frame, so that Shiva would be reflected in the mirror? Then, the solution came in a flash – use a transparency. Within a few seconds another thought followed – indeed, the transparency was the only solution; back to back pictures would not work because the OM and serpent on Shiva's neck would be transposed in the mirror image.

The picture stand

Nagaraj created a picture stand from sea-green styrofoam. While it was functionally complete, he was unhappy with the way it looked and wanted to cover its ugliness with gift paper. But, I had another plan in mind, due to an accidental find of green and transparent glass pebbles at the local art supplies store.

The collage

The Thursday before Maha Shivaratri, I arrived at the Mission. Several volunteers and of course Andrea were already there, and the place was bright with brass lamps and copper kalashas that many loving volunteers had polished to their pristine shine. There was a black velvet cloth on the foyer table --- something I had not planned for at all. Ready, waiting to be used as the base for my austere, shining Shiva

collage, which I began assembling. The books used to support the mirrors were covered with a green silk sari that Andrea stumbled upon in the puja room, giving an appearance of Mandakini flowing around Shiva. Nagaraj's "ugly" Styrofoam picture-stand for Shiva's photo became sparkling green marble steps strewn with glass pebbles, white flowers and candles.

The ending – coincidental or planned?

Austere, shining Shiva. He wanted nothing, yet that silent splendor challenged us to chisel a striking sculpture from our thoughts. In the flow of coincidences, it seemed we became instruments to carve the image he had already planned. Our desires to craft a perfect collage channeled into a single thought and created Shiva emerging from ice into spring.

The Assembly

Nagaraj Neerchal

When Chetana described her concept of the Shiva altar for the Shivaratri celebration involving reflections I was immediately enamored. It seemed as though she was describing Shiva in meditation, sitting in the icy chamber of a glacier with reflecting walls. I had read about a hotel in Iceland that is carved entirely out of ice, and had seen its pictures online. I do recall from one of my elementary physics class that mirrors placed in an angle will produce multiple reflections. More acute the angle, larger the number of reflections produced. But the mirrors had to be propped up in an angle with minimal support from outside to avoid any distracting protrusions. The other challenge was to place the beautiful Shiva picture (printed as a transparency and mounted in a glass-sandwich type of frame), in the middle of the mirror assembly using only the bottom part of the frame as support so that the entire picture would be reflected in the mirrors without any obstruction. Michaels Arts and Craft store carried mirrors

of various shapes and sizes. So, my first thought was to glue mirrors to a trifold poster board and I discussed this with a Michaels salesperson. He showed me a couple of varieties of glue. They carried 12" x 20" mirrors that have the perfect measurement for the flaps of a trifold poster board. After extensive browsing of various options, we decided to use styrofoam blocks to build the base for the picture. We returned with four mirrors, a poster board, styrofoam blocks of various shapes and sizes, and a couple of types of glue. I had anticipated that the base assembly would be difficult because of the heavy glass frame. But, gluing rectangular styrofoam blocks on another large flat block, with a gap to match the exact width of the photo frame, did the trick. But assembling the mirrors was not working out. The poster board was not strong enough to support the mirrors, and more importantly was making the entire structure look too cluttered. So, I thought I would use hinges. Of course, hinges have to be glued. This meant a trip to the hardware shop—usually this meant Home Depot. Since the base assembly was easy, I was procrastinating a bit more than usual on the mirror assembly. One day, we were driving past Clarksville's ACE hardware shop. I thought-- why not pick up the hinges from here. I wanted lightweight hinges—so I would look for aluminum perhaps? I walked in and asked someone about hinges. I told her that I needed hinges for gluing two mirrors so that I could open and close them like a book. She said, "I know exactly what you mean. I do this all the time to make a display for my antique jewelry collection." But she said gluing the hinges to the back of the mirror is a bad idea. She told me the simple trick of using duct tape, and even showed me exactly what tape to use and how to do it. I brought the supplies home and the assembly was ready in five minutes!

For a hobbyist, the assembly of an art project is a delightful challenge. Often, it takes several tries, several trials and errors, and the final product is like one's own child—a labor of love. The ease with which the Shiva altar got assembled was remarkable. The creative process taking place in a purposeful and deliberate pace, with various problems being presented and solved as they arose, was as if a final set of instructions had been handed out even before I set to work - the assembler watching the assembly being assembled.

BrahmaarpaNam

Acharya Sadananda

One of my nieces asked me recently in the Facebook the meaning of the sloka – brahmArpaNam brahma haviH... ,a sloka from Geeta that is routinely chanted before taking meals. Here is some explanation based on my understanding. First, this is 24th sloka in the 4th chapter of Geeta. In this sloka, Krishna uses an example that a gRihastha or householder was familiar at that time. It is related to the daily homam or nithyagnihotra that a householder performs or supposed to perform. Hence the sloka is immediately relevant to a gRihastha mumukshu – householder how is seeking for liberation. In this sloka the essence of whole Vedanta is packed. In essence, it says everything is Brahman and there is nothing other than Brahman. It is also a condensation of the Vedic statements – neha naanaasti kinchana, there is no plurality whatsoever here, and sarvam khalu idam brahma, all this (that exists) is indeed nothing but Brahman only. The complete sloka is:

brahmArpaNam brahma haviH,

**bramhAgnou brahmaNAhutam |
brahaiva tena gantavyam**

brahmakarma samAdhinA | |

Using the homam example, Krishna indicates that everything is nothing but Brahman. Brahma arpaNam, meaning the arpaNam or the ladle that is used to pour ghee into the fire is Brahman. Brahma haviH, all the items used for homam (haviH) are Brahman. Brahma agniH, the holy fire of homam is Brahman. BrahmaNaahutam – the one who is doing the homam (karthA) is Brahman. Brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahma karma samAdhinA – the karmaphlam or the fruit or the result of this homam is also Brahman. Thus, the kartaa, the doer, the karma, the action, kriya, the performance,

the kaaraka, the instruments involved in the action and the ingredients that go into action, the field in which the action is being performed and the karmaphalam the results of the action – everything is Brahman only. Thus Krishna declares, in essence, there is nothing other than Brahman. From the point of jignaasu or the seeker of knowledge, this sloka becomes an instructional statement that need to be contemplated upon and assimilated as a fact. From the point of jnaani, the sloka is the statement of his understanding or statement of a fact that is recognized or understood.

In the vishusahasranaamaavali, it says karaNam, kaaraNam, kartaa.. the instruments of action, karaNam, the cause for action, kaaraNam (material as well as motivating causes for action) and the actor, kartaa, are all nothing but Lord Vishnu only. Everything that can be known or need to be known in the past, present and future is nothing but Lord Vishnu only. In the purusha suuktam it says - purushayE vedagam sarvam, yat bhUtam yascha bhayvam - whatever that is in the past or will be in the future that was known or can be known are all nothing but Purusha only. In essence, there is nothing other than Lord Vishnu or there is nothing other than Brahman as the Krishna says in the above sloka. There is no plurality whatsoever as reality, since essence of everything is nothing but Brahman echoing the scriptural statement – aitat atmyam idagam sarvam, tat satyam, sa atmaa – where the essence of everything that is experienced or perceived or known is nothing but pure existence that you are. That sat, pure existence which is of the nature of consciousness and is limitless, itself appears as many, says Chandogya Upanishad.

Now let us understand this sloka more. In understanding or interpreting the sloka the principle of samanaadhikaraNam – that is principle of equal weightage for the words– was applied both by Bhagavan Ramanuja and Shankara. This principle is also used in the

interpretation of the Ch. Up. tat tvam asi statement by both. However, Bhagavan Ramanuja and Bhagavatpaada Shankara apply the principle of the samanAdhikaraNam differently.

There are four ways that the samanadhikaraNa can be applied as discussed by Shankara. When two words are used with the same case and relating each other, then we apply the principle of samanAdhikaraNa. In this sloka, let us take the first statement, arpaNam = Brahman. It says, the ladle is equal to Brahman. Brahman means limitless or infinite. Scripture says pure consciousness is Brahman – prajnanam brahma. Hence existence-consciousness-limitless – sat-chit-ananda is the nature of Brahman as declared by Tai. Up. In this sloka Krishana says – the arpanam – this small inert ladle is Brahman, which is infinite-existence-consciousness. At the outset, the statement makes no sense since attributes of the ladles do not match anywhere the nature of Brahman. Hence direct meaning or vAchyArtha does not make any sense. Since this is a scriptural statement, one has to look for an implied meaning to make some sense out of this equation, arpaNam=Brahman. Hence, the application of the principle of samanAdhikaraNa is required to unravel this equation. The four types of samAnAdhikaraNa are:

1. EkativE samAnAdhikaraNam,
2. vishEShaNavishEShyAbhyAm samAnAdhikaraNam.
3. upAsanAbhyAm samAnAdhikaraNam.
4. bhAdAbhyam SamAnAdhikaraNam

1. EkativE SamAnAdhikaraNam – that is two words are used with equal emphasis, both designating the same entity. For example when we chant the Vishnusahara nAmAvali – each word used there indicates the same entity, Lord Vishnu and each word has equal emphasis. Many words are used that provide the different attributive content of Lord Vishnu. For example the naamavali starts with a) viswam b) vishnuH, etc. The very first word, viswam means the entire universe of names and forms. The second word vishnuH means the one who pervades this entire universe of names and forms. Both are independently as well as together indicate the same entity, Lord Vishnu. Implication is also viswam =

vishnuH, the world of names and forms is indeed VishnuH, which is also the essence of the Brahmarpanam sloka. To appreciate the viswaruupa Iswara we need to understand the Geeta Ch. 11. We cannot apply this aspect of samAnAdhikarana in accounting the arpanam = brahman, since arpanam is limited, inert entity while Brahman is infinite existence-consciousness.

2. Visheshana VisheShAbhyam samAnAdhikaraNam. In this case the two words are used, of which one is an attribute or visheShANa and the other is the locus for the attribute, visheShya. For example when we say blue lotus, the blueness and the lotus-ness are distinctly separate but used in conjunction to indicate only one object, with one as attribute to the other. The lotus is qualified by blueness while blue itself is not lotus and is distinct from lotus. Thus, even if the attributes are inseparable, they are distinctly different.

As a side note, some non-advaitins interpret the sat –chit – ananda as attributes of Brahman. Such an assertion can be easily rejected on the ground that attributes are different from the locus of those attributes. For example if sat or existence is an attribute then its locas must be distinct from the attributive existence. Only thing that is distinct from existence is non-existence. Hence the statement reduces to saying that existence is an attribute to non-existence, which is self-contradictory. Hence sat-chit-ananda is/are swarUpa lakshana of Brahman because as Shankara says anantatvAt, or it is limitless or infinite. Infinite cannot have attributes and even the word infinite is only negation of all finites. Hence the scripture says Brahman is nirguNa or is attributeless. Hence from this point also arpaNam = Brahman cannot be valid since any finite entity cannot be infinite. Here, we may note that Bhagavan Ramanuja uses this samAnAdhikaraNa to explain the equation **tvam = tat** in the **tat tvam asi** statement. For this he considers that Brahman is same as all pervading Vishnu with infinite auspicious attributes and he is an object of our worship. The jiivas and the jagat form His internal constituents like organs of the body. All the five fundamental differences exist within while He pervades everything as Vishnu as total controller as well as weilder of His maayaa. Hence tvam in the equation has to be

understood as one of the inseparable attribute or visheshana of the the all-pervading Bhagavan. Hence the philosophy is also called vishiShTa advaita, advaita from the point of totality but visheShaNaS include all the jivas and the jagat along with infinite auspicious attributes that He posses. This is the viswarUpa darshanam that Arjuna is shown in Ch. 11 of Geeta. Ramanuja interprets the nirguNa as absence of all dosha guNaS or bad qualities. Shankara interprets the **tat tvam asi** statement using bhaaga tyaaga lakshana that is discussed below.

3. UpAsnAbhyAm samAnAdhikaraNam: Here the two words are equated for the sake of upaasana. When we go to temple and pray to the lord in the form of idol there, we invoke Lord Vishnu into that idol for the sake of worship. Lord is all pervading with infinite auspicious attributes while the idol is made of, say granite stone which is inert and finite. However, when we say looking at the idol that this is Lord Vishnu, we are equating the finite, inert idol with infinite conscous Vishnu. The identity is only valid for upaasana. When Krishna says arpaNam used in the nityaagnihomam is Brahman, as per Ramanuja the statement is to be interpreted using this samAnAdhikaraNam. Hence arpanam in the homan as to be invoked as Lord Vishnu for upasana or prayer. Hence the sloka implies all the factors that go into homan have to be looked upon reverentially as Bhagavat swaruupam only. In Hindu worship, as part of our upaasana, we request the Lord to come into this idol – **asmin bimbe AvAhayAmi** – and even name the Lord whom we want to come – thus we say **asmin bimbe shree mahA vishnum AvAhayAmi** or **Shree mahA ganapatim AvAhayAmi**. Of course, after the pujua over, we do the visarjanam as we request the busy Lord to leave that idol. Interestingly, Bhagavan Ramanuja is using two differnet aspects of samAnAdhikaraNam in interpreting **tat tam asi** statement and Brahmarpanam slokas.

4. bAdhAyAm SamanAdhikaraNam also called **apavade samanAdhikAraNam**. In the equation of **tat tvam asi**, we negate the contradictory qualifications of **tat** and **tvam** and equate only the essence. The negated components must be insignificant or apparent and not really real or arising from ignorance. Hence in the equation I am and Brahman, we need to reject all the superficial attributes

of the jiiva – such as BMI, and equate only the essence which is nothing but existence-consciousness-happiness. Hence all the assumed limitations of myself are rejected as not my limitations but belong to BMI. Similarly, all the attibutes of Iswara such as **sarvjnatvam, sarva shaktitvam, sarva vyaapakatvam** – omnisicent, ompotent and omnipresent – are rejected and only the essence sat-chit-ananda or satyam-jnanam-anantam aspects are equated. It is similar to the statement – **soyam devadattaH** – this is that devadatta. That Devadatta, who was cute looking fun-loving boy that we knew long time ago when we were children, is this Devadatta who is now the sanyAsi giving Vedanta talks. There is only one Devadatta and in understading we are intellectually rejecting all the contradictory qualifications of this Devadatta and that Devadatta and equating only the essence. The knowledge is immediate, if we understand the essence of that equation. Similarly **tat tvam asi** statement need to be understood by rejecting intellectually the contradictory qualificaitons of jiiva and Iswara and equate only the essence. Hence Changogya clearly says – **aitadAtmyam idagam sarva tat satyam** – the essence of every object that you see – is nothing but pure existence which was there before creation and which itself now appears with various names and forms as objects. Hence all names and forms are like gold appearing as various ornaments, each with its own attributes. Gold became many – but that many is only name-sake (and utlity-sake) many, but the essence is nothing but gold only. Scripure itself gives this example before it teaches the **tat tvam asi** statement. Hence equation has to involve bhaaga tyaagam or rejection of apparent contradicotry qualificaitons of both jiiva-jagat-Iswara and only equate the essence that which ultimately counts. What counts for rings, bangles, bracelets is not their names and other attributes that differ but their essence which is nothing but gold.

Applying the same samanAdhikaraNa, the brahmaarpan sloka also is interpreted when we say this arpaNam is Brahman. The contradictory qualifications here are one is finite and inert with some utility while the other is infinite, consious and useless (infinite cannot be used, only finite things are used. Infinte cannot be a transactional reality). If we reject all that what remains is only pure existence since arpanam exists or is, and

Brahmna is also existence. Existant aspect is only expressed in the inert forms while both existence and consciousness aspects are expressed in the beings with subtle bodies while the happiness part is only expressed fully only in jaanis who understand the statement – **ayam aatmaa brahma**. Thus as per vedanta, the whole universe consisting of both subject-object divisions is nothing but Brahman only – from which they came, by which it is sustained and into which they dissolve, **yatOvA imAni bhUtAni jAyante, yena jAtAni jlvanti, yat prayam tyabhisham visanti – tat vijnaasaswa tat brahmeti**. From which the whole universe came, by which it is sustained and into which they dissolve – is Brahman. From which all the gold arnaments came, by which it is sustained into which they go back is the material cause for all the gold ornaments. Brahmaarpanam brahma haviH .. etc as both karthaa, karma, kriya, kaaraNa and kriya phala all are nothing but Brahman. Brahman being infiniteness cannot exclude anything. This sloka says everything that is there in the transactonal world is nothing Brahmna only but with different names, forms and utilties,etc.

This sloka is chanted specially before meals to recognize that 1) taking food is also a yagna and therefore has to be done with reverential attitude and 2) Food is also being offered as part of yagna to the Lord inside and finally 3) from the point of decriminative intellect, meditation/recognition that everything eater as well as what is being eaten is Brahman only. Hence a realized upanisadic sage screams out in ecstasy – aham annam aham annam aham annam – aham annaadou aham annaadou aham annaadou – I am the food, I am the food I am the food – I am the eater of the food, I am the eater of the food, I am the eater of the food- brahmaarpaNam brahma haviH.

Jnana Yoga and Self Realization - XVIII

Acharya Sadananda

Obstacles for spiritual progress - II

In these series, we are now discussing the obstacles to our spiritual progress. Krishna says in Gita- 4th Ch. Verse 40 that there are three main obstacles for spiritual progress: - 1. avidya (ignorance) 2. ashraaddhaa (lack of faith) 3. samshaya (doubts about the goal and the means). Shraddhaa or faith is most essential for knowledge as Krishna says shraddhaavan labhate jnaanam. The major obstacle for spiritual knowledge is therefore the lack of shraddhaa that Krishna points out again and again. We discussed in the last post that mahaavaakyas are not descriptive type but introduction type in the sense that as in any introduction, it introduces true-self that is directly and immediately present. In the introductory statements, the knowledge should be direct and immediate like introducing to someone that I am so and so. However, in the case of mahaavaakya, the knowledge does not take place immediately for many, because of the lack of faith in the pramAna or in the Vedanta mahaavaakya that shows the identity of the self and the universal self. It is like introducing a street beggar with torn clothes as a maharaja of a country. It is hard believe that one who is begging for bits and pieces of happiness on the streets of sense objects is the very source of infinite happiness. (Interestingly in North India a swami is addressed as maharaj, unless he proves himself otherwise, while in South India a swami is taken as a vagabond unless he proves himself to be otherwise). The essential problem is the seeker of happiness itself is the source of happiness.

This aspect is discussed below taking the missing 10th-man story as an example, where the knowledge is also direct and immediate, since the words are also of introduction type. That is, the missing 10th is directly and immediately present, when the teacher says – you are the 10th man – tat tvam asi.

Lack of Shraddhaa that I am the missing 10th-man: In the missing 10th-man story also, the seeker himself is the sought. As long as the seeker and the sought are one and the same, any amount of seeking will end up in failure, since in the very seeking one has already resolved that the sought is not there where the seeker is. This very conclusion that the 10th man is not here and is lost hinders the discovery of the 10th man, since one is looking outside for the missing 10th man. 10th man is neither inside the seeker nor outside the seeker, but he is the very seeker himself. Discovery of the 10th man is hindered because of the following reasons:

One is mechanically receiving the message from a teacher. His mind is not abiding in the knowledge given by the teaching that you are the 10th man that you are seeking. In this case, the seeker is busily absorbed in searching for the 10th man outside, thinking that he must be somewhere out-there. That very conclusion will hinder the discovery of the 10th man. He is objectifying the 10th man as someone else out there. Thus, he has preconceived notions about the missing 10th man, that he is not anywhere around here, but somewhere out there, outside the range of one's vision. For, if he is inside the range of vision, he would have seen the 10th man. The seeker is not paying attention to the teaching because his mind is preoccupied in looking for the 10th man outside as an entity different from himself. In addition, he is very much engulfed in sorrow for not finding the 10th man, and concluding that he is lost. Thus, he is busy objectifying the 10th man and trying to locate him somewhere. His very desire to locate the 10th man out in front as recognizable entity separate from the nine that he is seeing right now, prevents him to see himself as the 10th man.

Similarly, everyone is searching for happiness, whether he is a religious person or not, whether he is a Vedantin or not. Yet everyone understands that happiness does not come from any object since the same object does

not give happiness to everybody. Yet, we go after the sense objects starting from a hot cup of coffee/tea in the morning. One tries to accumulate wealth so that he can be happy while the other tries to get rid of so that he can be happy. We go after wealth for our security, then, we are worried about the security of the wealth that we have acquired.

In the case of the self-knowledge, we are busily engaged in other pursuits that hopefully give us happiness that we seek. These are listed as the four-fold bondages; Possessions, Obligations, Relations and Transactions (PORT – the term coined by Swami Paramarthanandaji). Hence Krishna says- asaktiH anabhiShvangaH putradaara gRihaadiShu| - for the knowledge to take place the mind should be free from any longing attachments towards the sense-objects or beings. Broadly there are two types of dependents; those that depend on us for their happiness and those on whom we depend for our happiness. Attachments (or aversions) arise due to our likes and dislikes for objects and beings. There is confusion between attachment and love. Any dependence on things and beings for our happiness is attachment, while love is we let (not demand) others to depend on us for their happiness. However if we are happy making others to depend on us, then again it leads to attachments, since our happiness depends on other's dependence. A child depends on its parents for its security and happiness. However the growth of the child involves making him an independent person.

In essence, we have to get rid of all the attachments that result in raaga and dweShas or likes and dislikes, towards those that give pleasures and pains (shukam and duHkham) what Krishna calls as pair of opposites or dvandvaaH. Krishna gives examples - hot and cold (sItam and uShNam) at the body level, pleasure and pain (sukham and duHkham) at mind level and praise and insult (mAnam and apamAnam or avamAnam) at the intellect level. Because these distract the mind, they contribute to the lack of shraddhaa or faith in the teaching of mahaavaakya. At the BMI level these are difficult to avoid. At the same time we should be vigilant not to get carried away by them. Hence scripture says it is a razor-edge path – kshurasya dhaaraa. However, they are all temporary and Krishna says – aagamaa paayino

anityaaH, tan tithikshava bhaarata| - they come and go, dictated by prArabda. Therefore, considering them impermanent and cannot be avoided, we have to forbear them, and keep the mind not to get carried away by those temporary inconveniences. None can avoid them, since praarabda brings in what is destined – that includes all ups and downs in life. For this, we have to develop an attitude of karma yoga and prasaada bhuddi or acceptance without any reaction, which helps in developing the samatvam or equanimity – samatvam yogam uchyate – says Krishna. With titiksha or forbearance, one develops a frame of mind which can develop shraddhaa needed for knowledge.

Looking for Brahman out there or objectification of Brahman and/or a statement that I have studied Vedanta or have knowledge of Vedanta but now I want to experience Brahman - indicate that one has not understood the truth of Brahman. Here I am reminded of JK's statement – it is not an understanding as an understanding as a thought, but an understanding as an understanding as a fact. Until then, mahaavaakya is not understood. A similar statement is made by a student of Kena Up.

In the missing 10th man story, the one, who has desire to know the 10th man, has already negated, in counting all the nine people, as they are not the missing 10th-man. To him, who is desperately looking for the missing 10th man, the teacher has already assured that the 10th man exists; and hence the search for the 10th man is not going to be futile. In counting the 9 people, one has already negated that they are not the 10th man. Thus no. 1 man means he is not the dashamaH or the 10th man. No. 2 is not the 10th man. Thus by neti, neti or not No. 1, not No. 2, etc., he has already negated all the men that are countable, and there is still a hunger as well as anxiety to know the whereabouts of the 10th man. Interestingly, in the very counting of the nine and in dismissing that they are not the tenth, the 10th man is inherent in the counting, since he is the counter present in all the counting of nine-men. That which is there inherently in all the counting, yet different from the counted ones, is the very counter that the counter missed to count. The 10th man is inherently present in all the negation of the first, second, .. ninth man as not

the 10th. When the teacher says you are the missing 10th man, the knowledge can be direct and immediate as in the introductory statement, where counter encounters the missing man directly and immediately, provided he pays attention to the teaching and stops looking for the 10th man elsewhere where he can never find him. I want to know the 10th man and I am the only one left after excluding the nine persons as not the 10th. After excluding the nine, there is no one else left out there in the world of plurality to exclude from the list as not the 10th. He has done his saadhana by rejecting, neti, neti, of all the countable ones, namely 1 to 9 persons as na dashamaH – as not the 10th person. He is mentally distressed also indicative of samsaara. Fortunately or unfortunately he happened to be the 10th man. When the teacher introduces the 10th man as you are the 10th man, words are direct and definitely produce doubtless knowledge since all other possibilities for being 10th are already eliminated. He does not have to look for the 10th man any more or meditate to experience the 10th man.

Does he have to do Nidhidhyaasana that I am the 10th man to discover the 10th man, since the scriptures says so? He does not have to say now I know where the 10th man is and I need to sit down and do meditation on the 10th man to recognize him. The knowledge is immediate and direct when the teacher introduces the 10th man by pointing to the person as you are the missing 10th person. In the discovery of the 10th man one also recognizes that 10th man was never lost at any time in the past when everybody thought that he was last. The problem for not finding 10th man is only because that everybody objectifying the 10th man as something different from the subject who is doing the counting. Hence the fundamental problem in the lack of recognition is the very objectification of the subject.

In the same way, the Vedantic student, after discarding everything else as neti neti, not this, not this, what is left is only the existing-conscious entity, the self that he is that he forgot to recognize. In the very rejection of not this, the sought is also there as the subject that is doing the negation. In essence, he does not have to negate anything to discover oneself, since he is there in the very negating process. Hence, negation of all that come under

the category of this is only to drop the incorrect identification of the subject, I, with object, this. I cannot really negate this as this is needed for living in this transactional world, whether I live as a parivrajaka or wondering monk or as a gRihastha or house holder. In essence, having this is not a real problem but taking this as myself is the problem. Hence thinking that I should drop all this including the mind will only result in giving more reality to this than what this deserves. Therefore negation of this has to be understood as not dismissing this physically, but cognitively understanding that this that I see has no absolute reality or understanding that all this is mithyaa. Taking this as myself arose due to ignorance of myself and therefore negations here cannot be done without appropriate knowledge of myself. Hence another misunderstanding that needs to be disposed is, negation of this does not necessarily result in knowing myself completely. The negation only leads to knowing that I am a subject and not an object, this. Knowing myself fully and completely involves knowing that I am full and complete by myself and there is nothing other than myself – essentially aham brhaamasmi or I am infinite. This has to be understood cognitively using the BMI only.

Self-realization is not an experience that I am longing for. Brahman being infinite cannot but be experienced in every experience. Experience itself is finite since it involves the triad, experiencer, experienced and experiencing. Hence self-realization is not an experience but recognition that I am the very substratum for all experiences. It is again a cognitive understanding that I am there in all and all in me – sarva bhuutastam aatmaanam sarva bhuutaanica aatmani. That understanding has to be an understanding as a fact than as a thought.

Hence, I do not have to wait to experience Brahman, but clearly understand that the self that I am is the self in all. This understanding comes from the mahaavakyas of Vedanta. The mahavakayas are nothing but the statement of identity of the self in me is self in all. These statements of identity are provided by Vedanta and my faith or shraddhaa in those statements as valid provides me to cognitively recognize that as a fact. In that sense only Vedanta is pamANa or means of knowledge.

Experientially, however, I never see oneness of myself with the world that have rejected as I am not this. Only cognitively, I have an understanding the oneness that pervades the subject I and the object, this, in spite of seeing and cognizing the differences in all these appearances.

Hence intense faith in the mahavakyas namely prajnaanam brahma, consciousness is Brahman, tat tvam asi, you are that, aham brahmaasmi, I am infiniteness, and aham attam brahma, the self that I am is the self in all, are true. In addition, I should have clear understanding that I do not need anything other than this knowledge for myself realization. For the knowledge gained to become firm or abiding in spite of unavoidable transactions with the world of plurality where raaga and dveshaas at transactional level are unavoidable even for a jnaani, nidhidhyaasana on the knowledge gained is required, as prescribed by the scriptures- nidhidhyaasitavyaH. Nidhidhyaasana is not going to give me a new knowledge, but helps me to internalize the self-knowledge gained through shravana and manana. In that sense only parivrAjakatvam or sanyaasa, etc., are helpful for abiding in the knowledge already gained so that the mind can get established in the knowledge by reducing PORT, possessions, obligations, relations and transactions to a bare minimum required for the BMI to continue its course of existence that is destined.

Shivatratri Crossword - Solution

+	+	+	+	P	+	+	G	A	N	G	A	+	M	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	A	+	+	N	+	+	+	+	A	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	R	+	+	I	+	+	+	G	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	V	+	+	T	+	+	N	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	A	+	+	S	+	I	+	+	+	+	+	+
S	H	I	V	R	A	T	R	I	T	+	+	A	L	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	H	+	+	F	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	A	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	I	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	B	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
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+	S	+	+	+	+	+	+	I	+	+	+	+	+	+	B	+	+	+	+
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+	E	+	+	+	S	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	L	+	+	+	+	+	+
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+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	A	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	F	H	S	A	L	I	A	K	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

(Over, Down, Direction)

ABHISHEK (2, 8, S)

BILILEAF (15, 12, SW)

FASTING (14, 7, NW)

GANGA (8, 1, E)

KAILASH (15, 19, W)

LINGAM (14, 6, N)

PARVATHI (5, 1, SE)

SHIVA (6, 14, NE)

SHIVRATRI (1, 6, E)