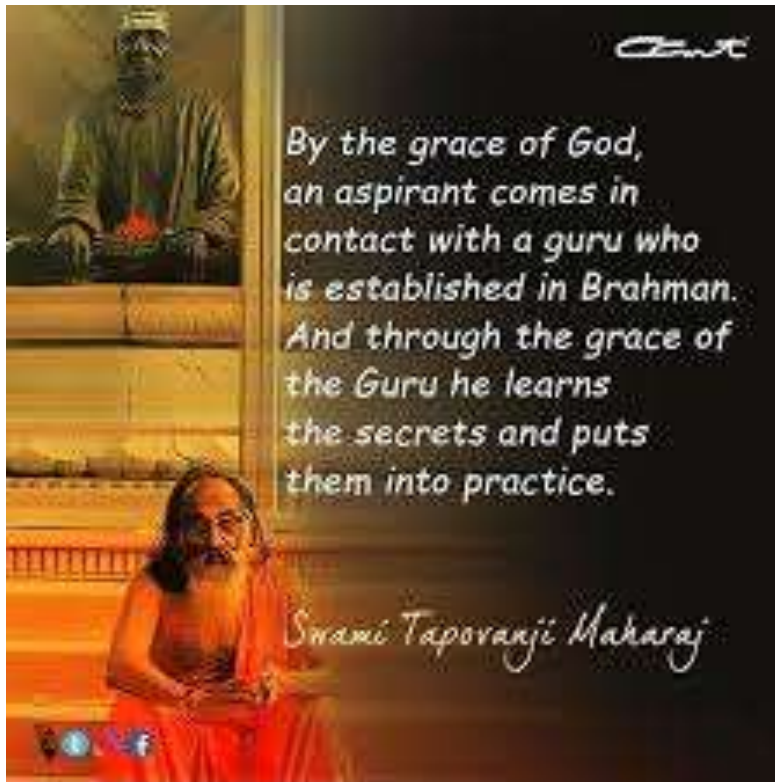


Chinmaya Smrithi



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

Volume 30, Number 5, September 2020



Om Sri Chinmaya Sadgurave Namah

Foreword: Swamiji's Message



Editor's Note: [Our beloved resident Swamiji, Swami Dheerananda is continuing his weekly classes on Vivekachoodamani. Please find below an excerpt from his class on verse 12].

सम्यग्विचारतः सिद्धा रज्जुतत्त्वावधारणा ।

भ्रान्तोदितमहासर्पभयदुःखविनाशिनी ॥ 12 ॥

samyagvicārataḥ siddhā rajjutattvāvadhāranā |
bhrāntoditamahāsarṣabhayaduḥkhavināśinī || 12 ||

Meaning: The fear and sorrow created by the delusory serpent on the rope can be ended only after fully ascertaining the truth of the rope which is available for recognition only through steady and balanced thinking.

The previous verse mentioned that Self-realization can be obtained by thinking alone. In this verse, the Acharya goes on to give us a famous example of the snake and rope. A man coming home in the dusk in a big city stumbles against a rope and thinks that he was bitten by a snake. He reached home and collapsed on the bed thinking that he was going to die shortly. Upon investigation, his close relatives found that the "snake" was nothing but a rope. As soon as the man realized that he was bitten not by a snake but had stumbled across a rope, his fear vanished. The realization helped him overcome his fear. Similarly, we forget our true Self and think that we are the Ego.

The person was so scared (fear) when he came home and sad (sorrow) that he had to leave the world. The fear of the illusory serpent born out of delusion (Tamas) and illusion (Rajas) give rise to fear and sorrow. Delusion of the rope gave rise to illusion of a snake. In the same way delusions of Self gives rise to illusion of Ego in people. The non-apprehension of the Self is caused by Tamas and this results in the misapprehension caused by Rajas.

When will this fear and sorrow end? Once the delusion (cause) is removed, the illusion (effect) will be destroyed

as well. The delusion needs to be destroyed. How can the delusion be destroyed? When the person realizes that the object he stumbled on was not a snake and recognizes that it was only a rope, then the delusion is destroyed. Does this realization happen automatically? No, only through the right means of knowledge can the Self be realized. The perceiver, feeler and thinker (all parts of Ego) are destroyed through thorough clear well examined inquiry. We are well-trained through many lives to be identified with the Ego and we need to practice Nidhidhyasana (meditation dropping all our external identities) for a few minutes every day to start our journey in this spiritual path.

Non apprehension ends when the Truth is apprehended. This leads to liberation from the world of change as explained previously in verse 10.

Calendar and Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

- October 1st: Swami Dheeranadaji's weekly Vivekachudamani classes resume online on Zoom. Classes will be held every Thursday from 7 to 8:30 p.m.
- October 10th : Divya Shakti Reunion – an online dialog with Vilasiniji and Vivekji from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- October 17 – 26 : Online Navaratri retreat. Save the dates with further details coming out soon.
- Multiple online study groups available in the comfort of your own home – please see Flyers in this edition for details.
- August 3rd onward: Chinmaya Ashtottarashata Namavali lectures for 108 days on Chinmaya youtube channel.

Study Groups

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

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- 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 – Sep 2020, are due by August 31, 2020
- 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

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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 – Please contact the editorial staff if interested to volunteer.

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

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News & Tidbits

Pujya Gurudev's Mahasamadhi Day

Pujya Gurudev's 27th Mahasamadhi day was observed on Aug 3rd through online programs at the various local chapters. At Chinmayam, the program featured Swamiji's message on the 108 glorious names followed by Bhajans from various children of the Chinmaya family. At Chinmaya Somnath, the program featured a message from Arvind Bhagwatji and Paduka Puja. Chinmaya Samarpan, an inspiring tribute to Gurudev featuring special offerings from various Chinmaya groups, a dialogue between Guruji and Swami Swaroopananda and events from across the world was made available on the Chinmaya YouTube channel.

Janmashtami celebrations

On August 11th, an online event was held by the CMWRC to celebrate Lord Krishna's birthdate. The program featured dance programs by various Balavihar student artistes as well as Bhajans by many members of the Chinmaya family. Swami Dheeranandaji provided an inspiring message on the occasion.

Launch of CMWRC Youtube channels

CMWRC has launched a new Youtube channel which can be your one-place stop to listen to all the events, discourses and talks from various visiting Vedanta teachers. Please subscribe to this channel and you can access the various events from one channel. Exciting new programs are constantly advertised in the weekly announcements.

Resumption of Balavihar classes

The various centers have resumed the 2020-21 academic year for Balavihar. Treating the ongoing challenges due to the pandemic as an opportunity for exploring new options, the classes are being held over Zoom. Swami Dheeranandaji has also resumed his weekly adult classes on the Bhagwad Gita. With Gurudev's grace and blessings, the organizers and volunteers have all stepped up cheerfully and the first couple of sessions have been conducted successfully so far.

Food Drive

In order to alleviate the distress caused due to the pandemic and in keeping with the spirit of giving back to the local community, Sevaks have organized a monthly food drive where bags of groceries are distributed to needy families. Please review the flyers and weekly announcements to get more information on details of how you can help and contribute to this noble cause.

Swami Ramakrishnananda Jnana Yagna

Swami Ramakrishnananda conducted an online Yagna for 10 days from Aug 23 to Sep 1st on the Adhyasa Bhasa (the theory of superimposition). This foreword to the Brahma Sutra gives the aspiring Vedanta student an excellent introduction. Hosted by the Chinmaya Somnath chapter, the online event was attended by over 200 participants. In his inimitable style, Swamiji was able to not only explain the Vedantic concepts lucidly but was also able to hold the attention of the audience using his day to day examples laced with his humorous style. The class also provided a detailed introduction into the various schools of thought which comprise the Hindu school of philosophy before delving deeper into the theory of superimposition. Swamiji also took time to answer multiple questions from the participants.

Arpanam

Please refer to the CMWRC website to learn more about this exciting new consolidated fundraising initiative. It offers the Chinmaya family an opportunity to donate at various levels on an on-going basis to support the current and future growth of CMWRC. Inspired by Gurudev's message that true loving is not in passive taking but in dynamic giving, the program is expected to help the mission pay down its debt while also positioning it for future growth to continue to spread the spiritual message of Vedanta. Donors making an Arpanam pledge may fulfill the pledge during the calendar year, and all tax-deductible offerings, such as Gita chanting registration, membership, Bala Vihar, enrichment, Guru Dakshina, event sponsorship, etc. are recognized towards the fulfillment of the pledge.

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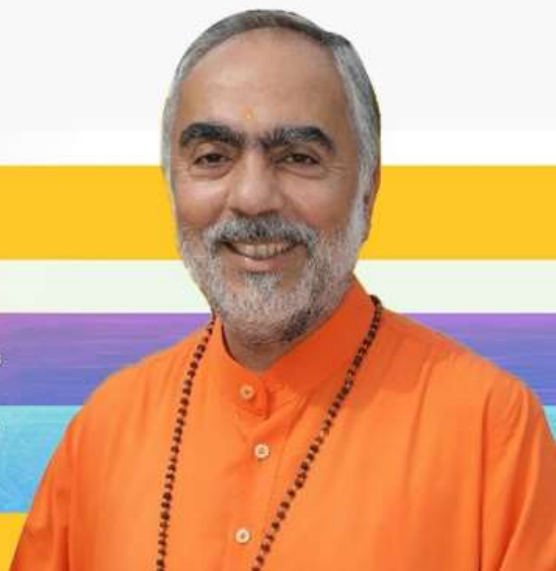
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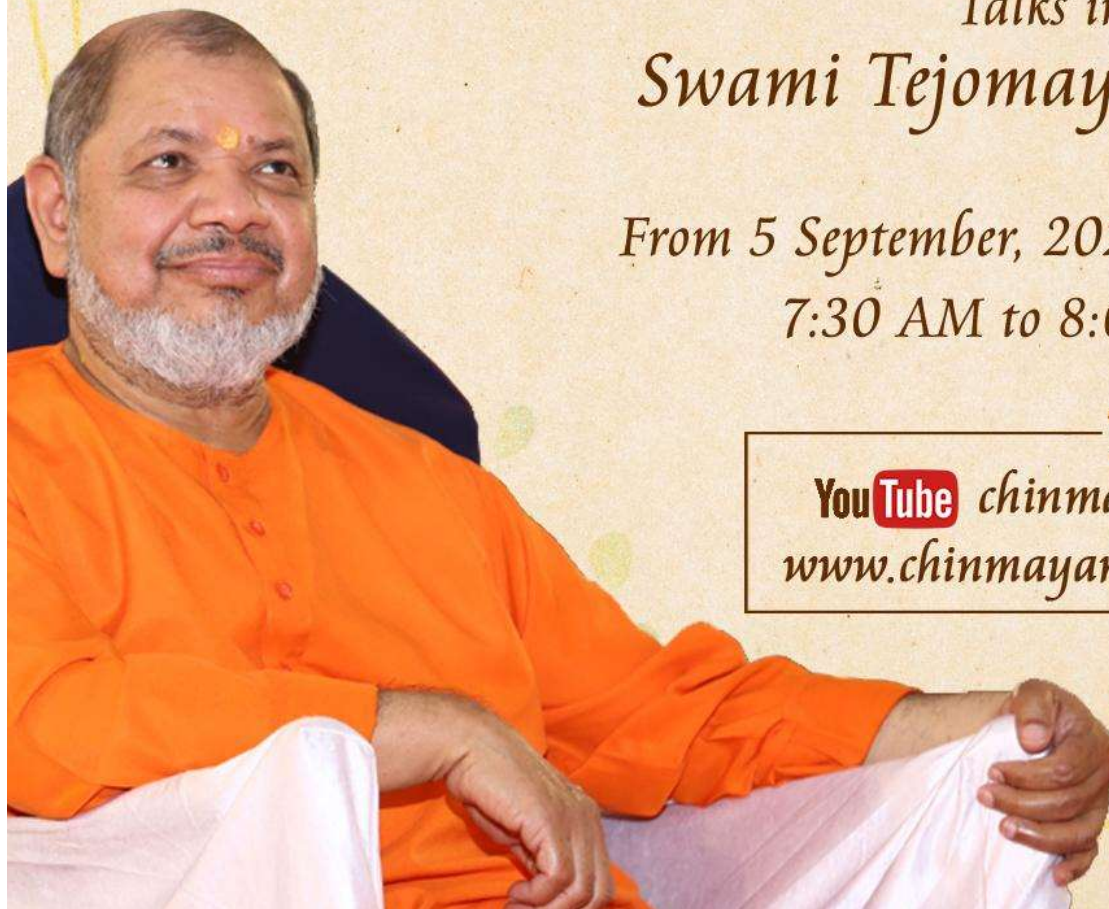
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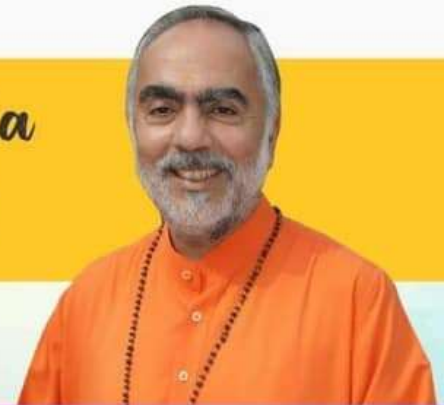


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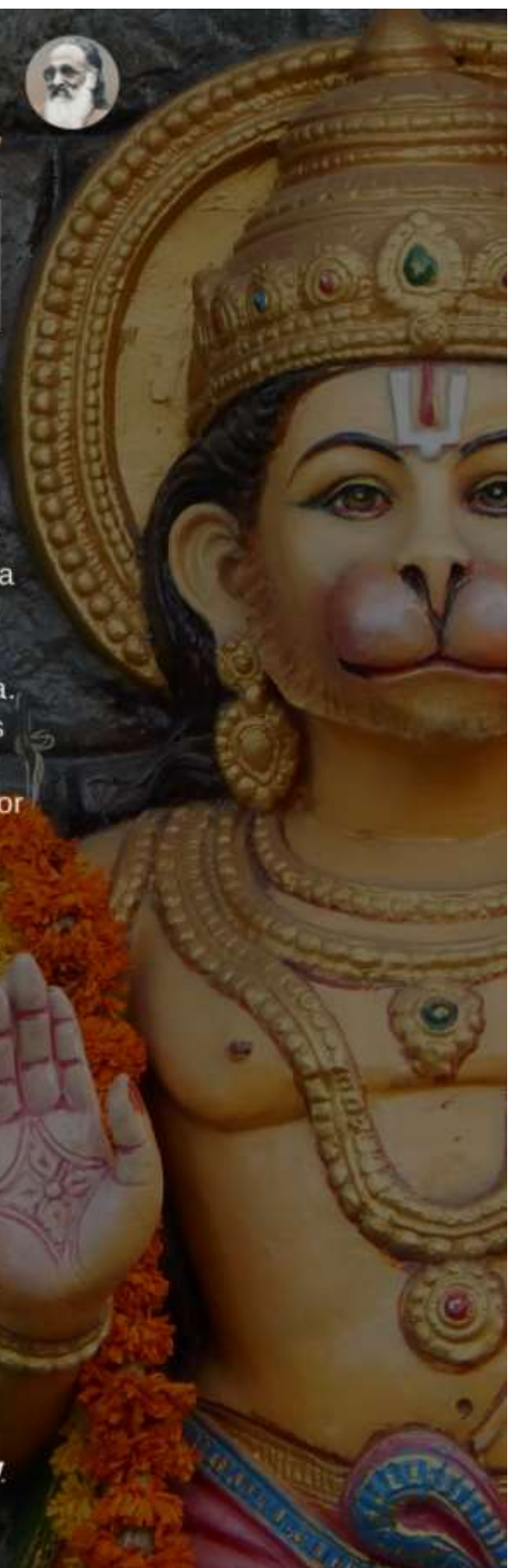
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- Swami Chinmayananda

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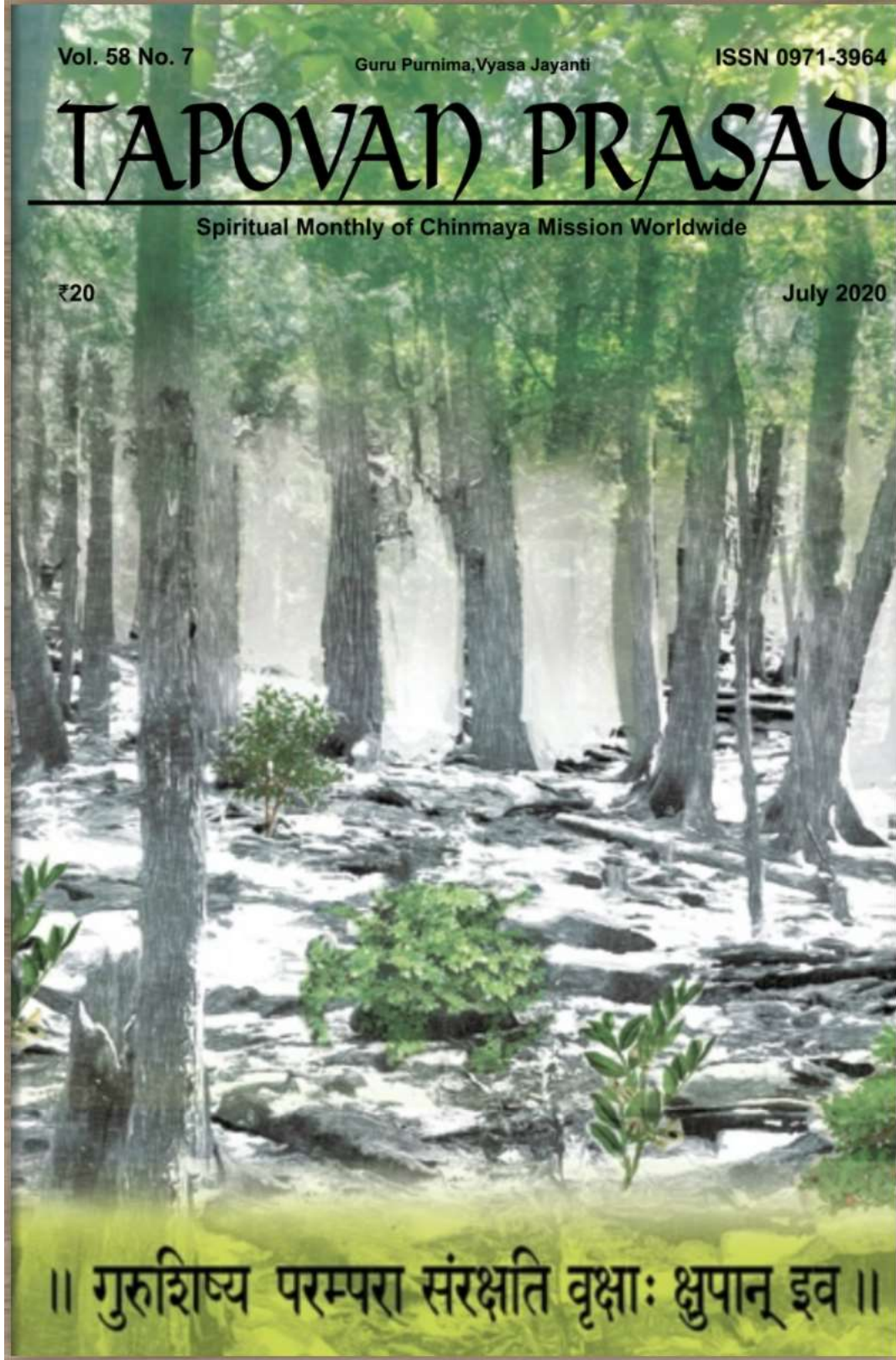
Smt. Medha Bhagwat, a scientist by profession, CMWRC member since 1988, serving currently as a Vedanta Teacher, formerly as a Bala Vihar teacher.

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Reflections on Narayaneeyam – Dasaka 2 -The Form of the Lord

Kodanate Lakshmanan

Editor's Note: With the grace and blessings of Swami Dheeranandaji, this is a series of reflections on Narayaneeyam, a devotional composition by Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiripad, containing the essence of Srimad Bhagawatham.

Narayaneeyam



Om Ganeshaya Namaha. Om Saraswatyai Namaha. Om Shri Gurubhyo Namaha.

Having described the glory of the Lord in the previous Dashaka, the poet Narayana Bhattathiri starts describing the form of the Lord in this Dashaka. The first three verses gives devotees a glimpse into the beautiful form of the Lord. The poet uses his full mastery of the rich Sanskrit language as evidenced by the Shlokas reproduced in this excerpt.

सूर्यस्पर्धिकिरीटमूर्ध्वतिलकप्रोद्भासिफालान्तरं
कारुण्याकुलनेत्रमार्द्रहसितोल्लासं सुनासापुटम्।
गण्डोदयन्मकराभकुण्डलयुगं कण्ठोज्वलत्कौस्तुभं
त्वद्रूपं वनमाल्यहारपटलश्रीवत्सदीप्रं भजे ॥१॥

suuryaspardhikiriiTamuurdhvatilaka
prOdbhaasiphaalaantaram

kaarUNyaakulanetramaardra hasitOllaasaM
sunaasaapuTam |

gaNDOdyanmakaraabha kuNDalayugaM
kaNThOjvalatkaustubham

tvadruupaM vanamaalyahaarapaTala shriivatsadiipraM
bhaje ||

The poet paints a brilliant word picture here. The Lord has a diadem as resplendent as the sun and His forehead shines with the upright sandal paste mark. His eyes are full of compassion and his face is lit up with a tender smile. His neck is adorned with the brilliant Kaustubha jewel along with garlands of Tulasi and various flowers and his chest has the Srivatsa mark.

There is a very interesting story about how the Srivatsa mark appeared on the Lord's chest. Legend has it that Sage Bhrigu was once tasked by the sages with determining which among the Trinity (Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu) was the most Sattvik. Accordingly, Sage Bhrigu visited each of them to determine the extent of their Sattvik nature. When he visited Lord Brahma and Lord Shiva, they were annoyed with him for not showing them respect. When the sage reached Lord Vishnu's abode, the Lord was sleeping. The sage kicked Him in anger. The Lord immediately woke up and apologized to the sage and enquired about his welfare. In addition, he told the sage the He was going to carry the mark of the sage's foot on his chest forever. Thus the Srivatsa mark got a permanent abode in the Lord's chest along with his consort Lakshmi Devi. This story is described in the Bhagawatham and a reference to it is also found in the 89th Dashaka of Narayaneeyam.

Verse 2 continues with a description of the beauty of the Lord's limbs and the adornments on the limbs as well as the beautiful earrings and ornaments. The Lord is

described as wearing a dress made of yellow resplendent silk. His feet are like exquisite lotuses and any devotee who resorts to His feet is immediately relieved of all their miseries. The use of imagery with a deeper Vedantic meaning is commonly found in many Hindu scriptural texts and the Narayaneeyam is no exception. The poet uses his command over the language to describe the beauty of the Lord's form while also hinting at a much deeper spiritual meaning. In Hinduism, the Lord representing the Infinite is often depicted as being of bluish complexion. In nature, one finds that anything that is infinite seems to be of blue color (e.g. blue sky or blue waters of the ocean). The Lord, playing through his Maya appears to manifest in the world mixed with the five elements and this is often represented in terms of His yellow robes.

यत्त्रैलोक्यमहीयसोऽपि महितं सम्मोहनं मोहनात्
कान्तं कान्तिनिधानतोऽपि मधुरं माधुर्यधुर्यादपि ।
सौन्दर्योत्तरतोऽपि सुन्दरतरं त्वद्रूपमाश्चर्यतोऽ-
प्याश्चर्यं भुवने न कस्य कुतुकं पुष्पाति विष्णो विभो ॥३॥

yatttrailOkyamahiiyasO(a)pi mahitaM sammOhanaM
mOhanaat

kaantaM kaantinidhaanatO(a)pi madhuraM
maadhuryadhuryaadapi |

saundryOttaratO(a)pi sundarataram
tvadruupamaashcharyatO(a)-

pyaashcharyaM bhuvane na kasya kutukaM puShNaati
viShNO vibhO ||

The third verse in this Dashaka refers to the Lord's enchanting form as the most beautiful form and the poet uses hyperbole effectively to describe this form. The first three verses of this Dashaka which describe in detail the form of the Lord are widely used as Dhyana Shlokas (literally Shlokas used to meditate upon the form of the Lord) by devotees at the beginning of the Narayaneeyam recitation.

लक्ष्मीस्तावकरामणीयकहृतैवेयं परेष्वस्थिरे-
त्यस्मिन्नन्यदपि प्रमाणमधुना वक्ष्यामि लक्ष्मीपते ।
ये त्वद्द्यानगुणानुकीर्तनरसासक्ता हि भक्ता जना-
स्तेष्वेषा वसति स्थिरैव दयितप्रस्तावदत्तादरा ॥५॥

lakshmiistaavaka-raamaNiiyaka-hR^itaiveyaM
pareShvasthire

tyasminnanyadapi pramaaNamadhunaa vakshyaami
lakshmiipate |

ye tvaddhyaanaguNaanukiirtanarasaasaktaa hi bhaktaa
janaa

steShveShaa vasati sthiraiva dayitaprastaavadattaadaraa
||

In the fourth and fifth verse, the poet states that Lakshmi Devi is Herself enchanted by the beauty of the Lord's form and is always residing in His heart. Lakshmi Devi is generally considered to be fickle and the poet here uses a delicious irony to state that She is fickle with Her devotees only because of Her firm devotion to the Lord's feet. Furthermore, the poet goes on to state that Lakshmi Devi is constantly staying with the Lord's devotees because She wants to hear the praise of the Lord from His devotees. The poet is thus masterfully hinting in these two verses that the true devotee would be engrossed in devotion to the Lord and that material prosperity is guaranteed for a devotee of the Lord. One should try to earn the grace of the Lord rather than run after illusory material pleasures driven by selfish desires.

From the sixth to the ninth verse, the poet goes on to describe the devotees' state of bliss and joy on meditating upon the Lord's form. Going on to compare the various paths leading to self-realization, the poet states that Karma Yoga (selfless dedicated service) is a necessary step which helps to purify the mind and makes the seeker eligible for the next stage of the spiritual journey. By itself, Karma Yoga will not lead to self-realization. The path of Jnana Yoga requires great mental strength and discipline and is very difficult to follow given it's abstract nature, especially in the present age of Kali. The path of devotion (Bhakti Yoga) is relatively easier for the devotee since it allows the seeker to experience the Lord through the mind and senses. This sentiment echoes the statement of Lord Krishna in Chapter 12 (Bhakti Yoga) of the Bhagwat Gita wherein the Lord describes various categories of seekers and advises the devotees to follow the path best suited to their own temperament.

त्वद्भक्तिस्तु कथारसामृतझरीनिर्मज्जनेन स्वयं
सिद्ध्यन्ती विमलप्रबोधपदवीमक्लेशतस्तन्वती ।
सद्यस्सिद्धिकरी जयत्ययि विभो सैवास्तु मे त्वत्पद-
प्रेमप्रौढिरसार्द्रता द्रुततरं वातालयाधीश्वर ॥१०॥

tvadbhaktistu kathaarasaamR^itajhariinirmajjanena
svayaM

siddhyantii vimalaprabOdhapadaviimakleshatastanvatii |

sadyassiddhikarii jayatyayi vibhO saivaastu me tvatpada

premaprauDhirasaardrataa drutataram
vaataalayaadhiishvara ||

The poet concludes this Dashaka by praying to the Lord to bestow upon him that pure devotion to the Lord through which the poet can be blessed with the pure knowledge of the Supreme Brahman. He prays for that experience where his heart would melt in the bliss of intense love for the Lord's feet.

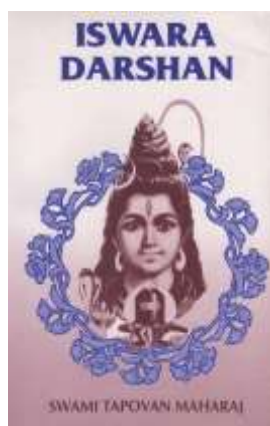
Having described the glory and the form of the Lord of Guruvayoor, the poet begins to describe the qualities of the perfect devotee.

To Be Continued

Messages from an autobiography of a Mahatma -20 (Iswara Darshan)

Sitaram Kowtha

Editor's Note: In this concluding installment, 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 sadhguru, Swami Chinmayananda. The editors would like to express our gratitude and thanks to Sitaramji for his contributions and excellent summary which has helped readers feel inspired and given us a glimpse into the life and teachings of Pujya Swami Tapovan Maharaj.



Part 2 Chapter 10 – Based in Uttar Kashi

Sojourns to Rishikesh

Swamiji would visit Rishikesh from time to time and during his visit he would stay at his old hermitage. Swamiji taught Geeta and encouraged spiritual discussions. One spiritual seeker was Ram Lal from Punjab, and another, Baladev Prasad, who later became a sannyasin by name 'Anandavanam'.

Among the visitors who came to visit Swamiji at Rishikesh were Westerners. They were eager to master yoga as a means to worldly advancement. Whether it is yoga, bhakti or jnana, they will pursue it, if they like, with singular earnestness; but their objective – always worldly prosperity, hardly other worldly happiness.

Conversation with an American lady on the topic of 'Samadhi'

Swamiji: When there is neither the presence or absence of sankalpa (idea) in the mind, that is called samadhi.

Lady: would you kindly explain that to me?

Swamiji: That sankalpa, whose rise makes the mind unsteady, must be checked gradually, step by step. The mind then must be raised higher and higher where all thoughts are checked. That state is called samadhi. When all activities of the mind cease, what remains, what shines by itself, is the Truth, the Self, the Supreme Self. What is required is to abide in it constantly. Experience alone can enable any person to understand it; mere intelligence cannot. Who can explain the sweetness of honey in words? If you cannot enter a prolonged state of Samadhi, you should be satisfied with a shorter one. However brief it is, it enables the person to realize the nature of the Self. Various siddhis are obtained through mental control, but such siddhis can only lead to worldly prosperity and not to liberation. The true seekers of liberation who aim at the highest goal of existence, the unsurpassed, eternal peace, should never care for siddhis. Those who practice Dhyana and Samadhi should make use of the senses only to enjoy such pure objects as would elevate the mind. The impure objects leading to mental demoralization should be discarded altogether.

It should be noted that Swamiji did have an occasional Western visitor with pure hearted desire for learning the Truth.

An eager and well-versed scholar from Punjab asked Swamiji on Samadhi, "What is the state of mind at the time of Samadhi? Does it remain in its own state? If it does, how can Samadhi be nirvikalpa? If it does not, how does he possess the knowledge of the past on returning from Samadhi? Is that knowledge of the nature of recollection or is it of the nature of inference?"

Swamiji: In the state of Samadhi, in the eyes of the man with the concentrated mind, the Self, all pervading as the sky, fixed and without a second, shines in its own glory. Then there is no perception of the mind or anything else. As his gross body remains visible to the eyes of the others, his mind appears to be inactive as in the state of sleep. There is no difficulty in guessing that the mind having forsaken its own nature has become fixated on some other object like the flame which burns steadily in the absence of disturbing wind, because on the termination of Samadhi, the mind is seen to resume its activity as before. The mind, extremely satvik, pure and fine becomes one with the object of meditation in the shape of samskara. When a man wakes up from samadhi he

becomes conscious, “till now I have been in Samadhi”. This knowledge can only be the result of recollection not of inference.

Thus, Swamiji spent his days in Rishikesh in unbroken spiritual bliss. After 1937, he left his cottage at Rishikesh and took up his abode at a lovely hermitage at muktashrama, where he spent the next three years. Later he started spending winters at his peaceful secluded hut in Uttarkashi. Not long after Swamiji left his ashram in Rishikesh, which was on the northern bank of Chandrabhaga, the ashram and land were washed away in floods. It seemed an act of divine dispensation.

Recluse

A recluse, leading a secluded life with a single undivided aim, what work had he to do? Begging for food was his sole activity. But he would get a regular supply of food wherever he was – Rishikesh, Uttarkashi or Gangotri. Swamiji was not born to lead a life of pleasure surrounded by a vast circle of disciples. A number of sadhus who had made great strides in Brahma Vidya and got well established in faith through study and satsang were on the increase, but Swamiji was not inclined to initiate anyone into sannyasa order.

While at Rishikesh, some folks who were at Haridwar for Kumbh Mela, paid a visit to Swamiji. They urged him with respect and humility to give an opportunity to people of his home district in Kerala to see him and hear him. Swamiji respectfully declined, “everything happens according to God’s will, what are we to do, not do or do otherwise”. After 17 years, Swamiji received a letter from his brother asking permission to write letters. Swamiji was moved upon receiving the letter. With love and joy, he wrote back, “there is no objection in writing to me if you require any spiritual counsel. I shall be glad to help you as I help other people who seek my advice. Otherwise, I don’t find any use of augmenting worldly activities by correspondence.”

Conclusion

No attempt is made here to add anything further to the autobiography. The story has been brought up to 1948. Some people may doubt in all sincerity whether the narration of the life-story of a common sannyasin, who has neither in the worldly nor in the real sense anything of the lofty and unique greatness of the sovereigns of Sannyasa like Sri Buddha or Sri Sankara, serves any useful purpose. True; but is it logical to say that the poor flies and mosquitoes have no right to fly, because of the great Garuda, the king of birds? It is hard to decide whether

something is useful or useless, noble or ignoble. Everything is useful, noble and as individuals, unique. Viewed in this way, who can doubt that sannyasin who are solely devoted to God and the stories of their vision of God are of some significance?

Who are you? Where were you born? Where do you come from? What are your customs, ideas, actions? When people are filled with curiosity to learn such facts, it is no doubt one’s duty to satisfy them by providing correct information. Part I of the book should satisfy northerners. Part II of the book should satisfy southerners. Of course, the book does something more than satisfying curiosity. As the author has discussed difficult spiritual subjects in the course of his attractive narration of spiritual history, like sugar-coated pills, they ought to agree with the consumers and benefit them indirectly and help them realize the goal of human existence, namely, the realization of God.

The author salutes again and again the holy feet of sannyasins who are worshipped even by the gods. Only those, who are devoted to God, who are established in God, who are eager to secure the vision of God, who have found God everywhere and in everything, who try to uplift others as well as themselves and thus hallow this world with their lives. These sannyasin are untouched by egotism and delusion, who have conquered the evil of attachment, who are established in the knowledge of the Self, who have freed themselves from desire and from dualities like pleasure and pain (Geeta Chapter 15, Verse 5).

Concluded.

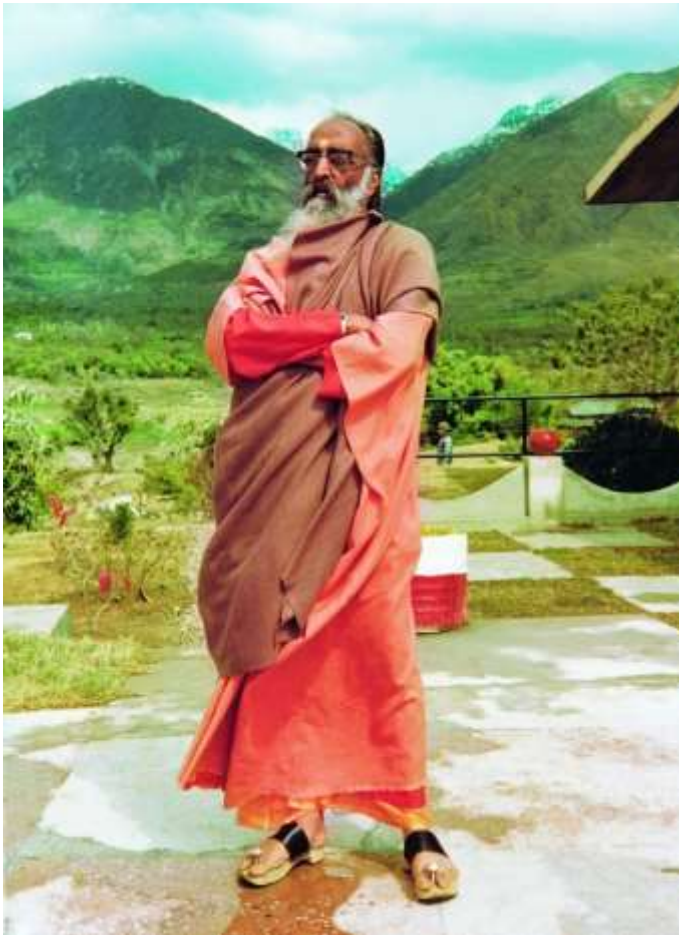
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Pranaams to Sri Tapovanji, Swami Sivanandaji, Swami Chinmayanandaji and Swami Dheeranandaji.

Hari Om!

Gurudev Uvacha

Inspiring Quotes from Pujya Gurudev Chinmayananda



[Editor's Note: Continuing the series of inspiring quotes from Gurudev sourced from the weekly Chinmayam announcements].

Live in Him. Chant.. Roar, Mutter, Repeat, Smile, Feel, Meditate. Live in His Presence --- under His watchful eyes --- under His loving care. Keep smiling.....Be steady in mental thoughts--- steadily remember Him. Live in smiles that rise from within. A bosom full of Him can only be joyous.

Let your hands and legs function; but let a part of your mind steadily hold on to the idea of the divine essence in you.

All duties are to be undertaken and fulfilled with a sense of loyalty and devotion to the Lord, who in His Great Wisdom has placed you where you are in your exact circumstances.

Religion is not an existence divorced from life. It is only a method of quiet searching and deliberate self-adjustment, whereby an individual, so cultured and perfected, can come back to the world to face it more efficiently and more fully.

Whether you accept or reject it, God's love for you is permanent.

The real men of achievement are people who have the heroism to fuel more and more enthusiasm in their work when they face more and more difficulties.

A strong man is one who faces facts. He is weak who wants to escape them.