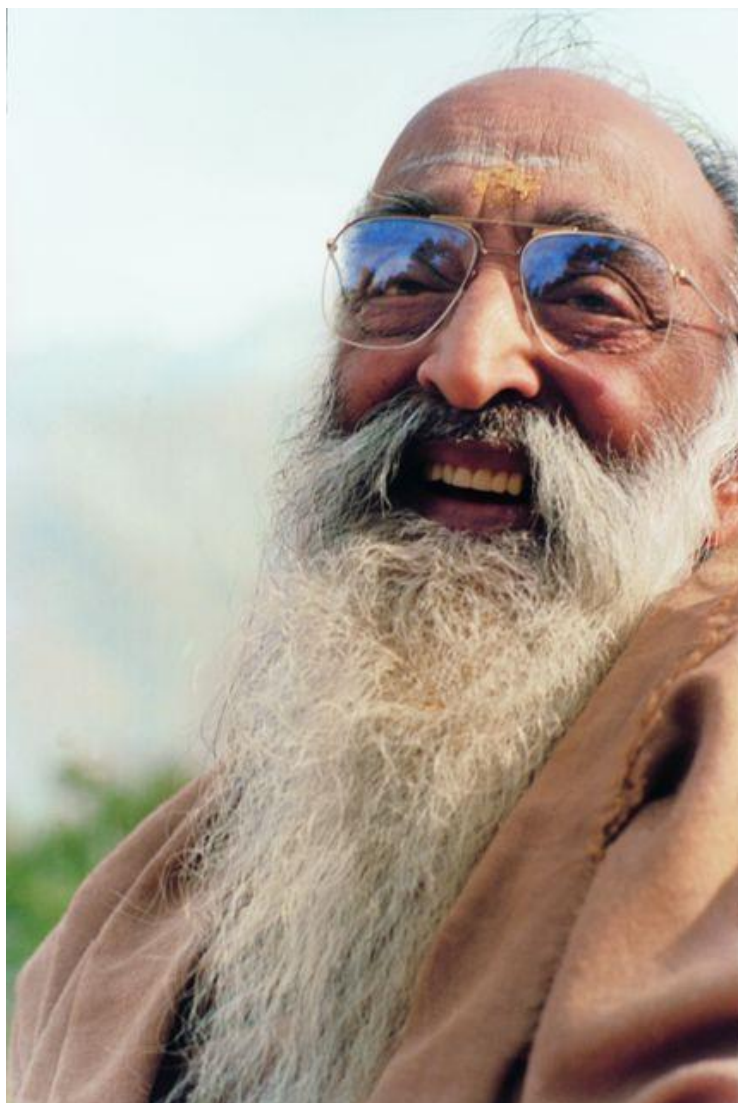


Chinmaya Smrithi



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

Volume 25, Number 5, November 20, 2015



CELEBRATING BIRTH CENTENARY OF SWAMI CHINMAYANANDA

Calendar and Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

- Annual Fund Raiser Banquet, Saturday Dec 5 at Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
- Gita Jayanti and Tapovanam Jayanti, Sat/Sun Dec 19/20 at Chinmayam and Chinmaya Somnath
- Gita Jnana Yajna by Pujya Swami Dheeranandaji, Chapter 2 Verses 54-72, Sat-Tue, December 26-29 at Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA
- No Bala Vihar session Dec 26-27, Jan 2-3
- New Year Day Puja at Chinmayam and Chinmaya Somnath, Friday, Jan 1 2016

Study Groups

- Please contact Sri Kishore Bala ji by email at kishorebk@hotmail.com, if you are interested in forming or learning more about study groups.

Bookstore/Library

- Browse Books, CDs, DVDs, etc. online at www.chinmayapublications.com. Contact Sevak to order (Vijay Singh at Chinmayam, Subbarao Kari at Chinmaya Somnath and Bijay Dash at Frederick)

Next Edition of Chinmaya Smrithi

- Articles for the next regular bi-monthly edition - January 2016, are due by December 31, 2015
- Email submissions to smrithi-editor@chinmayadc.org.
- Browse Past editions at www.chinmayadc.org/Smrithi/Smrithi.htm

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 DC – Chantilly VA Chapter website www.chinmayasomnath.org

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

Washington DC – Richmond VA Chapter website www.chinmayarichmond.org

Please Note

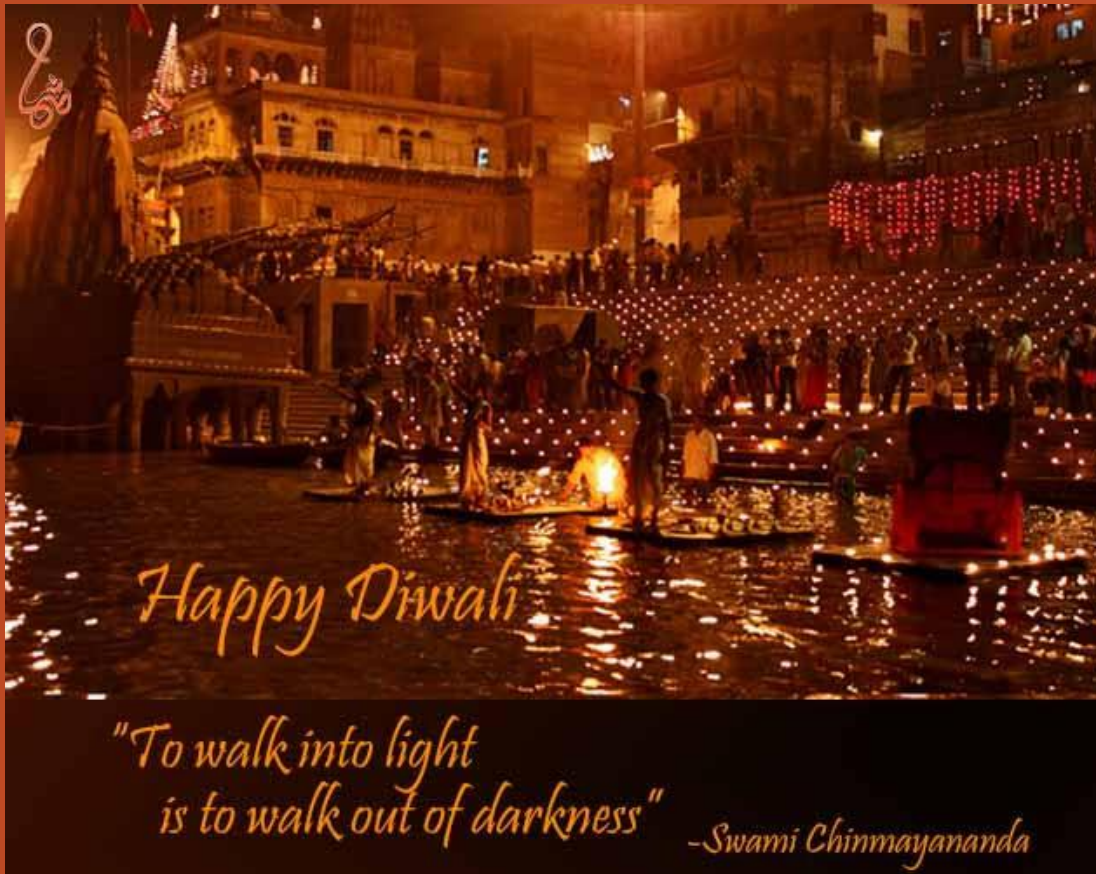
The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of Chinmaya Mission or CMWRC

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BV students – Nishant Carr, Siri Neerchal, Ananya Krishnan, Priya Tandon, Megha Karthikeyan, Usha Konduri, Thara Konduri, & Vishnu Dharmaraj,

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



Blessed Self!

Jai Jai Jagadeeshwara!

Salutations!

Diwali Greetings!

Let Us Celebrate Diwali

by Revering The One Light of Life

Shining in All Life Forms!

Hari Om! Hari Om!

Unto Sri Gurudev!

Swami Dheerananda

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From the Desk of the President

Hari Om:

As we come to the end of 2015, it is my pleasure to provide a short update on the progress at Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC).

Under the guidance of Swami Dheerananda and supported by CMWRC Acharyas, office bearers and sevaks, the Mission continues to grow as an organization, in the Washington Metro area. We have over 750 Member families, with around 1100 children, attending the weekend Bala Vihar and Adult programs. These programs are made possible by over 100 Bala Vihar teachers, and dozens of sevaks who work tirelessly throughout the year. We are fortunate to have two new Acharyas (Acharya Rahulji and Priyaji) who moved to our area and will be conducting classes at Chinmaya Somnath. Study groups are growing with steady participation. During this special year marking Sri Gurudev's Birth Centenary Celebrations, several initiatives/programs have already been launched and many more are in the planning stages. Over 1500 people watched the special movie 'On A Quest' highlighting Swami Chinmayananda's life and work, through the multiple screenings. The 2015 Geeta Chanting competition, saw 450 children and adults learn to chant Chapter 15, Purushottama Yoga. Pujya Swamiji's December Yajnas on Chapter 2 (Sthita Prajna Lakshana) in Dec 2014 and upcoming December 2015 highlight the glories of Sri Gurudev.

The Mission, Vision and legacy of Sri Gurudev has touched millions worldwide with knowledge of oneness that is the core of Vedanta. There are 300 mission centers worldwide and growing, under the guidance of Pujya Swami Tejomayananda and

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT), the apex body of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide. We are happy to share a short film that gives a snapshot of the work undertaken by CCMT to help support, sustain and accomplish Pujya Gurudev's vision and work.

Chinmaya Somnath, our new facility in Chantilly, VA, has hosted multiple events in the first twelve months since inauguration by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda. The membership has grown to over 400 families, with over 600 children enrolled in three sessions, including the newly started Saturday morning session. The facility, tirelessly supported by the rental and facilities team, has been rented by many organizations.

At Chinmayam, there has been renovation in providing a new concrete walkway between Chinmayam and Kailash Niwas, new LED based stage lighting, removal of old hazardous concrete staircase and building a new staircase. Basement in Chinmayam has also been painted, along with other modernization efforts. Membership is steady at 250-300 families attending the three weekend sessions. The Annapurna program is fully functional and serves all three sessions with wholesome meals, supported by sponsorship.

At the Frederick chapter, there has been similar growth and energy since the move from Walkesville to Urbana location.

Under the guidance of Pujya Swami Dheerananda, CMWRC conducted successful Summer Camps at all three Chapters this past year. This popular program

hosted over 200 children during the summer months.

There were multiple spiritual programs and retreats for all ages over the past year, including Yajnas/Camps by Swami Vimalananda, Swami Swaroopananda, Swami Dheerananda, Acharya Sadanandaji, and Acharya Vivekji, Marriage Retreat by Acharya Vilasiniji and Vivekji, CHYK retreat conducted by Acharya Rahulji and Acharya Priyaji, and the weeklong junior-CHYK retreat by Acharya Vivekji.

We are grateful for a strong financial year and we seek your continued generous support for our growing Mission needs. The 2014 audited financials and previous financials are available on our website (<http://www.chinmayadc.org/Financials/Financials.htm>). We thank everyone for your support, tireless seva and monetary contributions that have helped support the Mission of our Pujya Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda. We look forward to your presence at the Annual Fund-raiser program, on Saturday, December 5th at Chinmaya Somnath.

Acharya Anant Sarma
President, CMWRC

News

Swamiji's Health

Swamiji had been suffering from lower back pain for several months resulting in some restrictions to his daily activities. A recent MRI has confirmed that he has a herniated disc in lower spine (between L5 and S1), causing severe compression and irritation to the nerves that serve his lower legs.

Under advice from his medical team, Swamiji elected to undergo a surgical procedure to help manage this condition. This procedure was conducted on 11/10/2015 at the Georgetown University Hospital in Washington D.C.

With Sri Gurudev's blessings, the surgery was successful - it went smoothly, according to plan and everything got done a couple of hours earlier than planned. Swamiji is pleased with the results. He is in great spirits, as always!

A team of long time Chinmaya Mission members that include doctors, are providing care as Swamiji recovers.

Swami Swaroopananda Visit and 'Sadhana Diwas'

Sadhana Diwas, August 3rd, was observed at Chinmayam and Chinmaya Somnath, centered around Guru Paduka Puja. Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda attained Mahasamadhi on this day in 1993. Pujya Swami Dheeranandaji graced Chinmaya Somnath with his presence and Srimati Lakshmi Reddy was also present. At Chinmayam, visiting Acharya, Pujya Swami Swaroopananda graced the occasion. Swami Swaroopanandaji talked about the glory of Gurudev and on the following day spoke about Love. Swamiji also offered discourses at Chinmaya Somnath later that week.



2015 Geeta Chanting National Competition

The National Geeta Chanting competition was held Chinmaya Mission Chicago during Labor Day weekend. Sri Gopalakrishna represented CMWRC as a judge and the top winners from our Regional Competition participated. While none of our children qualified to proceed to International Competition in December in India, everyone expressed that they were fortunate to have been part of it. The CMWRC children who participated in the national competition were:

Group A: *Vedha Vembar, Medha Valluri*

Group B: *Sridhanya Thirumala, Rhea Sharma*

Group C: *Anagha Shastry, Abhirama Rachabattuni*

Group D: *Srijay Kasturi, Madhura Managoli*

CHYK Retreat

Acharyas Rahul Maini and Priya Kumar conducted CHYK retreat at Chinmayam in August (14-16). At the end of the camp, the CHYKs were treated to the movie, "On a Quest".

Junior CHYK Camp & F.E.A.R. Workshop

Acharya Vivekji conducted a national Junior CHYK Camp at Chinmaya Somnath in August (17-21). See accompanying JHYCK Camp article and photos.

In parallel, during evening hours, Acharya Vivekji conducted a workshop for adults on the theme "Face Everything and Rise (F.E.A.R.). The workshop attracted many adults and CHYKs.

Navaratri Celebrations

Navaratri was celebrated at Chinmayam on Sunday October 18th (see accompanying article and photos).

Organized as a fund raiser for CMWRC, a grand Navaratri celebration was held Chinmaya Somnath on Saturday October 24th. Program included musical performance by Purvi Nanavaty and Garba Dance. About 350 people attended.

Screening of "On a Quest" Movie

The movie 'On a Quest' on the vision and life of Pujya Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda, was screened in Virginia and Maryland in September.

Bala Vihar 2015-16 in Session

With Ganesh puja, new Bala Vihar year kicked off auspiciously at all three chapters. Chapter Directors are reporting growth in membership and students

with Chinmaya Somnath seeing most, where a 3rd session was added to accommodate more students.

Grand Music Concert

A grand music concert was held at Chinmaya Somnath on September 19 as a fund raiser. The Carnatic Music was performed by Lalgudi Krishnan and Vijayalakshmi, and Dr. Trichy Sankaran. The program was well attended and over \$9000 were raised towards CMWRC capital projects.

Shraddhanjali

A Bala Vihar Teacher at Chinmaya Somnath, a Geeta Chanting Judge, a dedicated sevak, a devoted student of Vedanta and Sri Gurudev's works, Sri Viswanadhan Yellayi left his body on November 10 after battling cancer. He is survived by his wife, Lalitha, who is also a Bala Vihar teacher, and two children, Neeharika and Vedanth.

Let us pray together to invoke the Divine Lord's Grace and Pujya Gurudev's Blessings to give the family solace during this difficult situation.

Please see the eulogy by Sri Gopalakrishna.

Bala Vihar Children Chanted Geeta in India

Marali and Dyuthi at Sringeri Sharada Peetham

Marali, Dyuthi and Vibha Harikar had the opportunity to visit Sringeri Sharada Peetha and their great desire to chant the Bhagavad Gita in front of the Jagadguru was fulfilled. When their chance came up in the queue, they requested to chant the Gita. Guruji agreed and they were seated right in front of Sri Sri Bharathi Theertha Mahaswamigal. Marali, Dyuthi and Vibha started with the 15th chapter, and then continued with the 3rd chapter. The sound of the chanting reverberating in the hall was divine. They were told later that their chanting could also be heard outside the hall through the speakers. The Jagadguru listened and could be seen at times mouthing the verses with them. After the assembly, Guruji spoke to Marali & Dyuthi and asked them who taught them the Gita. Marali mentioned Chinmaya mission. He inquired about their name, which grade they were in. As soon as Marali mentioned her name, Jagadguru chanted "Marali mandagamana mahalavnya shevadhihi". He blessed all of them. In addition, the future Jagadguru Sri Vidhushekhara Bharati Swamiji also spoke to them and blessed them.

Mythili in Kerala

A Geeta Chanting competition was held at Shree Thrippayya Thrimurthi Temple located at Nadavaramba, Thrissur District, Kerala, India. The competitions were part of the Shree Krishna Janmashtami celebrations. They conducted Geeta



Chanting Competitions, Krishna bhajans competitions, and a Quiz on Krishna's life. For Gita Chanting, it was Chapter 15. Mythili Menon, CMWRC Bala Vihar student, was in senior category, Ages 10-16, and had to chant shlokas from one through 10. There were around 18-20 children in her category and she won first prize for Geeta Chanting. She participated in Krishna Quiz and won third prize for that too.



Announcements and Flyers

Announcements

- ❖ Yoga Of Time Travel, a talk by “Dr. Quantum”, Dr. Fred Alan Wolf, as part of CMWRC Annual Fund Raiser Banquet. Saturday December 5, 2016 at Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA. Program starts at 4 PM. Tickets available for purchase online or locally at all chapters.
- ❖ Geeta Jayanti and Swami Tapovanam Jayanti, celebrated locally at all chapters, Sat/Sun December 19 and 20.
- ❖ Geeta Jnana Yajna by Puja Swami Dheerananda, Text: Geeta Chapter 2, Verses 54-72 on Sthita Prajna Lakshana (one of steady wisdom). Swamiji will describe glory of Sri Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda. One of Gurudev’s 108 Names is ‘Sthita Prajnaaya’. The Yajna will be at Chinmaya Somnath, Chantilly VA from Saturday December 26 through Tuesday December 29
- ❖ New Year Day Puja – Guru Paduka Puja and Sahasra Namavali, on January 1 2016 at Chinmayam (Silver Spring MD) and Chinmaya Somnath (Chantilly VA)
- ❖ Chinmaya Mahima – Theme for celebration of Sri Gurudev’s 100th Birthday. Please join, participate, support and most importantly celebrate the birth centennial. All are invited to participate in one or more of the following. Some are underway, some are in planning and some are being drawn up.
 - CMWRC Family – children, youth, adults and friends are invited to submit essays, reflections, recollections, photographs, art-work to join in the celebration of life, teachings and glory of Swami Chinmayananda. A special souvenir will be published on May 8th 2016
 - Swamiji Chinmaya Mahima Maala
 - Attend Swamiji’s session

- Listen to his audio discourse on one or more of the 108 Names of Gurudev and write your own summary of it
- Gurudev Gita Discourses integrated into Adult Sessions a Chinmaya Somnath
- Bala Vihar activities integrating glory of Gurudev
- Geeta Chanting
 - All verses of Geeta are being recited
 - Every Wednesday at Chinmaya Somnath
 - Soon – “Ghar Ghar mein Geeta” in Maryland
 - 2016 Geeta Chanting Competition – Sthita Prajna Lakshana (Ch 2 Vs 54-72)
- Chinmaya Mahima Play
- 108 Guru Paduka Puja
- Chinmaya Likhita Japa
- Study Groups, including ‘Satsang with Gurudev’
- ❖ 2016 Geeta Chanting Competition Registration is now open. Visit <http://geetachanting.cmwrc.org> for more information, registration and practice materials.
- ❖ Donate Generously and support activities and growth of Chinmaya Mission
 - Donation Website
 - <http://chinmayasomnath.cmwrc.org/fundraising.html>
 - Amazon Smile
 - Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to **Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center** whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.
 - Link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-1618964>

Jnana Yajna - FREE series of discourses
December Sat, 26th through Tue, 29th



Bhagavad Geeta Jnana Yajna

Free series of discourses – By Swami Dheerananda Ji

Geeta Chapter 2

Sthita Prajna Lakshana
Qualities of a Realized Master

Chinmaya Mission, Chinmaya Somnath invites you and your family for the Jnana Yajna - Free series of discourses by [Swami Dheerananda Ji](#), resident acharya of [CMWRC](#).

Swami Dheeranandaji will continue the discourses on **Sthita Prajna Lakshana - qualities of the realized master**. Geeta Chapter 2 discourses were started in 2011 and is expected to be concluded in year 2015. Although you may or may not have attended the previous session, one can attend Yajna and take the advantage. For everyone's benefit, previous discourses audio recordings are available online [here](#)

Program

Open for All, No registration required

- 6:45 pm - Chanting : Geeta Chapter 2
 - 7:00 pm - Swamiji's talk
 - 8:30 pm - Aarati (For Aarati sponsorship, please contact yajna@chinmayasomnath.org)
- Complimentary childcare will be provided for children above 4 year old.

We request everyone to be on time and be seated before the 7:00 pm



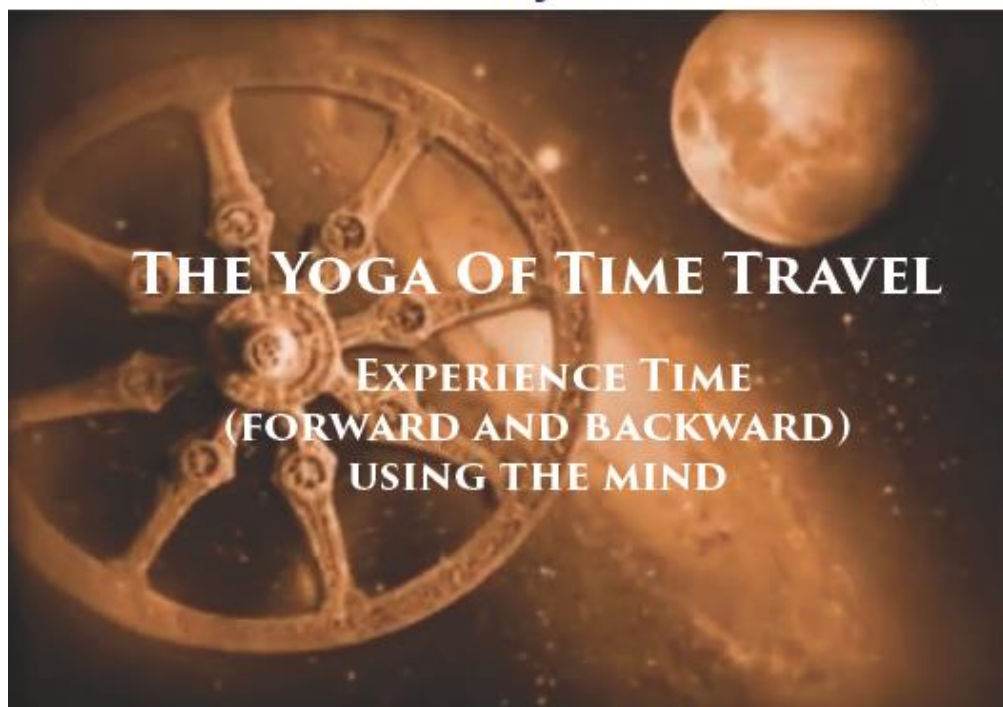
Chinmaya Mission® Washington Regional Center

Cordially Invites You To Our



2015 ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Saturday December 5th, 2015



THE YOGA OF TIME TRAVEL

**EXPERIENCE TIME
(FORWARD AND BACKWARD)
USING THE MIND**

Keynote Speaker



Fred Alan Wolf, also known as "Dr. Quantum", is a physicist, writer, and lecturer who earned his Ph.D. in theoretical physics at UCLA in 1963. He continues to write, lecture throughout the world, and conduct research on the relationship of quantum physics to consciousness. His work in quantum physics and consciousness is well-known through his popular and scientific writings. He is the author of seventeen books.

The Yoga of Time Travel

Time travel is not just science fiction; it may actually be possible. Wolf draws on yoga and quantum physics to show that time is a flexible projection of mind. Cheating time, he says, is an ancient metaphysical idea from the Vedas having to do with moving through meditation to a place where time stands still.

Venue

**Chinmaya Somnath
4350 Blue Spring Drive,
Chantilly VA 20151**

Program

**4:00 - 5:00 PM - Registration
Refreshments
5:00 - 7:45 PM - Main Program
7:45 - 9:15 PM - Dinner**

Tickets

**Adult - \$50 (50% Tax deductible)
Child - \$20 (Pre-K to 12)**

Children in Grades 10-12
will attend the keynote address.

Separate Program with entertainment
for Children Grades Pre-K to 9

Contact

tickets@chinmayadc.org

**Vinod Kulkarni 703-728-8617
Sudesh Nimishe 202-492-4930
Saravanan Parandapalli 301-305-4438**

Tickets available Online at websites mentioned below.

Chinmaya Mission® Washington Regional Center (CMWRC) is a non-profit Tax-Exempt organization.
46 Norwood Road, Silver Spring MD 20905

www.chinmayadc.org

www.chinmayasomnath.org

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2016 Geeta Chanting Competition

“Chant Geeta, Enchant Krishna, Celebrate Chinmaya”



EVERYONE IS INVITED

To participate in 2016 Chapter Competition

CHILD – YOUTH – ADULT

And even those afar can participate by Writing (Reflection)

Geeta Ch. 2- Sthitaprajna Lakshana- Verses 54-72

Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center is pleased to announce the 2016 Geeta Chanting Competition. The aim of Geeta Chanting is to encourage everyone to chant, study and live the essence of the Upanishadic knowledge that Sri Krishna imparted to Arjuna. It is particularly poignant in 2016 as Chinmaya Mission world-wide celebrates the birth centenary Pujya Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda, on May 8 2016. Swami Chinmayananda is synonymous with Geeta Jnana Yajna. He carried the message of the Geeta to kindle the knowledge of the Self in millions world-wide!

2016 CHAPTER COMPETITION PARTICIPATION CATEGORIES

Dates and Locations:

- Chinmayam (Silver Spring MD)
 - April 9th 2016
- Chinmaya Somnath (Chantilly, VA)
 - April 9th 2016
- Chinmaya Frederick (Urbana, MD)
 - April 10th 2016

- Memory
- Memory & Comprehension
- Reading
- Reading & Comprehension
- Writing (Reflection)

<http://geetachanting.cmwrc.org>

For information, registration, and practice materials



CHINMAYA MAHIMA

Celebrating the Glory Of Swami Chinmayananda

**A Special Centenary Souvenir
will be published on May 8th 2016**

Submit:

- Personal Experience with Gurudev
- A story centered on Gurudev
- Values/Reflections from His teachings
- Painting/art-work
- Your Favorite Quote of Gurudev and Why it inspires you
- Essays
- Poems
- Songs
- Videos

Who: *(Each and Every member of CM family)*

- Acharyas
- Bala Vihar students
- CHYKs
- All Members (Current and Past)
- CMWRC Founding Members
- Friends, Well-Wishers or Anyone inspired by Gurudev

When:

Now through February 18th 2016

All accepted submissions will be on Chinmaya Mahima website, soon after they are submitted



Related Activities

**A play on Gurudev's life planned
for May 8th 2016**

**Narration of Stories on Gurudev
or Personal Experiences with
Him, during Bala Vihar Common
Time or other special occasions**

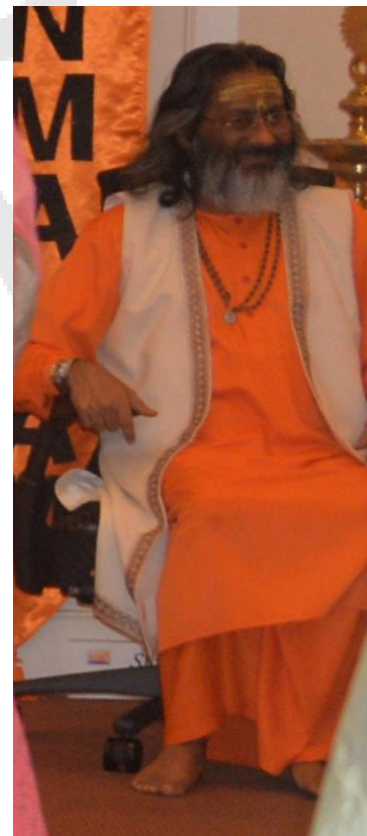
Contact: ChinmayaMahima@chinmayadc.org

Festive and Joyous Navaratri 2015 Celebrations at Chinmayam

Vandana Bapna

Navaratri was celebrated at Chinmayam on October 18th evening amidst Chinmaya families and the presence and blessings of Puja Swami Dheerananda. It was a joyous satsang with the traditional festivities as an offering of devotion and honour to Mother Ambaa. At 4:30 pm, Goddess Durga was invoked by chanting Shakradaya Stuti (Durga Saptashati). This was followed by Garba and Dandia Raas by everyone around the beautiful Devi altar. The Garba Raas was played to the melodious beats of live music by SaReGaMaPa finalists (Zee TV USA), Krushanu and Deeti Majmundar and awesome dholak accompaniment by Sachin Shriraj Mehta. The music was simply superb comprising the evergreen traditional melodies on glories of Devi Mother. The topping on the cake was puja Swamiji's Navaratri message on how the principle of Devi Mother cleanses our impurities (mala), agitations (vikshepa) and ignorance (aavarana) towards realization of our true nature. We concluded with Jagadamba Maha Aarati by all families before proceeding to enjoy the delicious Mahaprasad with everyone at 7 pm. Everyone pitched in cheerfully to make the evening magical and memorable. One participant quipped "It was the best Garba I have ever experienced. The music, friends, food and Swamiji's message everything was divine." Chinmayam echoed with the joy of rapturous music, colourful costumes, graceful dancers, smiling devotees, reflective spiritual message and delicious Mahaprasad. It was re-living the nostalgic memories of blissful Navaratri from childhood.





Deepavali Celebration at Chinmayam

Vandana Bapna

Deepavali was celebrated with 250 Chinmaya family members and Puja Swami Dheerananda on Sunday, November 8th, 2015 evening. Families started gathering at 5 pm and practiced the Indian style Macarena steps (Ramjhanyu) to be performed with everyone later on in the program. Puja Swamiji arrived at 5:30 pm to inaugurate the delightful cultural program. The Carnatic music class children presented a few songs followed by a beautiful Devi song duet by the teacher, Nandini Duraiswamy along with Vishwa Duraiswamy. Charming classical dances were presented by Bharatanatyam teacher, Aishwarya Ratan, and students of Kuchipudi teacher, Subha Maruvada. A Hindustani classical song was presented by our Bala Vihar children. There was a surprise item with high energy Lezim dance by the visiting friends from Frederick that kept the audience tapping and thrilled. And, Krushanu Majmundar sang the evergreen songs to blissful sighs and ovation of the audience. On Swamiji's special request, he treated everyone to Puja Gurudev's favourite song on Lord Krishna -Main Nahin Makhan Khayo.

The foyer and the altar were beautifully decorated and lit up with twinkling diyas. With children gathered around, Puja Swamiji gave the essence of Diwali celebrations, indicated by the rows of lamps sparkling with the same light shining in every lamp. Diwali means honouring and celebrating that One light of life that shines through all life forms, animate and inanimate. Swamiji inspired everyone to celebrate Diwali in every moment of our lives.

The cultural program concluded at 7:45 pm with the vivacious Ramjhanyu (led by Paulomi Nanavaty and Priti Mehta) that brightened both the dancers as well as the audience with joy and cheer, in true spirit of

lighting up on Diwali. The entire evening was a reflection of superb teamwork. Everyone enjoyed the sumptuous and delicious dinner with traditional Diwali sweets and snacks. On the way home that night, there was wonderment about living in Diwali spirit at every moment.



Swamiji's Deepavali Message at

http://www.chinmayadc.org/Video/Swamiji_Diwali_Message.MP4

Watch the dance video, Link:

http://www.chinmayadc.org/Video/Deepavali_at_Chinmayam_2015.mp4

Eulogy – Viswanadhan Yallayi

Sri Gopalakrishna

[Sri Viswanadhan Yellayi, member, Bala Vihar teacher and sevak at Chinmaya Somnath, passed away on Tue Nov 9th. The funeral service was held on Friday Nov 13th.]

*Chinmayam vyApiyat sarvam try-lokyam sacharAcharam
tat-padam darshitam yena tasmai shree Gurave namah*

Sri Gurubhyo Namah, hari Om

I am thankful for this opportunity to say a few words about Sri Viswanadhan Yallayi. My thoughts will focus on Viswanadhan's role with Chinmaya Mission as well as my personal interactions with him as a friend.



I have known Viswanadhan for about 6-7 years since his family moved to this area from Delaware. My first memories of him were at the Dulles Community Center, where he would ardently soak in the

message of Gita during the Adult session of the weekend programs. He would sit in the first row, with little Vedanth along with him. He had a number of questions that he would ask the teacher/Acharya and also raise at the many short sessions I would spend with him. He was a seeker of knowledge, a deep thinker and would question until he understood what he was hearing.

Over the next few years, he developed a love for Vedanta and attended every spiritual discourse that was presented in Chinmaya Mission. As a Yajna Coordinator, it was my delight to have such a dedicated Mission Member. I drafted him into our small team for organizing programs. He would come without fail for each program, sometimes leaving early from work. Whatever help requested, he was always willing to fulfil. Prior to the inauguration of our current Chinmaya Somnath facility, all spiritual programs would take place in rental places (Dulles Community Center, Herndon HS etc.) and setup/dismantling was always a challenge. He was always present to assist in this task and then would sit with rapt attention through the discourses, absorbing the message. He especially loved the December Yajnas by Swami Dheerananda on Bhagavad Gita and would continue to revisit and listen to the recordings that were posted later at the website.

It did not stop at shravanam (listening) which is the usual the case for many. Viswanadhan continued mananam to read extensively and reflect upon the works of Sri Gurudev. He attended a couple of study groups where the discussion happened. As time evolved, he began teaching as a Bala Vihar teacher. He drafted his wife Lalitha to become a teacher as well. He was fascinated with chanting also and

ensured that his children were enrolled in the Shloka classes along with Bala Vihar. When we were short of teachers for the afternoon session and Sirisha approached the family to teach, Viswanadhan and Lalitha (both in the Morning session) would come back to teach in the afternoon session as Bala Vihar teachers – that was the dedication.

He loved Bhagavad Gita and joined the group of sevaks who organized the Gita Chanting Competition. He was so motivated that he would teach Gita to his Bala Vihar children along with the regular syllabus. He served as a judge for the competitions, even as late as this March 2015, despite his medical challenges; which were known only to a small group of us in Chinmaya. He also loved the Chinmaya Summer Camp and Swami Dheerananda's way of teaching the children. He would insist that his children participate every year in Summer Camp. This year when he was in the hospital, I know Lalitha had second thoughts as she rushed between home, work and hospital, and her parents were at home anyway to be with the children. However Viswanadhan still wanted the children to attend the Summer Camp and benefit from it.

During the construction of Chinmaya Somnath facility, our building team of Sri Prakash Soman and Sushil Baluja depended on his expertise. He offered his expertise in construction management. He visited the site regularly during the construction period (18 months) to make sure that the construction was going according to industry standard. This greatly helped Chinmaya Mission monitor the work of the Construction Company and architect.

He would send regular updates and pictures to the building and executive committee. This legacy is still available through these pictures and reports on our website.

Lalitha is deeply spiritual and would continue her weekly Pujas; and he would support her in these efforts. Their entire family would always be present for the special Pujas we held in the new facility. When I started teaching Sri Rudram in Chinmaya, he was one of the first students to enroll. This was just before he started experiencing the symptoms that led to his demise. I would attend regularly, and practice the chanting at home and he would keep telling me how much it helped him begin his day with the chanting of Sri Rudram. When Jaya and I visited him in the hospital, and he was in poor physical shape, his mind was still fresh and cheerful. He would ask me for special books to read. I was touched when he mentioned that he was listening every day to the class rendition of Sri Rudram that I had created and it was giving him the strength needed. His father would mention that he engaged in extensive discussions on spirituality.

Sri Gurudev' Ashtottara-Sata-Namavali was very special to him. Lalitha tells me he would chant that every day, listening to Swami Dheerananda's recording on youtube. There were days when Lalitha would wake up at 4 AM to Swami Dheerananda's voice, only to realize it was the ashtottara playing.

When the email went out to CMWRC and other friends, the outpouring of love that followed is a testament to his legacy. I quote Sri Vishwanath Ramabhatta, one of our close friends, who is now in India ... ' Very deeply saddened by the news Sri. Please convey our condolences on behalf of both of us, if you can, to Lalitha. Ganga remembers Lalitha (her Co-teacher in Balavihar) and I remember vishwanathan helping us immensely during the December Yajnas - he was always a very cheerful and a calm person.'

I have personally had the privilege of teaching his two wonderful children for many years and working with Lalitha for the various Pujas we have organized in Chinmaya Somnath. While I was aware of his

serious illness, it was a shock to me to see the rapid deterioration as the disease spread through his body. During this time, his cheerfulness and poise strengthened by faith in the spiritual teachings and served as an inspiration for my own personal sadhana (spiritual study).

Swami Dheerananda, head of CM DC, knew the family well. Many of you many know that Swamiji went through back-surgery on Tuesday (same day that Viswanadhan left the body). I did not copy Swamiji on the initial email to a small group of friends with the news. The email reached Swamiji indirectly at 1.00 AM in the morning after his surgery and he was still awake. He immediately wrote back, wanting full details and asking me to ensure the write-up was reflective of all the entire family. The next day, Swamiji made one his first calls to the family and spoke with each of them for a long time. We are truly grateful for Swamiji's gracious compassion. Acharya Anantji and Sri Vijayakumar ji could not be present today for this service. Both of them have asked me to convey their sympathies. Anantji visited the family at their home and spent time speaking to Lalitha and the parents and Vijay ji will do so this weekend.

Viswanadhan will be greatly missed by everyone for his smiling face, peaceful composure and great company. We all know there is a purpose behind everything. No spiritual effort is every wasted in this life; I am sure Viswanadhan's journey continues to a conducive environment towards the final destination of One-ness with the Cosmic Principle.

At this time of grieving for the family, I am happy that so many friends have helped them in various capacities and I am sure we will all continue to provide the support needed for Lalitha and the children to get back to whatever normalcy life will offer them.

Hari Om!

Chinmayam Class Summaries

Text: Self Unfoldment by Swami Chinmayananda

Submitted by Sunday AM Bala Vihar Teachers, Chinmayam Chapter

Introduction

Vikas Bector

September 20th, 2015

The class participated in several activities in order to serve as an introduction (or re-introduction) to Self-Unfoldment: -Gita Verses: The class reviewed several verses from Chapter 2 of the Gita: verses 48, 62, 63, and 64. These discuss the dangers of attachments and desires, and the importance of moving away from them by practicing self-control and possessing evenness of mind (yoga). -Origami Activity: Students were given origami boats, folded from paper with a picture printed on it. They were instructed to slowly unfold the paper and observe the picture while doing so. As the origami was slowly unfolded, the picture became apparent. (It was a picture of a clump of snow which resembled a polar bear). We grow in stages, in different ways - physically, mentally, intellectually, and spiritually. Spiritual growth is known as 'self-unfoldment' because it involves looking past our outer selves and slowly discovering our inner selves. The inner self is the True Self, and is discovered by reflecting upon the difference between reality and the illusion. -Writing Activity (What is Hinduism?): Students spent a few minutes reflecting on and writing down their personal definition of Hinduism. -Quest-a-thon: The class was divided into four discussion groups, and each group collectively came up with a list of questions that they had about Hinduism. Each group then shared three of their questions with the entire class. The process of questioning (curiosity, reflection, discovery, deeper understanding) is very important in the

process of spiritual growth, and we encourage students to continue it. We (teachers) have collected all of the questions and plan to address them as they become relevant to our lessons this year.

Ch 1. Freedom

Sandeep Linga

September 26, 2015

We started the class with opening prayers and the Geeta verses. After that we transitioned to the question "what is freedom"? Some answers included to be happy, having internal freedom from certain desires, and not having false tendencies affect your progress in life. After our discussion we began to read the poem "Freedom" by Rabindranath Tagore which was very interesting. As a class we discussed about how freedom has many limiting factors and that freedom may be seen by some very differently than others. Tagore's poem was written when India was a British colony and the poem expressed feelings of the slaves in the colonial period. This led into the discussion of how freedom now could be limited to ourselves.

In our discussion about how freedom could be limited, some key points were the moral aspects that one believes and how peer pressure could influence someone into taking part in actions that are not desirable. After this discussion we began to read from the class text on the chapter called freedom. As a class we talked about how our personalities get sharpen from the problems in life and thus help

become a better person. Also how blaming other people for our actions can be related to limiting our freedom as it hinders our personal responsibilities. One example that was related to the chapter on freedom was when someone studies very hard for a test and fails, their intentions are very good but they didn't understand the material that was given. So rather than giving up, understanding why you failed will progress you along to your next test in a positive way.

Towards the end of class we played a game of bingo. This form was a little different because it was more interactive within the class. To play we went around asking questions that were labeled on the card and matched them with the person it related to. It was almost like an ice breaker as the new students were able to meet the more senior students. We rapped up class with closing prayers and final announcements.

Ch 2. Happiness

Ananth Shastri

October 4, 2015

As always, we began our third class of the year with the customary opening prayers, followed by a recitation of verses 48 and 62 from the second chapter of the Gita. Anil Uncle then started off the discussion by posing the class a deceptively simple question: what does happiness mean to you? Our various answers ranged from the following: being content with what you have; enjoying what you do in life, so long as you aren't harming others; having loved ones around you (which Anil-ji challenged by bringing up the example of Arjuna at the beginning of the Gita, being around people he loved he wasn't happy!!); having your needs or desires met; not worrying about outcomes; and reaching a self-defined personal goal. Then, the class was surveyed

about methods of handling unhappiness, and again produced multiple responses, including the following: listening to music, doing homework (yes, really!), exercising, napping, and emotional release. The latter seemed to be the most popular choice, and Anil-ji recommended that each member of the class have a trusted person to whom they could vent without restraint. He suggested that we use this method to diffuse the numerous sources of stress in our lives, and thereby enjoy an almost completely stress-free existence.

We then transitioned to the idea of utopia, which is defined as a place where everyone is fully content. We divided into five groups, and each group thought of what characteristics it would ascribe to a utopian society. Those characteristics are listed below.

Group 1: communist government, a healthy population, death at 80, and a uniform profession

Group 2: a lack of greed, crime, hunger, illiteracy, discrimination, poverty, homelessness, and capital offense

Group 3: a lack of disease, poverty, and sadness; a government without one specific group in power, the ability to choose one's time of death, free opportunity, good prices and technology, and renewable energy

Group 4: a lack of grades and unemployment; a socialist government, merit-based pay, and the satisfaction of the basic needs of the population

Group 5: a lack of crime, hunger, a system of currency, leftovers, nuclear missiles, and racism; healthy fast food, increased government spending on education, religious freedom, free healthcare, and paid maternity leave for two months

However, as we were engaging in the exercise, we began to suspect that the very idea of utopia was impossible, since none of the characteristics mentioned would be acceptable to every member of a nation's population. For example, having a uniform profession - or a communist or socialist government,

for that matter - would be a highly unwelcome change for many individuals. Our suspicions were confirmed upon reading chapter two of Self-Unfoldment, our assigned text, which attributed the whole of human behavior to two impulses: revulsion to sorrow and yearning for joy. Because no situation, even a good one, can be entirely insulated from change, each person must constantly continue adjusting towards his or her own happiness, and cannot remain content for long periods of time. On a larger scale, this is why each government must have an active legislature - it is impossible to find a permanent balance that pleases every citizen of that nation. Unfortunately, class was over before we could unravel the implications of this chapter, so our lingering doubts will have to wait until next Sunday.

Summary for Class on October 11th

Vishnu Dharmaraj

Today, the whole class was asked to elaborate on the meaning of true happiness. The class was split into three groups to answer different aspects of this question. One group was asked to say what made them feel happy; the second was asked to say what happiness feels like; the third group was asked to say why they were still unhappy. Examples from the first category were eating, sleeping, and music; examples from the second included feeling satisfied, invincible, and blissful; our answer for the third question was that we are unable to attain true happiness due to the increasing number of desires we have when pursuing happiness in the material world.

The class as a whole then read the section in the book concerning happiness. Swami Chinmayananda describes happiness as a measure of the tranquility of the mind, not the satisfaction of the sense organs through material possessions. He uses the following equation to quantify happiness:

$$\text{Happiness} = \frac{\text{Number of desires fulfilled}}{\text{Number of Desires entertained}}$$

There are two ways to go about increasing our happiness. One is to increase the numerator by increasing the number of desires fulfilled. However, the problem with this approach is that fulfilling desires usually leads to the formation of other desires. The net result is that happiness is never truly achieved. The other option is to decrease the number of desires we have in the first place. Decreasing the number of desires leads to a more permanent happiness. The class then went back to some of the aforementioned examples of what makes us happy and discussed what gave a more permanent happiness. We noticed that a more permanent happiness originated from less materialistic sources. For instance, music gives us a more permanent happiness than eating one good meal.

We concluded the class by looking at chapter study questions. The first question asked what we felt like once we fulfilled a desire. We admitted that we felt happy after a couple of days, but after a while, the fulfillment of the desire became trivial. The second study question asked us how we would characterize our thoughts when we feel anxious. Sometimes, we had jumbled thoughts and at other times, we were able to clear our mind and block our anxiety, leading to a more successful outcome. When we focus less on fulfilling a desire or achieving something and simply do what we have to do, our actions lead to better results.

Junior CHYK Camp, August 2015 at Chinmaya Somnath

Aashika Suseendran

Hailing from many different states and even outside the country in some cases, JCHYKs came together this past summer (August 17th to 21st, 2015) at this year's JCHYK camp held at Chinmaya Somnath in Chantilly, VA. The camp, entitled Decoding Dharma, was held under the tutelage of Acharya Vivekji. JCHYKs had the opportunity not only to seek answers to some of the most enigmatic questions explored in our Hindu scriptures, but also to introspect and share their newfound knowledge with others.

The camp consisted of satsangs led by Acharya Vivekji and a discourse with Swami Dheeranandaji, explaining to the JCHYKs, among many things, the 3 SD's. The JCHYKs were taught the meaning of (1) sanatana dharma, that is, the eternal responsibility to be happiness, through the process of (2) self-development, which in turn comes by (3) studying discipline.

In decoding what was meant by sanatana dharma, the JCHYKs were also given myriad opportunities to actively engage in their learning. The campers got to experience Holi, participate in bhajans, do seva (service), learn prayers and meditation, engage in outdoor athletics, and venture into Washington D.C. to answer other people's questions about sanatana dharma (an excursion called Pride in D.C.).

On the final evening of the camp was a culminating show of group performances, which ranged from game shows to skits to a sanathana dharma rap, where families were invited to attend. As the camp concluded, families and friends came together as one for arathi and guru dakshina.



Acharya's Messages

Acharya Priya

The Power of Prayer

Life hands us situations that are not always in our control. We may want so badly to help others, but limitations prevent us from doing so. Sometimes, we may want to help ourselves, but there seems to be no light at the end of the tunnel. All is dark and no solution seems to be viable. Does it mean that we can't do anything? Turn inwards. Invoke the divinity in you and marvel at the answers that are revealed, sometimes immediately and sometimes over time. The powerful vibrations of prayer have deep and profound impacts.

Daily Divine Moments

The vibrant, brilliant, coral sunset sets in the valley, creating a blanket of warmth over the tree studded hills. A blossoming flower, unfolding each petal, one at a time, emanating a fresh fragrance. The smile of a child, eyes filled with innocence and laughter. We have the opportunity to experience divine moments each and every day. Divinity is present all around us in each and every thing. Make an ordinary moment extraordinary, the choice is yours!

Purify Inside and Out

You wake up in the morning and head straight to the shower. You adorn yourself with lotions and perfumes. After an affirming smile in the mirror, you're on your way. Squeaky clean from the outside...but what about the inside? Just as our body requires daily cleaning, so does our mind. Every day the mind is filled with various inputs from the external world and our internal chatter. In order to begin our day with a fresh perspective, we must purify our mind through prayer, japa and meditation.

Acceptance

'Doing the action is in our hands. The result of the action, however, is not. Believe it or not, this is the ultimate blessing. The Lord knows what is best for us. Reflect on your own life experiences. Aren't there at least a few things you wished for that you are happy you did NOT get? Do your duty, offer it as naivadyam. The result will be your prasada. The one who lives with this attitude of acceptance is never disappointed.

Living in the Present

'The past is history, the future is mystery. The present is a gift- that's why it's called the present!' - Master Oogway, Kung Fu Panda. All deep rooted negative emotions and feelings come from the worries of the past and the anxieties of the future. Peace, contentment and calm belong to the present. This moment is your gift. Unwrap and enjoy!

The Nature of Thought

Everything originates from a single thought. Knowing this, we can understand how powerful thoughts are. A noble deed, a vicious crime, a sound investment or a bad decision all originate in thought. Let your thoughts be positive, vibrant and spiritually rooted. Peace will surely be yours!

Nivritthinatha, Sopanadeva and Muktabai

Series: Saints of Maharashtra, continued

Nirmala Limaye

The story of Jnaneshwara (covered previously in this series) is not complete without the story of his three siblings who were with him always during his life. They wrote a few abhangas and were not involved with teaching the masses as much as Jnaneshwara.

Nivrittinatha was born in the year 1268 AD. He was the first son of Vittalpant and Rukminibai. The legend has it that father named his children as a progression in spirituality. With Nivritti, the dispassion from samsara (material world) is indicated, followed by Jnana (2nd child who came to be known as Sant Jnaneshwara) which indicates highest knowledge, following that is Sopana, indicating a ladder, and lastly Muktabai, mukti indicating liberation. Whether the legend is true or not, the names follow progression in spirituality. Father, Vittalpant had accepted his Guru's command and returned to Aladi to resume life of a householder with Rukminibai (the return to householder life was a punishment as he had lied that he had his wife's permission to take up sanyas – become a renunciate).

Vittalpant started teaching Vedadhyanam and puranas to his children from a very young age. Vittalpant was ostracized by orthodox pundits and the children teased as children of a Sanyasi. They lived outside the town in a small hut and daily bhiksha was the source of their meals.

Once Vittalpant took them to Trayambakeshwara temple near Nasik. They prayed to the Lord and were circumambulating the Brahmagiri Mountain when Nivrittinath was separated from the family. In fear of a tiger attack, the family ran. Nivrittinath entered a cave and there he saw that a sadhu was

meditating, and felt secure. After the sadhu got up from Samadhi, he noticed Nivritti, heard his story and assured him that he is in a safe place. The sadhu was none other than Gahininath (one of the Navanath) of Nath Sampradaya. The sadhu took Nivritti as his disciple and imparted spiritual knowledge. Nivritti rejoined his family with the help of his Guru, and upon returning home he initiated his brothers Jnanadeva and Sopandeva. Thus, all the siblings pursued spiritual path at an early age and became realized souls.

Soon after Nivritti's return, Vittalpant sought to get upanayanam for his sons. However, the brahmins of that town refused as they claimed that they had no guidance from Vedas on how to purify Vittalpant and his family. When Vittalpant pleaded them to find a way, they urged Vittalpant and his wife to end their lives, and they might consider. Vittalpant and his wife obliged by jumping into Indrayani River and giving up their life.

Even after this sacrifice, the Brahmins did not budge, but asked the children to go to Paithan where most educated pundits resided. The four siblings made their way through jungle and minimal food to reach Paithan. Upon reaching it, they appealed to the brahmins, but they said that there was no guidance in the scriptures for purification and thread ceremony. Jnandeva pleaded further, but they said that even if they wanted to, they didn't know how, just as they cannot teach a buffalo. The legend has it that Jnandeva made a buffalo recite Vedas. Witnessing this, the brahmins they gave them shuddhipatra to get thread ceremony.

Whether they eventually had the ceremony performed or not is not mentioned in the books. The siblings walked to a town by name of Newase, known for Mohiniraj Temple and decided to reside in a temple by the river. Nivritti ordered Jnanadeva to write a commentary in Marathi (which was taboo in those days). Jnanadeva also started pravachans (discourses) where many farmers, cowherds, laborers came by the hundreds to listen. A Kulkarni (administrator) by name of Satchidananda Baba, who was saved from death by Jnanadeva became his disciple and scribe. After completing this task, Nivritti suggested to Jnanadeva that he should express his experiences gained in Samadhi – this work is called 'Amritanubhava'.

The four siblings then started a tradition of 'Wari' or 'Dindi' – they travelled by foot and reached Pandharpura along with all people from different walks of life. During travel they sang bhajans, kirtans and addressed everyone as mauli (mother). This was a start of Bhagwat Pratha which is still followed today. Nivritti compares samsara (material world) to a tree in the manner of ashwattha tree described in Chapter 15 of Geeta. "Only a guru can help you to uproot this tree, then the lord shows himself to a devotee if he possesses good emotions and desires." "One should shut up the mouth and meditate on the Lord. Also, shut your ears if someone praises you, fragrance of the Lord surpasses the fragrance of any flower." "When we see Lord, the world vanishes. No sun, moon or stars are seen, the distinction between Lord and devotee vanishes only to remain as waves of ocean".

Observing how the simple folk have very little time to pray on most days, with Nivrittinatha's blessings, Jnanadeva wrote abhagas, (Devotional songs) and 28 slokas of Haripath which everyone understood and benefitted spiritually.

Jnanadeva would not write anything without a command from Nivritti, his guru. Nivrittinath wrote

few abhagas, too. In one of them, he says there are no words to describe grace of Vittala to grant Pudalikas request to stay standing with his arms on waist for bhaktas forever. Lord Vishnu stood with shivlinga on his head (it is still there on his head under the crown). It was nivrittinath who placed a boulder over Jnaneswara's Samadhi. Nivrittinatha did not give any spiritual discourses, but was a silent, realised man. He passed away after few years and his samadhi is near Trayambakeswara Temple

All siblings did tirthyatra (pilgrimage). Sopana passed away a year later. Except for a few abhagas, he did not write or teach. Muktabai was initiated by Nivrittinath also. It was she who detected ego in Saint Namdava and sent him to Visoba Khechar for getting the knowledge.

In a famous abhaga, Muktabai describes her experiences of Samadhi, "I was leading a blinded life but was gradually awakened by Nivrittinatha and taken to the bank of river of samsara." She described her mystical experience, "As if floating ant devoured the Sun". Another one was 'a barren woman giving birth to a child', 'a scorpion went to netherworld and a serpent fell at his feet!' 'A fly had delivered and gave birth to a kite!' She laughed at these mystical experiences.

It was she who initiated Changadeva and removed his ego. She told him with remarkable candor that he must turn back from streams of life as the river runs with a great force otherwise he will be swept away as great swimmers are thrown away. Life is transient and one must not allow one's lifetime to go waste. She advised to speak words of silence, to sleep the sleep of eternal bliss where the unstruck sound is heard. She further advised that one's mind is regulated by the thread of breath and the blissful state is enjoyed which is beyond both sleep and (waking) consciousness. The bride groom will come from the womb of the bride, and as the bride groom comes out, the bride will vanish (the bride is prakriti

and groom is atman) and there will be no limit to the happiness that may then be enjoyed.

As Changdeva was initiated, he was never separated from these siblings. He described his initiation as “it was one gnat which enveloped whole world; a sound of flute came out without a person”. In describing these siblings in an abhaga, Jnanadeva drank to his fill the water of pearls, Nivrittinatha caught in his hands the shade of clouds, Sopana decorated himself with the garland of fragrance and Muktabai fed herself on cooked diamonds.”

Muktabai was struck by lightning while performing a sankirtana. Her samadhi is near Edalabad. Sopana wrote few abhangas. He tells us, “He who contemplates on the Lord shall never come again to experience of life’s turmoils. The only sacred thing in the world is the Lord. The only non-sacred thing is the mind of the non-believer”. As soon as the sound of a devotee fell upon ears of the Lord, he came forth to receive them. Sopana took samadhi year after jnaneswara,

Nivrittinatha was the last one to leave his body and his samadhi is near Trayambakeswara. The life of these four saints are etched onto every marathi bhakta forever.

(Author pays tribute to Gurudev Ranade, a saint from 20th century, and the information is from his book, ‘Mysticism in Maharashtra’.)

A Travel and a Blessing

(Travelogue – Allahabad, Kashi, Chinmaya Vibhooti and Sandeepany Sadhanalaya)

Sitaram Kowtha

An unexpected turn of events accorded us with an opportunity to undertake a short trip to India. As our travel plans firmed up, our trip became a journey to Prayag (Allahabad) and Kashi, followed by Chinmaya Vibhooti and Powai Ashram in Mumbai.

Swami Yogasthanandaji at CM Allahabad encouraged us to stay in the ashram, and make a trip to Kashi from there. At Chinmaya Vibhooti we learned that 'Guru Mahima' discourse was being planned by Swami Advaitanandaji and we also learned that we can stay at Sandeepany – Powai Ashram in Mumbai and attend Vedanta classes that the current batch of Brahmacharis are attending, thanks to the current Acharya – Swami Bodhatmanandaji. To top it all, Swami Yogasthanandaji informed us that our itinerary coincided with Chinmaya Jyothi Yatra visiting Allahabad and nearby CM chapters and centers. Our hearts skipped a beat – this was turning into a special journey indeed.

Prayag

CM Allahabad is one of older centers started by Sri Gurudev. (There is a detailed write up on CM Allahabad in the recent Mananam Series on Vanaprastha.) Swami Yogasthanandaji specializes on hatha yoga and he led the development of CM's Vanaprastha program for those in advanced age, at the behest of Swami Chinmayananda. Today, the center has a Shiva mandir (temple), a school, an ashram and residence for senior citizens. To this day, Swami Yogasthanandaji continues to do Surya Namaskar in the morning and periodically conducts Vanaprastha retreat which are very popular in that

part of India. He also started a newsletter on Vanaprastha and is hoping to gain subscribership in India and abroad.

With the help of sevaks there we visited Prayag (the word prayag means a place where two rivers meet; Prayag is the most special of the prayags since Ganga, Yamuna and invisible Saraswathi meet here to become Ganga and flow towards Kashi). After taking a dip at the point of merger of the rivers, we looked at the beautiful vista. This is where Kumbh Mela takes place every 12 years. I had read about Kumbha Mela, but now I was at the junction of the sacred rivers surrounded by land where there would be tens of millions of devotees taking a holy dip! We visited an Adi Sankara temple overlooking Prayag and then learned about the holiness of Prayag. It is said that Sri Rama came here to visit Gautam Mahamuni ashram and sat under a tree. The tree has managed to survive to this day and is situated inside a fort nearby. Emperor Akbar had heard about the holiness of Prayag and was taken in by it during his visit. He called the place Allahabad and built the fort.

The following day we made a day trip to Kashi and visited Kashi Vishwanath temple, Annapurna temple, Kashi Visalakshi temple and Sankat Mochan (Hanuman) temple.

Since Chinmaya Jyothi Yatra was traveling through Allahabad at that time, many Swamijis and CHYKs were at the ashram. Each day they would go to places nearby and events were planned to celebrate Sri Gurudev's centennial year and to get the word of Gurudev's mission and glory to everyone. We had the occasion to meet Swami Chidrupananda (CM

Noida, near New Delhi), Swami Mitrananda (CM Chennai), Swami Raghavananda (CM Bhopal), CHYKs and many sevaks. There were also members from other CM centers in the area requesting that Jyothi Yatra visit their town also. We had a chance to listen to Swami Chidrupanandaji and Swami Yogasthanandaji speak as part of evening programs associated with the Jyothi Yatra. The resident Brahmachari at CM Allahabad, Nirvan Chaitanyaji asked us if we would be interested in performing Guru Paduka Puja. We learned that the padukas traveling with Jyothi Yatra were worn by Sri Guduev. Another such pair are at Chinmaya Vibhooti. What a blessing! We couldn't believe how our trip unexpectedly materialized, we ended up going to Allahabad and we got to do Paduka Puja as part of Chinmaya Jyothi Yatra! Mere coincidence or divine blessing?

After we performed paduka puja, we visited a local engineering college with Swami Chidrupanandaji where he explained what CM is all about, played a video excerpt from Gurudev's talk on Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, and answered questions from the students. Swamiji relishes going to places where there is indifference, skepticism or total disregard for spirituality, and inspire interest in CM. We witnessed just such a performance and could sense eyes opening with interest from the audience.

Watching all the Swamijis, the energy at Allahabad ashram, with children at the CM school, and the Jyothi Yatra entourage, it occurred to us that Sri Gurudev is operating through many BMIs. His glorious work continues. How wonderful!



Jyothi Yatra Van at CM Allahabad Ashram Premises



Guru Padukas, Akhanda Jyothi in the auditorium at the Ashram

Chinmaya Vibhooti

Situated in the Western Ghats, east of Mumbai, away from city, nestled among mountains and a nearby Pavana lake, Chinmaya Vibhooti is a scenic, serene

sprawling campus with two temples – Hanuman and Ganesha, Chinmaya Jeevan Darshan (an immersive audio visual display of Sri Gurudev's life and teachings), a 1000 capacity auditorium, home of Chinmaya Naada Bindu (music and dance wing of Chinmaya Mission), Chinmaya Vani (a large, beautiful bookstore), Chinmaya Upahaar (gift store), Annasri (kitchen/dining) that can serve thousand people at a time and office/residential buildings (with boarding capacity for 1000 visitors). Chinmaya Vibhooti is about 2 to 3 hour drive from Mumbai and about 1 to 2 hour drive from Pune.

Our visit centered on attending 'Guru Mahima' discourse, in Hindi, based on 'Guru Gita' from Skanda Puran by Swami Advaitanandaji. Guru Gita was imparted by Lord Shiva to Mother Parvati in response to her question about the special place accorded to a guru. Swamiji has a wonderful voice and his talks exude bhakti bhava. His voice and style remind one of Pujya Guruji. Swamiji unfolded the meanings of the verses glorifying Guru. Swamiji not only has command of Hindi, Sanskrit and English, he also is a great bhajan singer. He set the atmosphere ready for learning by starting each session with uplifting bhajans. It was interesting to note that the verses of Guru Stotram that we regularly chant at the mission are from Guru Gita. Over 250 people attended the sessions, taking advantage of national holiday in honor of Mahatma Gandhi.

In between Swamiji's discourses, we visited the temples and Chinmaya Jeevan Darshan. The Ganesha temple situated at a higher elevation was visible from far way. On the floor below the Ganesh altar, there is a meditation room and next to it a room where likhita japa books were stored. We recalled that CMWRC children and adult members had participated in the likhita japa activity when this temple was under construction, and Pujya Swami Dheeranandaji had presented a check from CMWRC to Guruji, Swami Tejyomayananda for the temple.

The Hanuman temple draws visitors from local community as it is near the entrance and is also the place where bhajans are regularly performed.

Anyone who has seen the movie 'On a Quest' will recognize Chinmaya Jeevan Darshan. With an audio guide coupled with visuals, sculptures and wax figures, one is transported to a plane where it is possible to grasp this fantastic journey and legacy of one man. Just as Mahatma Gandhi shouldered aspirations of freedom of the nation and led the struggle for India's independence, Swami Chinmayananda shouldered the aspiration of freedom, love and compassion, and happiness of one and all, and tirelessly and eloquently spread the message of the Upanishads far and wide. The life-like wax figure of Sri Gurudev reminded us of the style and demeanor of our own Pujya Swami Dheeranandaji.

Annasri is the watering hole where delicious food is served on time and efficiently. All visitors and resident sevaks all come together here. The walkways and gardens all over the campus have variety of colorful and fragrant flowers. Looking up at the sky and in the trees, one will see a variety of birds. The view from the residence halls highlight the hills surrounding the campus. The top of the hills look like Shivalinga. The shape of a mountain near Pavana lake is reminiscent of Kailash that I have seen in pictures and video.

Pujya Guruji's vision and creative efforts of many sevaks has established Chinmaya Vibhooti as a place every CM member should visit - a truly wonderful destination. I recall Guruji's words from 2008 Mahasamadhi Camp – love thy mother, love thy neighbor, love thyself: CM members should lend monetary and seva support to CM in India (mother), our neighboring CM centers and chapters, and our own CM center and chapter. We should all lend support to the many activities and centers in India

including Chinmaya Vibhooti, even as we support our neighbors in CM West and our own center.

Powai Ashram

As we entered Powai Ashram, Sri Gurudev's kutia is to the right, Jagadeeshwara temple to the left, further down, Annasri (kitchen/dining), followed by Saraswati Hall (where Vedanta classes are held). The lodging for the Brahmacharis were to the right. We were taken in by the serene and beautiful location; neat and well organized campus, and people with smiles and warmth.

Swami Bodhatmanandaji asked us to attend the Vedanta class that afternoon and also come to Jagadeeshwara temple for the evening prayers and satsang. The Vedanta class topic was on Indra as a student of Brahma. Indra thinks he understood the teaching of Brahma but returns again and again until he fully grasps the knowledge. We had seen Upanishad Ganga episode on the very topic at Chinmaya Vibhooti, and here we heard Swamiji teach the verses and explore the various commentaries on them. Sitting in the Saraswati Hall, we could image Gurudev sitting on Vyasa Peetha teaching Brahmacharis during early years of Sandeepany. There is large picture of Tapovan Maharaj behind. I had seen picture of Gurudev with Tapovanji in the background – I felt that picture was taken here.

The temple is a popular place with many devotees streaming in and out. The temple was full for evening aarati. We listened to a Brahmachari present a Vedanta topic, followed by Swamiji's discourse on Ramcharitmanas.

The following day, we attending morning Vedanta class. Swamiji was covering chapter 1 of Gita. Later that day, we visited Gurudev's kutir. It was a wonderful feeling to see different rooms and

imagine how they were filled with His grand presence. We again attended the evening aarati at the temple. This day it was Shabana's turn to speak during Brahmachari talks. Shabana had served as summer camp teacher/volunteer at CM Washington, and our children had come to know her as Shabana didi (sister). She is now enrolled in Brahmachari course. Her presentation was well prepared, she spoke with no notes in her hand, and made a logical and passionate explanation of Vedanta message of oneness. Swamiji continued teaching Ramcharitmanas – the theme was Sri Rama addressing the citizens of Ayodhya after completing Rajasuyagam on importance of spiritual progress in this lifetime.

As we left Powai Ashram and India, we were left marveling at the epic journey of Sri Gurudev and the gift he has given us. "Hari Om" is like a passport, as one prominent CM member and sevika said. It opens hearts and doors at Chinmaya centers and families all over. Wherever we went – Allahabad, Chinmaya Vibhooti and Powai Ashram, uttering Hari Om meant welcome, warm smiles and acceptance. This senior sevika said that is what happens when she travels to Chinmaya Mission centers all over India on mission work; and it was the same experience when she was visiting United States last year.

The Brahmachari course at Sandeepany attract not only many young students from all over India and the world, but also many senior sevaks. Many of these students - the youth and senior sevaks will take up serving the mission as acharyas, reenergizing and expanding Sri Gurudev's mission. Sandeepany is a gift that keeps on giving. A modern gurukul in a modern bustling city imparting the ancient, but eternal knowledge of Truth from the Upanishads to an eager student body, and thus blessing the world.

Gurudeva Tava Mahaneeya Krupa.

Hari Om!

Who Slept Very Well?

Part 1 of 4 on the state of Deep Sleep

Acharya K. Sadananda

First, before I forget, I want to express my appreciation to Pujya Sastriji and Shree Subbuji for directing me to the Pancadashi Ch.11, where the deep-sleep aspects are discussed extensively by Shree Vidyaranya. This write-up is in response to the question posed by a sincere seeker in a private mail some time back. His question focused on the following: Who is the experiencer, knower, and the recollector of the deep-sleep state, when the mind is not there. In essence, who slept very well and knows that he slept very well and now recollecting that information when he is awake. This response to the question posed is based on my understanding of both what Shree Sastriji wrote to me in private and what I understood by studying the 11th Chapter, and what Shree Subbuji also posted.

In searching for answers I came across what Shree Ananda Wood wrote many years ago in discussions with Shree Dennis Waite (which is available in his website) where he discussed Shree Atamanada Krishna Menon's understanding of what deep sleep state is. Given the fact that all descriptions of deep-sleep state are necessarily done in the waking state, we can only relay on 1) shastra pramANA and 2) those experiences that are universally common for analysis. The problems with Shree Atmanadaji's interpretation of the state of affairs of deep –sleep state are noted in the end, since there are many people as I see in facebook as well as elsewhere that follow what Atmanadaji writings related to deep sleep state. Since my write-up runs into many pages, I will post them in parts.

Common Experiences in Deep-Sleep State:

We all experience deep sleep state. Everyone longs for it and prepares all the things needed to get comfortable sleep that involves soft bed, pillows, mosquito curtain where needed, etc., to ensure uninterrupted relaxing sleep. The external ingredients do contribute to comfort and happiness for the one who is preparing to sleep. This is the object-induced happiness, when the mind is still awake. This happiness that is born out of comforts makes the mind to give up the waking state easily by detaching oneself from the body-identification and glide into the dream and deep sleep states. This object-induced happiness will not have anything to do with the happiness or suffering in the dream state. In spite of comfortable bed, one can go into uncomfortable dream experiences where the dreamer's body, mind and intellect, BMI, can undergo severe pain and unhappiness. Likewise, in spite of the uncomfortable BMI conditions in the waking state, the dreamer's BMI can have all the comforts in the dream. In essence, the dream experiences can be contradictory to the waker's experiences. While it is still dark in the bedroom where we are sleeping we can dream bright and brilliant sun in the dream. Thus the experiences in the two states can be contradictory. We all experience theses during our waking and dream states. When we go to deep sleep state there appears to be no more identification with BMI-s and their related experiences. Everyone enjoys deep sleep state in spite of whatever conditions one has during waking or dream states. There is a famous Telugu song by Annamacharya that says – nidra okkate....the sleep-experience is the same whether

one is a beggar lying down on the street-pavement or an emperor sleeping in a comfortable bed in the palace.

Thus, everyone experiences happiness in deep sleep state. This happiness differs from the happiness that one gains during waking state and dream state. In these two later states, the happiness is related to fulfilling the desires and thus object-induced happiness; the object can involve physical, mental or intellectual fulfilment. In essence, there is a tripuTi or triad that involves experiencer-experienced and experiencing, each differing from the other. This duality or plurality is inherent in the happiness that one gains in the waking and dream states. In contrast, the happiness that one experiences in the deep sleep state is devoid of the obvious duality of experiencer-experienced. The object oriented happiness arises not from the object per se, but due to the reflection of intrinsic fullness of the self when the mind is momentarily quietened when it is satisfied momentarily with the objective gains. That satisfaction can arise, for example, when a desire for an object is fulfilled. Vidyananda brahmanandaH – where the happiness which is intrinsic nature of Brahman is reflected in the mind as the object-induced-happiness in the mind. There is a hierarchy of levels of happiness that Tai. Up. discusses in terms of the units of one man's happiness who owns the whole world and enjoys everything in it. All these objective happiness are also matched by renouncing the desires for the objects backed up by the knowledge of the scriptures, says the Upanishad – shrotriyasya akaamaya tasya – for the one who understood the import of the scriptures and has renounced the desires pertaining to the loka that he is in. One who has understood the absolute truth and hence has sublimated all the desires for object oriented happiness and therefore revels in himself by himself is a realized master, says Lord Krishna – prajahAti yadA kAmAn sarvAn pArtha monOgathAn,

Atmanyeva AtmanA tuShTaH. Therefore, the happiness of the realized person comes with the clear understanding gained using the mind that he is full and happy by himself, and therefore there is no need to long for object –oriented happiness. Hence, there is no desire for object oriented happiness. That understanding comes using the mind and in the mind only and not in the absence of the mind. In essence, the happiness that one enjoys comes from oneself, either via fulfilment of desires or by renunciation of desires.

In the deep sleep, there is no object-oriented happiness, since no object is perceived as the perceiving senses are folded and there is no subject-object duality. In addition, the mind that experiences happiness also appears to be folded. The question arises as to who experiences the deep sleep state? Is there an experiencer-experienced – experiencing triad in the deep sleep state? When I am awake from deep sleep state I say that I enjoyed the sleep or I slept well. The law of memory is that the experiencer and the recollector of that experience have to be one and the same. I cannot recollect somebody else's experience. Therefore, in principle, I was the one who slept and thus experienced the happiness in the deep sleep state, in spite of the apparent absence of experiencer-experienced duality, since I am able to recollect that I slept very well and that I was happy. I do complain and become irritant, if I did not have good sleep. Hence the benefits of the deep-sleep experience of happiness are felt in the waking state. Some even take sleeping pills to get into this deep sleep state of non-duality where one is relieved of the pains of BMI. Thus the first experience of deep sleep is happiness that one enjoys.

The second aspect of this deep-sleep experience is, I have no knowledge of that experience, while I am in the deep sleep state. This is also a common experience of all beings. I experience homogeneous absence of everything, or absence of duality seen in

the waking and dream states. Scripture (Mandukya Up.) states this as - na kanchana kAmam kAmayate – that there is no desire to enjoy any objects in the deep sleep state since their existence is not perceived or experienced. There is no experienced duality that includes knower-known duality. Hence all the objective-knowledge gained in the waking and dream states is, as though, absorbed into a homogenous mass of undifferentiated knowledge, which scriptures call it as prajnaana ghanam. The prajnaana ghanam includes the knowledge of things I know and also the knowledge of the ignorance of things that I do not know, viditam vA aviditam vA. In one sense, in the deep sleep state, I have the knowledge of the absence of particular knowledge of any kind. What we have is knowledge of the deep sleep state as 'I do not know anything' – that is lack of any particular or differentiable knowledge. Non-existence of objects is also knowledge, since when I am awake I say that I did not know anything during deep-sleep state. This is anupaladbi pramANa, as knowledge of the non-existence of a thing, just as when I say that I see there is no pot here. That is, I see that I do not see a pot here, or I have the knowledge of the absence of a pot here. To have that knowledge, I should have prior knowledge of a pot for me to say that I do not see any pot here. I cannot say there is no gaagaabuubu here, since I do not have a prior knowledge of what gaagaabuubu is. The absence of an object is knowledge only if its presence in the universe was known before, and is stored in the memory.
