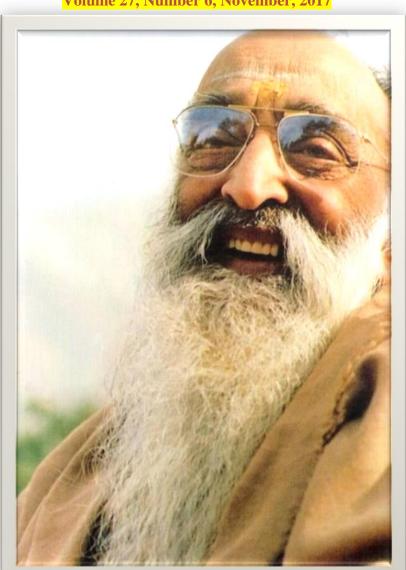


A Bi-Monthly News Magazine of the Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC)



Volume 27, Number 6, November, 2017

Gurudev smiling

Foreword – Swami Dheerananda



Editor's Note: [Our beloved resident Acharya Swami Dheerananda provided a message to the CMWRC community at the recent Annual Fund Raiser. The editorial team is honored to present a summary of his message below.]

Swami Dheerananda addressed the CMWRC family at the Annual Fund Raiser 2017. Responding to a member's request for a tip about how to conquer anger and other negative emotions, Swamiji responded in his inimitable style that an easy method would be to write a check to CMWRC for \$27 each time one felt and failed to destroy a negative emotion. Weaving his message into the fund-raising theme of the evening, Swamiji went on to say that "Behind every generous man is a kind and compassionate woman". He mentioned that he has often heard the soft and compassionate voice of the woman whispering lovingly into the generous man's ear inspiring him to donate for a noble cause. Swamiji thus gently inspired the audience to be generous with their donations and be true to the Chinmaya pledge to "give more than we take and produce more than we consume". Finally, Swamiji reminded the Chinmaya family that behind every kind and compassionate woman is Shri Hanuman who is the embodiment of a quiet, alert and vigilant mind. He advised the members to invoke the grace and blessings of Shri Hanuman to be able to live honestly the noble life of sacrifice and service. He concluded his message with the shloka on Shri Hanuman given on the next page.

By serving, loving and giving, one can purify one's mind which will enable one to meditate and realize. This will then enable a person to be good, do good, be kind and be compassionate.

Hari Om! Hari Om! Unto Sri Gurudev! Swami Dheerananda

ॐ बुद्धिर्बलं Om Buddhir-Balam (One Gets Wisdom, Strength)

ॐ बुद्धिर्बलं यशो धैर्यं

om buddhir-balam yaśo dhair-yam

निर्भयत्वम् अरोगता ।

nir-bha-yat-vam aro-gatā |

अजाड्यं वाक्पटुत्वं च

हनुमत् स्मरणात् भवेत् ॥

hanu-mat smara-ṇāt bha-vet ||

ajād-yam vāk-patut-vam cha

One gets wisdom, strength, fame, courage, fearlessness, health, alertness and eloquence by remembering Hanuman.



Calendar and Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

- December 2nd Gita Jayanti
- December 27th to December 30th Gita Jnana Yagna on Chapter 3 Verses 22-43 by Swami Dheerananda at Chinmaya Somnath
- January 1st New year day program at Chinmayam and Chinmaya Somnath
- March 17th and 18th 2018 Geeta Chanting Competition at all chapters. See website for specific dates and times at your chapter.
- December 9th Life Management Workshop by Acharya Priya at Chinmaya Somnath based on "Storm to Perform" by Mukhya Swami Swaroopananda.

Study Groups

• Please contact Sri Ravi Ravichandran ji by email at ravi5211@yahoo.com, if you are interested in forming or learning more about study groups.

Bookstore/Library

• Browse Books, CDs, DVDs, etc. online at <u>www.chinmayapublications.com</u> 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 2018, are due by December 31, 2017
- Email submissions to smrithi-editor@chinmayadc.org.
- Browse Past editions at www.chinmayadc.org/Smrithi/Smrithi.htm

Useful Links:

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust www.chinmayamission.com

Chinmaya Mission West www.chinmayamission.org

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

Chinmayam Chapter – Silver Spring MD website http://chinmayam.chinmayadc.org/chinmayam-chapter/

Chinmaya Somnath Chapter - Chantilly VA website www.chinmayasomnath.org

Chinmaya Frederick Chapter – Urbana MD website http://www.frederick.cmwrc.org/

Chinmaya Richmond Chapter – Richmond VA website www.chinmayarichmond.org

CMWRC – Washington Regional Center www.chinmayadc.org

<u>Please Note</u>

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!

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News & Tidbits

Unity Walk, Montgomery County

The Chinmayam chapter organized a Unity Walk in Montgomery county. The walk was the brainchild of CM Washington's Richa Agarwala and took shape with assistance of many leaders in the Montgomery County and Washington DC Inter-Faith community. See inside for a more detailed event summary with pictures of this unique event.

Mann Ki Shaanti

CMWRC has partnered with a local radio broadcaster on Channel 102.9 FM to broadcast a series of talks on how to discover inner peace. These talks will be broadcast every Saturday from 9.30 to 10 a.m.

Annual Fund Raiser 2017

CMWRC held its annual fund raiser at Chinmaya Somnath on November 11th. The keynote address was delivered by Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty from Houston. His speech on the importance of a "Quiet, Alert and Vigilant mind" as a key ingredient for a Sadhak was well received by the audience. CMWRC has unveiled special programs over the next few years to facilitate on-going donations to the mission. Please visit our website for more details. As usual, the fundraiser concluded with a sumptuous dinner.

Bhagavad Geeta Jnana Yajna

Geeta Chapter 3 verses 22-43 By Swami Dheerananda

Dec 27 - Dec 30 7pm to 8:30pm

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'Children are not vessels to be filled, but lamps to be lit.' - Pujya Swami Chinmayananda



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Speakers:

Dr. Kenneth Baron

Dr. Amanda Knapp

Click here For Event Details

Where:

Chinmaya Somnath 4350 Blue Spring Dr. Chantilly, VA When: Dec 3rd. 3pm to 5pm





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Subscription: please write to editor@mananam.org. Current and past editions can be purchased at our bookstores.)

<u>Tapovan Prasad Subscription</u> (print version or E-version). Tapovan Prasad brings out each month - excerpts from teachings of Swami Tapovan Maharaj, Sri Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda, Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda and CM acharyas. In addition, it captures the pulse of Chinmaya Mission world-wide with reports on happenings and upcoming events.

Tapovan Prasad Subscription Instructions:

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- 5. Please provide username, password, email...details, etc...and proceed.
- 6. When you click on Axis Bank / CCAvenue payment gateway, enter details and complete the process. (Do revert in case of any problem)

Please consider Other Chinmaya Magazines for your subscriptions:

- <u>Bala Vihar magazine</u> for children, parents and Bala Vihar teachers. subscription link: http://www.chinmayamission.com/balvihar-subscription-overseas/#.WE LYvkrJhE
- Chinmaya Udghosh magazine for youth appropriate for 13-30 year olds subscription
 link: <u>http://www.chinmayamission.com/our-magazines/chinmaya-udghosh/#.WE_MBPkrJhE</u>

Unity Walk of Montgomery County, October 8 2017

Faith Community Awareness Council (FCAC)

Editor's Note: [CMWRC was one of the main organizers of the recent inter-faith unity walk held in Montgomery county for the first time. Please find below a summary of the event from a participant Sitaram Kowtha.]

An Inter-Faith unity walk was held in Montgomery County, Maryland, USA on October 8th, 2017. The walk was the brainchild of CM Washington's Richa Agarwala and took shape with assistance of many leaders in the Montgomery County and Washington DC Inter-Faith community.

The Silver Spring Maryland location of CM Washington served as the starting point of the walk. Representatives from several houses of worship – Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Buddhist shared the stage at CHINMAYAM with our Pujya Swami Dheerananda. Montgomery County leaders were also on hand, including the County Executive and City Council President.



Here is an excerpt from Reverend Mansfield "Kasey" Kaseman of Montgomery County Faith Community Awareness Council (FCAC), one of the key organizers of this walk –

"our confused, conflicted and violent culture, what could be better than crossing lines of difference, learning about different faith traditions and experiencing the love that lies at the heart of each of them?

The Montgomery Unity Walk received rave reviews. The only complaints in its evaluation were that more houses of worship were not engaged in it. In spite of weather reports predicting 80% chance of rain, hundreds of people came for the Resource Fair with 17 exhibitors in the Chinmaya Washington Regional Center. The Chinmaya sanctuary was standing room only for the Opening Ceremony. It included an instrumental call to prayer, musical performance by the ADAMS BEAT (the first Mosque based choir in America), a message on unity by Swami Dheerananda and remarks by County Executive, Ike Leggett, and Council President, Roger Berliner.

Below is a statement by a Unity Walk participant:

"I especially liked being able to go into different houses of worship, especially the Muslim Community Center and Buddhist Temple and learn about their prayers – so many similarities in all of these! We have to see the ONENESS IN ALL! I wish that more members of our community had participated. Thank you for this empowering and unifying event."

On behalf of all present, the FCAC thanks all participating houses of worship, their volunteers, Fire and Rescue Services, Office of Community Partnerships and the Departments of Police, Recreation and Transportation for making it safe and enjoyable.

Please enjoy some pictures from the event below.



Chinmaya Smrithi – Bi-Monthly News Magazine of Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center













Nov 2017

Naad Bindu Music Camp 2017

Purvi Nanavaty

Editor's Note: [The first music intensive Naad Bindu music camp was recently held at Chinmayam. Purvi Nanavatyji has presented an article about the event.]



This summer, we hosted the very first Music Intensive at Chinmayam from July 31st to August 11th. This concept was designed based off of the workshops and camps that happen at the Chinmaya Naada Bindu Gurukula at Chinmaya Vibhooti in Pune. After participating in such workshops at CNBG myself, it was an amazing experience to conduct one on my own. Participants of varying musical backgrounds came together and learned about the many different aspects of Hindustani Classical Music. The camp was a success with 15 students in total. Over the course of two weeks, a lot of topics were covered. We began every day with alankaar practice and tips on how to do riyaz or practice. After these warm up exercises, we slowly went into more detailed aspects of classical music. We went over the 10 thaats or parent raags of Hindustani Music. Another aspect of our traditional music is semiclassical music, also known as light music. Bhajans fall under this category, and we sang many Krishna bhajans as Janmashtami was coming up shortly after the intensive. We started off the mornings with the basic concepts and went deeper and more in detail through out the day, so that when it came time to learn the raags, everyone was mentally prepared for it. During the first week, campers learned Raag Yaman, and during the second week, Bhimpalasi. Raag



A major aspect of Hindustani Classical Music is taal, so Vinay Mallikaarjun came in and gave a few sessions on taal and the effect of tabla on music. The participants enjoyed all of the rhythm sessions that we had, and they always looked forward to learning something new everyday.



On the last day of the intensive, we had a showcase during which the participants performed everything that they had learned over the course of two weeks. It was very heartwarming to hear students share their experiences with their families: some mentioned how their perspectives changed over the two weeks, and others excitedly asked when the next camp was happening!

With the help of Priya Kulkarni – camp volunteer, and Pratima Jadav & Meena Sankar – camp coordinators, we had an amazing first intensive, and we look forward to doing it again soon!

Interview with our BV Alum, Anoop Kumar, MD

by Deepak Chopra, MD

Editor's Note: [One of our BV alumni, Anoop Kumar, MD recently spoke with Deepak Chopra, MD. Excerpts from his interview are presented below with a link to the full interview.]

What is health? What is disease? What is love? What am I? What is the nature of this world?

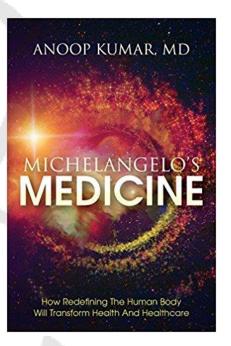
I never learned the answers to these questions in medical school or management school. Instead, I had to look to my roots in Advaita Vedanta to investigate and discover the answers. That education began thirty years ago for me with Chinmaya Mission, where I spent many days of the week in Bala Vihar, Yuva Kendra, and adult Vedanta classes. (My parents thought I wasn't listening. (5))

Churning these questions and measuring the answers against my own experience ultimately yielded a new vision of life, in which the objective sciences I learned are contextualized within the fluctuations of the mind and stabilized in the still depths of the ocean of consciousness.

Seeing the state of healthcare in this country, I couldn't keep my thoughts to myself. They have been elaborated upon in my book, <u>Michelangelo's Medicine</u>, which details how we can see the human body anew as not merely a physical structure, but an integrated activity of thought, emotion, intuition, energy, and ultimately consciousness itself. This new vision is the basis for true healthcare.

In a recent conversation with Dr. Deepak Chopra, I discussed the book's implications for healthcare and beyond. <u>The conversation can be viewed here.</u> I offer all these with love and gratitude at the feet of my many teachers.

Anoop Kumar, MD, attended Bala Vihar and Yuva Kendra for many years at CMWRC and also trained in Carnatak vocal music. He is board-certified in Emergency Medicine and holds a Master's degree in Management. His passion is exploring and translating the intersection of selfawareness, science, and well-being in daily life. Visit Anoop at <u>anoopkumar.com</u>.



"Into the Unknown" a poem by Anoop Kumar

Wearied by traveling the path of the known, her legs gave way and she tumbled to the ground. She looked up, face turned to the wind, and released her yearning into its safekeeping.

And the wind addressed her.

Oh mighty one,

What your limbs fight for cannot be gained though it exists,

What your eyes look for cannot be seen though it sees,

What you heart throbs for cannot be known though it knows.

And she shuddered. A gust blew.

Oh mighty one, to abide as the immeasurable,

See the fighter in the fight,

See the seer in the seen,

See the knower in the known.

Oh mighty one, to awaken from this dream,

See the formlessness of form,

See the boundlessness in all boundaries,

See the unknown in the known.

Oh mighty one, to reach the unreachable,

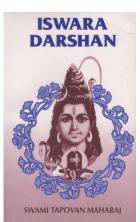
See fullness and emptiness as one and the same, See identity and non-identity as one and the same, See the absolute and relative as one and the same.

And she opened her eyes.

Messages from an autobiography of a Mahatma -3 (Iswara Darshan)

Sitaram Kowtha

Editor's Note: In this series, selected excerpts from the book "Iswara Darshan" by Pujya Swami Tapovan Maharaj of Uttar Kashi, are provided by Sitaram Kowthaji to inspire the students of Vedanta to delve deeply into the glories of a mahatma who inspired our sadguru, Swami Chinmayananda.



2. Swami Tapovanam - Birth

Kerala

Kerala, white with her fame and dark with her perennial forests, lies to the south of Bharat, beautiful like the stage upon which the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity holds her divine dance. The land is graced by the presence of Lord Krishna at Guruvayoor, Sri Ramachandra at Thiruvilamala Sri Padmanabha and at Thriuvananthapuram. The invincible world-teacher Sri Sankara, prince among religious mendicants, who wrote learned commentaries upon the Brahmasutras, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Geeta, and His Highness Sri Kulasekhara-perumal, really a king among devotees of God, were just two among the children of Mother Kerala.

Birth

It was in this blessed Kerala, in a small village near Palakkad, that Swami Tapovanam was born in 1886. The child was born as a result of years of devout prayer. Its parents were distinguished by the satwik qualities like modesty, mercy and liberality, rather rare outside the Brahmanic fold. They were scrupulously clean in their life and conscientious in the performance of their duties. The mother was called Balamba and father Achuthan. There was something of the grandeur of the great ocean about them. They named their son Subramania. The boy was born under the constellation of Revati, on Suklapaksha Ekadasi in the month of Margascersha. For the Hindus, this day is a sacred day on the account of the birth of the celestial song (the Bhagavad Geeta). It is called Geeta Jayanti. The astrologers noted several signs of extraordinary prosperity and extreme poverty. According to one set of signs, Subramania could have no married life at all. Other signs suggested the acquisition of great knowledge and devotion as well as great fame. It is no wonder if the conflicting signs in the horoscope baffled the proud astrologers. How could those money-loving wiseacres read the inscrutable decrees of providence?

Childhood

In time, the child was introduced to the alphabet of his mother tongue, Malayalam. He picked up the letters with wonderful alacrity. Having mastered the alphabet, he began to learn the hymns to Ganapathi, Siva, Krishna, Rama and other Gods by heart. It was a pleasant exercise for him every day to recite the hymns again and again to memorize them. He used to sink into deep thought as he listened to the stotras describing the forms of various gods and goddesses.

To ape others and to quarrel are habits common to ordinary children and monkeys. Subramania never betrayed such weaknesses. By nature, he was firm and in the performance of duties, he never relaxed. He was careless about food. Even as a child he loved to spend his time in solitude. He was fond of visiting holy temples and worshipping Gods. He felt deep delight in meeting holy men.

Early Disposition

To pursue objects of one's love is a quality of the mind. This boy found his delight in worshipping at holy temples and quietly meditating upon the wonders of God's play in creation, preservation and destruction of the universe. Besides, with great devotion, he set up a beautiful piece of stone as Siva linga for daily worship in one of the rooms in his father's house.

In his father's home, it was a daily custom to read sacred books like Ramayana, Maha Bharata and Bhagavatha. During holidays, Subramania attended their reading and recitations with love and devotion. His loving parents used every means to persuade him to wear costly jewels and put on glossy silk but in vain. He appeared all the more attractive in his utter, unornamented simplicity.

Subramania studied Malayalam until he was nine and joined a school to study English. As a student, he was a delight to his parents as he shone among his classmates like the full moon in the circle of twinkling stars.

Great souls are born, not made

Neither the external things like the body, nor the internal things like the mind are new. They are most ancient, and have been existing all along. The manifestation of life is called birth; and its disappearance is called death. Every jeeva assumes several similar and dissimilar bodies. While in each of the bodies, it performs several actions and acquires many pieces of knowledge. It is the sum total of the impressions resulting from knowledge so acquired and actions so performed that is called 'mind'.

It is to be supposed that the impressions so acquired in previous lives were responsible for Subramania's spirit of vairagya (dispassion) and his love of God. The worship of God, practiced through several lives without any eye to its results by the great souls who have conquered all desires, bears fruit in good time. Viewed thus, it will be clear that the rudiments of Subramania's noble aspirations were already present at his birth.

To Be Continued

Iswara Darshanam - VI

Discussion of the 11th Chapter of Gita – Acharya Sadanandaji

Having a desire to see the Lord is one thing but being qualified to see is different. Hence Arjuna says, please show me your aiswarya ruupam, if you think I am qualified to see it.

Q. Why do we require a separate qualification to see this Iswara swarUpam?

Ans. Qualification is required not for seeing but for having an attitude or bhAvana. This requires knowledge (inaanam) + grace (anugraha). Suppose I see a beautiful Natarja vigraham or idol there. Appreciating the artistic beauty of it and taking a picture with a camera is one aspect. Having a reverential attitude towards the idol where a bhAvana or feeling that it is a symbolic representation of the Lord of the universe is another. One takes a camera to take a picture; the other takes a flower and offers by folding his hands in reverential attitude is another. In Hinduism, we have almost every animal that we can think of used by Gods as a vehicle, starting from a mouse, thus developing a reverential attitude for all living beings, sarva bhUta hitE ratAH, compassion for all beings is an essential part in the spiritual evolution, says Krishna. A rational intellect commented that Hindus are very superstitious and they worship anything that crawls, besides stones and trees. It is not a superstition, but is wisdom, since they recognize everything in the creation is nothing but the Lord himself in various names and forms. We are not idol worshipers but worship the ideal behind the idol, just as when we salute a piece of cloth with some design as a flag representing the nation and sing a national anthem saluting that flag. We are not saluting a piece of cloth with some design but saluting a nation that stands for values, culture, and tradition with history. It is the attitude that makes a difference.

Iswara is not separate from the world of plurality. He himself appears as plurality. That forms the Iswara sRiShTi.

All religions say God created this world. However, they rarely address the questions such as, why did He create and on what basis, and where did He get the material to create, etc. Even asking such questions is considered as blasphemy by some religions since they do not have the answers. Only in Vedanta does a student dare to ask such questions, and in fact is encouraged to ask such questions. The answer is provided to a qualified student. In essence, scriptures state the absolute law of conservation that no creation can come out from nothing, and that what is there can never be destroyed – nAsato vidyate bhAvo nAbhAvo vidyate sataH – non-existent cannot come into existence and existent cannot become non-existent. (I consider this as the absolute law of conservation principle, while asat word here has been explained by advaita masters as mithyaa). Hence creation can only be a modification of what is already there.

Normally, in science, we deal with two types of transformations: reversible transformation and irreversible transformation. Reversible transformation is like ice becoming water while irreversible transformation is like milk becoming curds or yogurt. The latter transformation is referred by Vedantins as pariNama. Brahman/Iswara becoming many involves а transformation-less transformation, similar to gold becoming ornaments. Thus gold remains as gold while still there are varieties of names and forms of ornaments, each having its own attributes, utilities, date of birth, etc. Gold can declare that all ornaments are in me, but really there are no ornaments in me as I am pure gold unaffected by the states of experiences of these ornaments. My vision may be limited to only seeing the ornaments and not gold from which they came, by which they are sustained, and into which they go back, because I am attached to those names and forms. I may say, this is my wedding ring and therefore precious, while the other ring is just an ordinary gold ring. Hence raaga and dweshaa, attachments and aversions can cloud my vision of the underlying reality, which remains as changeless in all the changes.

What was there before creation, scriptures say, was pure existence-consciousness, which is limitless – which is called Brahman. He himself became many. For one to become many requires a driving force or Shakti and that force is called mayaa. In addition, Brahman who is infinite cannot undergo a transformation; hence this becoming many is transformation-less transformation like gold becoming many, still remaining as gold. Brahman with maaya Shakti is called Iswara. Hence creation involves Iswara himself appearing as many with different names and forms, using his maayaa Shakti. Hence the essence of everything and every being is nothing but Iswara only. Since He already became many, to see Him one has to see him in and through many only. Hence vision of the world is the vision of the Lord. That is, Iswara has to be recognized as the essence of everything that one sees or transacts with. Perceptually the senses can only see the attributes but locus for the attributes or its essence is nothing but the Lord himself, who is imperceptible to the normal instruments of perception.

We do not see the world, which is nothing but Iswara or Iswara sRiShTi, as is, due to the false goggles of raaga and dwesha, likes and dislikes, that we are wearing. Hence scriptures says there are two creations; Iswara sRiShTi and jiiva sRiShta, the creation of Iswara and creation as perceived by jiiva. The later includes his imaginations and projections based on the Iswara sRiShTi. Each jiiva sees the world differently due to variations in the goggles of raaga and dweshaa. To see creation as Iswara in all His glory, we need to remove the goggles of raaga dweshaas. That requires purification of the mind, which involves neutralization of the raaga dweshaas. The spiritual discipline involves the purification process. Such a purified mind is required to appropriate knowledge that reveals this absolute truth. That is, Iswara pervades in and through the world of plurality. Being infinite the pervasive substantive is imperceptible. This is what was discussed earlier as two essential requirements for the Iswara darshanam, knowledge and grace, or knowledge and attitude or bhAvana.

Arjuna understood the essential teaching up to the 10th chapter as summarized by him in the first two slokas of the 11th chapter. Because of the remnant raaga dweshaas, even though he understood the teaching and has full faith in the teaching as he says that his delusion was gone due to the grace of the Lord, he longs for actually vision of the Lord in and through the world of plurality. Hence he requests Krishna to give that vision of viswaruupa Iswara, if Krishna thinks he is qualified for that. Such a vision involves temporary removal of the goggles of raaga dweshaas which can be achieved by the grace of teacher or Iswara. This will not be a permanent vision, since for that the obstructing goggles of raaga dweshaas have to be removed by spiritual discipline that includes nidhidhyaasana, constant contemplation on the absolute reality. As swami Paramarthanandaji puts it, as one abides in the vision, the frequency, the intensity and the recovery time, FIR, of perturbations reduces. Raaga dweshaas can never be completely eliminated but their effect can be nullified to a large extent.

Krishna grants that vision, which is called divya kshakshu or jnaana kshaskhu or wisdom eyes, to Arjuna. After learning to meditate on the absolute reality many sadhaks or seekers feel at time a vision of peace that passeth understanding. They feel that they have realized the truth. Unfortunately they keep longing for that experience again and again but do not achieve it since the same frame of mind is not there all the time. For a permanent vision or for permanently abiding in the knowledge, constant shravana, manana and nidhidhyaasana are required to eliminate slowly and steadily the lingering vaasanaas or raaga dweshaas. For many the nidhidhyaasana, required to abide in the knowledge gained by shravana and manana, may take a whole life of pursuit as it depends on individual stock of vaasanaas or extent of the lingering raaga and dweshas.

Krishna grants that request by temporarily removing the goggles that obstruct the vision of Iswara in and through the world of names and forms.

To be continued...