March 2010, No. 134

In This Issue

SPIRITUAL TRAILS
Graceful Aging
My Teacher, Swami Tapovanam

TRAVELOGUE
Vande Mataram
Chinmaya Dham Yatra

REFLECTIONS
What Prayers Do
Lead Me from the Unreal to the Real
My Guru Is in the Driver’s Seat
Pujya Gurudev’s Demand Ashtakam

NEWS
Prabhavalis Arrive at CM Houston
New Properties for CM Centers
Bhumi Puja in Virginia
CM Dallas/Fort Worth Family Camp
Chinmaya Rameshwaram Opens
CHYK Retreat
CM San Diego’s Ninth Anniversary
CHYK Austin Film Workshop
CM New York’s CORD Walkathon
Kenopanishad at CM Niagara Falls
CM Minneapolis Events

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Easy Sanskrit Online Course
CORD USA
17th Mahasamadhi Camp
Dharma Sevak Course 2010
Pujya Gurudev’s Birth Centenary
Chinmaya Publications: New Arrivals
CIF’s Correspondence Vedanta Courses
Worship at Adi Shankara Nilayam
Ottawa Awakening Canadians to India
Summer CHYK Retreat
CM Trinidad Summer Camp
Vedanta 2010: CMW’s One-Year Course
CM Chicago Summer Kids’ Camps
MISSION STATEMENT

To provide to individuals, from any background, the wisdom of Vedanta, and the practical means for spiritual growth and happiness, enabling them to become positive contributors to society.
Desire is at the root of all action, good or evil. A man of detachment has no desire. Of what use is action to such a man whose sole aim is the realization of truth? He alone is entitled to a life of action, who is still attached to action but unattached to its fruits. It will help him to attain purity of mind. One who is pure of mind, and whose mind is ever fixed in the thought of Brahman and who revels in it needs [to] follow no rules of action. . . . He who has attained purity of mind does not turn his mind to action, which produces a state of turmoil.

Source: *Ishvara Darshan*

Actions are the louder expression of thoughts. The quality of thought is ordered by the nature of our inner belief and faith. . . . Actions are nothing but the actor’s thoughts projected and expressed in and through him.

The secret of action is to get established in equanimity, renouncing all egocentric attachments, forgetting to worry over successes and failures. Every action motivated by egocentric desires thickens the veil of ignorance and permits not even a single ray of our essential Divinity to peep through to illumine the Life in us.

Source: *Chinmaya Uvacha*

The individual cannot have any right or might apart from the total. The part cannot exist apart from the whole. Hence, from the Lord alone do we get the capacity to desire, know, and act. Before acting, if we keep this in mind, then apart from Him, how can we have any doership? He alone acts through us. . . . We thus see that action, done with egocentric desires, binds man. When actions are performed with the understanding that the Lord is the Governor of all actions . . . and the Giver of all results . . . the mind becomes purified since *vasanas* are [being] exhausted, and such a mind becomes an aid to liberate man.

Source: *Upadesha Sara*

Click here for Pujya Guruji’s Itinerary
Acharyaya priyam dhanam-abrtya.

After learning from the teacher, it is the student’s duty to give dakshina. Earlier, no fees were collected; the students went to the guru-kulam to stay and study. Whether rajkumar or brahminkumar, everyone studied together. And at the end, they offered whatever dakshina they wished. Thus, the teacher instructs the students here to be mindful and give what is dear (priyam) to the guru when offering dakshina, for dakshina represents the student’s heartfelt gratitude to the guru. This means, from whomsoever you learn something—whether karma vidya, jnana vidya, or upasana vidya—always be grateful to that person. In this way, maintain respect for the guru-shishya tradition.

Kushalan-na pramaditavyam.

Never be negligent toward your welfare. The expression, “Take care of yourself,” is common. When someone is unwell, we say, “Take care of yourself.” To a traveler, we say, “Be careful,” meaning, no one else will take care of you. And even if someone is willing to take care of you, you must first be willing to accept it. You may be unwell, and your assistant may give you your medications, but you must also be ready to take them. When you travel, your ticket, your bag, your clothes, your passport, your money—all that you need must be with you. Who else will take care of these? And then, of course, there are bigger things to be taken care of—like your income tax filings!

Praja-tantum ma vyavachcbhetsih.

Do not break your family lineage. Go home, get married, have children, and continue your vamsha parampara, for whatever one learns in guru-kulam must be passed on. Of course, there are students who do not enter grhastha ashrama and right away take to the spiritual path instead. For them, praja-tantum does not come in the form of a householder’s life, but in the form of continuing the guru-shishya parampara, so that whatever branch of knowledge has been learnt is passed on in the guru-shishya tradition.

Bhutyai na pramaditavyam.

Here, bhuti means “prosperity.” Never be negligent toward prosperity. In whichever field or profession you are, there must be some material profit to sustain yourself and your family. Accordingly, you must continue to upgrade your knowledge in your field. This is called bhuti. When a doctor decides to specialize in a field, it is for bhuti. Thus, the teaching here is that one should continue learning throughout life and be successful at whatever one does.

Svadhyaya-pravachanabhyam na pramaditavyam.

In self-study and giving discourses (spreading this knowledge), do not be negligent. Continue studying, and share all that you learn. After your study courses in Chinmaya Mission, be sure to become a teacher and impart what you have learned. In this way, your knowledge will be brightened and others will benefit as well.
This does not mean assume a big role as some great guru. Simply share your knowledge. There is a title of jagad-guru, or “teacher of the whole world,” as in, Krishnam vande jagad-gurum, or “Salutations unto Lord Krishna, the teacher of the entire world.” The great acharyas and rishis of the world are also known as jagad-gurus.

There was once a swami who asked, “Why is everyone a jagad-guru? I also want to be a jagadguru!” So he gave himself the title. A very humorous swami he was.

Someone asked him who gave him that title, and he said, “What is the need of anybody giving? I have a disciple. His name is Jagad. And I am his guru. I will show you. Jagad!” he called.

The disciple came running, “Yes, Swamiji!” This was his meaning of jagadguru!

I do not have a disciple named Jagad, so I cannot say I am the guru of the world. But in Sanskrit, jagad-guru yasya, sab jagad-guruh, meaning, the world is my guru, or vishvam gurur-mama—the whole world is my teacher.

Parents should be particularly careful to be aware of and know what their child is learning in his younger years. Often parents want their children to learn Sanskrit stotrams, but they themselves don’t want to study anything. So when the children end up knowing more than the parents, and when they keep asking questions to which their parents don’t have answers, the children start losing respect for their parents. Because parents are role models for their children, their continuing studies play an important part in properly nurturing and grooming their children.

Devapitr-karyabhyam na pramaditavyam.

One must be steadfast in all duties related to the devatas and pits (forefathers), without any inadvertence, forgetfulness, negligence. In Hinduism, there are rituals like deva yajna and pitr yajna.

Here, the term devatas refers to the presiding deities of the forces of nature. We must remain in tune with all of them, with due reverence, so that we maintain ecological balance and harmony. We plant more trees and celebrate “Earth Day,” yet we pollute the waters and exploit the earth. Yajna is not just, “Svaha, svaha.” When we perform havans, it is to value and respect these forces.

So, too, we must respect our forefathers who have passed down noble family and community culture. If one keeps disrespecting everyone and thinks his forefathers knew nothing, then, according to the law of heredity, one inherits the same qualities—because his father knew nothing and his grandfather knew nothing! Apparently no one knows anything and he alone has suddenly tapkofied (fallen) from the sky and veritably knows everything!

As a world citizen, it is important to give due reverence to one’s heritage and global environment.


Matr-devo bhava: Treat your mother as God. Pitr-devo bhava: Treat your father as God. Acharya-devo bhava: Treat your teacher as God. Atithi-devo bhava: Treat your guest as God. (An atithi is a guest who arrives at your doorstep without an invitation or appointment: a-tithi.) These instructions of the acharya are very important, because so much of what he has already taught points to this same teaching of seeing God/the Self everywhere. We say God is invisible to us, for we are unable to know and see Him. But if we cannot first see God as directly present in the form of our mother, father, and guru, then how are we to recognize Him elsewhere?

As you sow, so you reap. When you begin by treating your mother, father, and guru as the Divine, you eventually expand this vision to everyone. In this way, you also set an example for future generations. But if you don’t have even the remotest idea of reverence for anyone, how can you get respect from anyone?

I read a story where a family kept the grandfather in the outhouse. They gave him a bell, so that whenever he needed them, he could ring it. They didn’t want him to come into the main house. One day, the grandchild in the family took the bell. When the bell did not ring even once throughout the whole day, the
father began to wonder what had happened. So he went to check on the grandfather, from whom he learned, “What to do? Your son took it away.”

The father called his son, “Why have you taken it away? Where is that bell?”

The son said, “I have kept it safely for you. When you become old, I will give it to you.”

In *Manu Smriti*, there are clear instructions given to never, even by mistake, insult your mother and father, who have taken so many pains to bring you into this world and raise you. Do not insult them even in a dream! Such is the instruction.

Here it is said that one must treat one’s mother, father, guru, and guest as God. Remember that at some point, you also may become a mother or father, and at some time, you, too, will become someone’s atithi (guest). Therefore, always protect dharma and do the right thing. For when dharma is protected, dharma will protect you, save you, make you prosperous, and even take you to liberation: *Dharmo rakshati rakshitah*.

Some people complain that nowadays, no one follows values anyway, so why should I? Try—see if you can live such a life! But also be ready to pay the price when the time comes! It is interesting to note that values themselves have never lost their relevance in society. From time immemorial, until today, everyone respects values—the only difference is that now most people respect these values in others, but don’t strive to live these values themselves. They want and expect to see values and virtues in others. They may be corrupt themselves, but they respect loyalty in others. Even the criminal wants only that accountant who is reliable and loyal!


Follow only good conduct and perform only good actions. The *acharya* specifies that we are humans, so we may act or think improperly, but we should be careful and alert to keep correcting ourselves. Many people think that they are above all laws, rules, and regulations, and are perfect and free from faults. But the Upanishad teacher does not say this. In fact, he even goes so far as to advise the students to follow only the blemish-free actions and thoughts of their *acharyas*, and none others.

In life, there are always different situations and circumstances where we become unable to determine our duties, proper conduct, right response—whether with a particular person or in a given situation. Doubts may come. If we are confused or unable to find the right answer, then the instruction given by the *acharya* is to approach a good, noble, wise person and follow the advice given, for such people do not have ulterior motives of any kind. Thus, whatever such noble persons do, say, or advise, it should be followed. If you are able to find a solution by yourself, it is good, but if not, don’t let your false pride get in the way of asking for help.

There was a man who was driving, and he got lost. He should have asked for directions, but no, he insisted on figuring it out himself. He kept going on and on and got really lost. Finally, he reached a fork, with one road going right, and one going left. A happy-go-lucky person was sitting under a tree at this junction, whistling away.

The lost man got down and asked, “Where does this road to the left go?”

The reply was, “I don’t know.”

“Where does the road to the right go?”

The reply was, “I don’t know.”

The man said, “What a fool you are!”

The happy-go-lucky person said, “Maybe so. But at least I’m not lost!”

Therefore, if you have any doubt about duty or conduct, approach a noble, wise person, and ask. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna got confused, but at least he asked the Lord for help: “*Shadhi mam tvam prapannam.*”

... to be continued
Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF), a center for Sanskrit Research and Indology, is pleased to introduce its new “Easy Sanskrit Online Study Course” for beginners interested in starting their journey into Sanskrit. This course covers the salient aspects of Sanskrit grammar and vocabulary, and simplifies intricate details for easy learning. Students do not even need to know the Devanagri (Sanskrit) script, or the script for any other Indian language for that matter. So it is truly Sanskrit made easy!

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CORD USA, Inc. serves as the support organization for Chinmaya Organization for Rural Development (CORD) in India. CORD focuses on rural development, empowering women and children, vocational training, and administering the Chinmaya Vijaya orphanage (Andhra Pradesh), in India and Sri Lanka.

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It is several days since the letter was received. The food parcel arrived even earlier. Incidentally Swami Chinmayanandaji happened to tell me of the dispassion, fasting, and other religious observances of the couple (to whom the letters were addressed) imbued with their firm devotion to the godly way of life. It is a matter of regret that in sending replies and directions to even such deserving people there is so much delay owing to my habitual indifference. Hope the old warning not to get worried or vexed over the delay will be remembered.

Concentrate your mind upon japa and meditation. As a rule, in the early morning (brahma mukhurta), and night, sit in a firm posture as long as possible and go on repeating the names of God. Also meditate upon His form. In the early stages the mind will be prone to stray, but don’t give up the practices. If one has sincere faith in God and love for Him, the exercise can give him only joy; in no way can it disgust him.

Moderation in conversation is a great sadhana. As far as possible, talk of God. Don’t pollute your mind with petty talk of love and hate. Avoid criticism of other people. Spend not much time listening to news and newspapers. Keep away from bad company, for it will upset the mind. Now and then observe a day of silence. Eat only pure and satvik food. Never eat too much. Impure or excessive food will put aspirants into difficulties. On some days it is good to eat fruits alone or fast completely. Along with it, it would be better to keep silence and devote entire time to the worship of God.

Reading books of devotion and Self-knowledge, and consideration of their purport, for an hour or two daily, will help to lift the mind above worldly affairs and strengthen the spirit of dispassion. Association with mahatmas is still more beneficial. No book, no scriptures can confer the same degree of benefit. But real sadhus are, of course, rare, and chances to associate with them are rarer still in these days. In the circumstances, a study of the works of ancient sadhus will be something of a substitute for personal contact. What else can be done?

Try to raise the mind above such pairs as pleasure and pain, friend and foe, honor and dishonor. Maintain equanimity. But all this will be possible—the mind will rise above all these—only if the goal is Godhead and nothing else. If the mind plunges into the thought of God and immerses in it, when will it have the time and the opportunity to think of honor and dishonor, etc.?

Balance of mind is moksha. It is God-realization. It is all transcending peace, all transcending bliss. It is the supreme object of human life. All spiritual sadhanas start aiming at it. Perpetual delight of the mind in God principle is its real balance.

Affectionately,

Swami Tapovanam
To write the life of a realized saint of the stature of Shri Swami Tapovanam is to trace sincerely the adventures of his soul in its onward flights to God-realization. A mahatma starts his career in a new world, with a new personality, and maintains absolutely a new set of relationships. Once a sannyasi, he becomes dead to his entire past. And yet, ordinarily, we have almost an unhealthy curiosity to trace the life of the mahatma before he reached the Gate of the Temple to ring the bell in adoration to the Infinite.

Shri Swamiji Maharaj was no tame individual to whom, even after ten years of intimate service and total surrender, could I discover the necessary courage to ask of his personal life before he took sannyasa. Some scrappy material is certainly available in his own words, and here below we are tracing them as best as we can.

A boy was born in Palghat Taluk, in Kerala, in a fairly medium-sized village called Kuzholmannam, in a house called Puthan Veedu (“New House”), in 1889, to Smt. Balamba and Shri Achutan Nair. The child was named Subramaniam. He was called by the parents as Chippu Kutty, and this pet name was taken up later on by all his friends and admirers, all through his life until he took sannyasa.

His early education started with the village teacher and soon he had his ordinary education in the schools at Koduvayur, Kollengode, and Alattur. The educational system available and the subjects taught therein were not to his taste. Therefore, the young boy, at an early age of 14, stopped going to school and came to stay in his father’s house in Koduvayur. This was a great disappointment to his father, who, being a fairly rich landlord, had his own ambitions to see his son educated and employed as a government official. Shri Gurudev himself remembered the painful interview the son had with his father. Expressing his utter disappointment, the loving father one day exclaimed: “What a pity! When hundreds and thousands of children bemoan that they have not the means to educate themselves, you, who have sufficient means, must decide not to continue your education!”

Chippu Kutty did not run away from the school because of idleness. He had the greatest reverence for knowledge, and thirst for learning. He had independently thought of his problem and had come to his own conclusions regarding the type of education that would satisfy him. The boy replied, “Father, I have not discarded education. I have only stopped attending the school.”

Thereafter, with the help of some well-read persons in the vicinity, the intelligent boy started his self-study, and gained a tolerable mastery over the English language. Now he turned his attention to the study of Sanskrit from the local pundits. He learned in the old orthodox style, the divine language, through the study of drama, meter, logic, and grammar etc. At the age of 18, he composed a poem, Vibhakar, in his language, Malayalam. It attracted the attention of all the literary scholars of the time, and when they came to know of the young heart behind the work, he received from them endless applauses.

Even by this time Chippu Kutty had started feeling an urge for the study of philosophy and scriptures. Throughout he was an ardent devotee of the Lord. The weakness of a young man at his age, being materially fairly well off and quite independent, did not touch him. Solitude and books were his companions. He used to spend much of his time in the jungles near his father’s house. Panchakshari was his mantra, and during these days he used to spend a lot of his time regularly in japa and meditation upon the form of Shri Mahadeva.

Pilgrimage was the only recreation for this young man. He had many a time during these years opposed vehemently even vague suggestions of his marriage. When he was 21 his father died and he was extremely shaken up by it. To bring back his mind to equilibrium he turned the impulses of despair at his bereavement into poetic inspiration, and wrote a prayerful poem, Vishnuyamakam. This shock in his life awakened the spirit of renunciation sleeping in his bosom.

At this moment, his only brother was still in the college, and being the head of the family, he could not leave Kerala. However, he spent his time in religious pursuits and study of
spiritual texts. During these days, for a short time, Chippu Kutty left Kerala for Bhavnagar in Saurashtra, and there, at the feet of Swami Shantyananda Saraswati, he listened to two great Vedantic texts: *Samkshepa Sharirikam* and *Vedanta Paribhasha*. He then returned to Kerala and took up, for a short period, in a spirit of service, the editing and publishing of a monthly journal, *Gopala Krishna*, from Palghat. Righteousness, education, character, literature, and other nonpolitical themes of social importance were the discussions in the pages of this journal. During this period the young man often addressed the public, especially in the southern districts of Kerala.

All along this period of external activities, his personal spiritual *sadhana* was never given up, and the inward development in him ultimately conquered all his attention. The publication and other such activities, the writing and the lecture tours, all completely dried away by the time Chippu Kutty entered the 28th year of his life. During this period he had visited Madurai, Shrirangam, Chidambram, Arunagiri, Rameshwaram, and other South Indian pilgrim centers.

At Chidambaram he met Mahamahopadhyaya Shri Dandapani Deekshitar and had discussions with him that cleared many of his difficulties in his independent study of the *shastras*. In Madras, he met Swami Sarvananda, President of Ramakrishna Math. On his return journey he visited also Cape Comorin, Shri Ananta-Padmanabha Temple at Trivandrum, and the sacred temple of Adi Shankara in Kalady.

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At the suggestions of Sri Swami Shantyananda, Chippu Kutty left for Calcutta and lived there for a few months with the swami, who was then the head of the Dwaraka Sarada Pitham. While he was there, Chippu Kutty spent much of his time in lonely parks, meditating on the Self. Pleased by the young man’s spiritual unfoldment, Shri Sankaracharya of the Dwaraka Pitham gave him the title, *Chidvilasa*. While living with Shri Swami Shantyananda, the young man had very many chances to meet and discuss spiritual themes with accredited pundits and scholars of Bengal and the neighboring provinces.

During his stay in Calcutta, Chippu Kutty visited the Belur Math of Shri Ramakrishna Mission and met the president of the Math. He met also Swami Brahmananda, the direct disciple of Shri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. With both of them he had very profitable discussions. He chose to differ from their points of view liberally.

From Calcutta he visited Benares, Haridwar, and Rishikesh, and in each place he met very many pundits, sages, and saints. He visited all the sacred rivers. After staying in the Himalayas for a few days and tasting the joys of solitary meditation, the young man returned, humbly praying to Lord Himavan to call him back speedily so that he may serve the Himalaya mission by achieving spiritual perfection on those immortal and glorious peaks.

On his way back, the young man stopped at Delhi, touched Agra, Mathura, and Vrindavan. En route to Pushkar, he reached Dwaraka, and after a three-day stay there, by boat he came to Bombay, immediately leaving for Kerala by train due to a pressing call of urgent duties at home.

The visit to the North completed the transformation of Chippu Kutty. He returned to Kerala indeed as a *sannyasi* in white clothes! He remained in his native village for about three years, and even today, those who knew him there remember his Kuzholmannam *tapas* with awe and veneration. A furlong away from his ancestral home, in the coconut gardens, on the edge of the extensive fields of cultivation, there stands a humble thatched hut. Within it sits a young Malayali youth, reading, thinking, worshipping, praying, and meditating all day long. Once a day, in the noon, he walks to his home, where is he is the head of the family, humbly sits in a modest corner, and partakes his simple *bhiksha*. Two hours a night he rests; his bed is the bare floor. Early morning after bath, he wears the same wet towel, a single piece of cloth, which is his sole apparel. Thus, in *tapascharya* lived the young man Chippu Kutty, for three years—as a *Chidvilasa*, indeed.

His only brother, by now a graduate in law, had started his practice in Palghat. One day, he approached the younger brother and said, “I propose to start on *Gokulashtami* Day to visit the temple of Hari-Hara on the banks of the Tungabhadra River. Please permit me to start.” On *Krishnashtami* Day, along with his younger brother, Chippu Kutty reached the Olavakode
railway station. As the train was steaming out, his brother said, “Do not stay too long. Come back quickly.” Silence was the reply from this 33-year old, divinely determined pilgrim.

On the banks of the Tungabhadra, obeying the great call within him, this born yogi accepted sannyasa for himself. Thereafter, for seven years, he lived in severe tapas in many places in India. His pilgrimage to Kailasa, his rambles in the Himalayas, his stays at Badri, Uttarkashi, and Gangotri, would all, if properly reported, read like a saga. After these roaming, he reached Rishikesh, and there, on the island Purana Jhadi in the Ganges, in a grass hut, he remained, practicing meditation. It is at this time that he was given formal sannyasa samskara initiation by Shri Swami Janardhana Giri of Kailasa Ashram, Rishikesh. Thus, Chippu Kutty became Swami Tapovanam.

He had visited on foot almost all the important lower peaks of the Himalayas, from Kashmir and Amarnath to Almora and Kailasa. These roamings were undertaken mainly in the summer months; in other months he would be either in Uttarkashi or Gangotri. Throughout, Swamiji had been teaching the students who voluntarily reached him with a request to teach them the Prasthan-traya [three fundamental Vedantic scriptures: Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Brahma Sutras]. However, it must be said that being a very strict disciplinarian, very rarely could his students remain long enough to complete their studies. I myself belong to the last batch that Swamiji taught, and even during my ten years of study and practice, I can count some 30-35 people who came with divine enthusiasm, but alas, could not keep it up for more than a couple of years. The climate, the unavailability of any living conveniences, the lack of nutritious food, the chilly bath in the Ganges, the hard study and the unrelenting discipline—each made life uncomfortable and [collectively] became a suffocating tyranny for those of us who could not get any glimpse of the yonder. Indeed, it must be admitted that had they, instead of merely reading, spent at least a part of their time in reflection and meditation, they could have discovered a secret courage to face the life of tapas there, thus discovering an endless source of joy that would have made it worthwhile for them to brave the discomforts of Uttarkashi. Their failure was certainly of their own making.

Every year, during the beginning of the summer, Swamiji would come to Rishikesh. By about July, we used to go up to Gangotri. And by the first week of November, we used to return each year to Uttarkashi. There we remained until around the following Shivaratri, when we again reached Rishikesh. Our program of study continued at both, Uttarkashi and Gangotri. Swamiji would take daily lessons in the morning for one and a half hours, except in winter, when he would take daily lessons in the afternoon, 2-3:30 p.m. While he was planning to take the Bhagavad Gita, he developed an attack of cough, and whenever he made efforts to talk and explain, the attack would become severe. “You study for yourself. If there are doubts, come to me. I do not think there will be any difficulties for you.” So said Shri Gurudev one day, and my studies at his feet with textbook in hand, ended.

Late in 1955, Swamiji took ill. That year he came from Gangotri early because he felt attacks of frequent giddiness coming to him. Various medicines reached us there. Swamiji would give each one [medicine] a three-day chance. He would say, “We must give chance to others in the queue also,” and smile! Steadily his health deteriorated; digestion became nil. During 1955-56, I ran up to Uttarkashi three or four times, in between my yajnas. All requests to come down to Delhi for a general checkup and diagnosis were angrily turned down. Each time I saw his body getting more and more emaciated. I took with me others, his own old bhaktas, but none could persuade him to come down for treatment. During my last visit in early December 1956, I broke down suddenly and burst out crying. He saw the tears and softly said, “Chinmaya! It is easy to learn Vedanta, easier to preach Vedanta, hard indeed to live the knowledge. When we are born death is born with us. He gave me so long a chance to live and experience. Now He, who was waiting so long, is coming to meet me. You say I must now run to escape Him? How mean! Here how quietly I lived; now I cannot. [I can] quietly die, hearing the eternal music of my Mother Ganga. Don’t weep. You go and continue the work . . . .” I returned to my yajnashala. While I was holding a session in Palghat came the news. The manifested Light divine was reabsorbed into the transcendental Infinite. In 1957 January, on the full moon day, the great Master chose to discard his mortal vesture. Narayanayeti samarpayami.
Dharma Sevak Course 2010
August 7-20, 2010

Conducted by
Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

Text for Study: Tattva Bodha

Registration
Includes lodging and boarding, and excludes transportation: $1,200 per person. Due to CMW’s one-year residential Vedanta Course, seats for DSC are limited; first-come, first-served. Register online here.

Deposit
Your place will be reserved and confirmed when your minimum $100 per person deposit ($103.30 via PayPal) is received. Cancellations made 60 days prior to the course qualify for a full refund of the deposit, less any applicable credit card/PayPal charges.

Cancellations
Cancellations within 14-60 days prior to the course qualify for a 50% deposit refund. Within 14 days of the course, no refund will be issued.

Transportation to/from Piercy/SFO
The nonstop chartered bus departs from SFO on Saturday, August 7, at 2 p.m. Meet at Arrivals (lower level) of the North Terminal, United Airlines, Door #5 before 2 p.m. The chartered bus departs from Krishnalaya on Friday, August 20, at 5:30 a.m. and reaches SFO ~ 11:00 a.m. The additional charge is $90 roundtrip. If you will be driving to/from Piercy, directions are on the Krishnalaya website.

To get more information or to register (online registration is available), go to www.chinmayamission.org/krishnalaya. For specific questions, e-mail info-krishnalaya@chinmayamission.org or call (707) 207-5011.
March 16

The word “explore” is my favorite word, because to explore implies no motive behind an action. When you explore, you are not looking for any one thing in particular, you are not focused on the goal. You then start to enjoy the journey, which is as it should be.

A few days ago, a brahmachari named Samvit Chaitanya came from Mumbai to visit Shayur and attend the completion of his purascharanam, which is a long, elaborate ritual at the end of which you have to feed Brahmins. I had never met him before, but when Shayur and I went to receive Samvitji, we talked for an hour or so. Imagine a guy with a shaved head except for a little shikha in the back, who laughs all the time, pretty much resembles the Laughing Buddha (clothes and all), and speaks Sanskrit. He was Shayur’s Sanskrit acharya during the two-year Vedanta course in Chinmaya Mission’s Mumbai ashram.

Today, Shayur, Samvitji, and I made our way into the city, for it was the end of Shayur’s purascharanam. We offered rituals and/or prayers at Kedar Ghat, Kedareshwar Mandir, and Siddhivinayaka Temple. The latter is located near Manikarnika Ghat, the funeral ghat. It is said that here a cremation fire is burning 24/7. This traditional cremation ground for Hindus is believed to be the most auspicious. Even if one does not cremate here but brings the ashes of the deceased, that too, is considered highly auspicious for the deceased. Interestingly, it is said that it is also most auspicious to bathe in the Ganga at Manikarnika Ghat.

Shayur’s final ritual took place at Siddhivinayaka Temple, where we first made some incantations. After all 25 Brahmins and the food finally arrived, we helped Shayur serve the Brahmins, while Samvitji chanted some mantras. When we later went to Manikarnika Ghat—I thought we were just going to go take a photo—Samvitji caught me by surprise when he said we were taking a full bath in the Ganga at Manikarnika Ghat. We stripped down to our boxers and literally jumped into the river—and it was cold! But once I was in, I didn’t want to get out, because a) I hadn’t swum in years, and b) it felt really, really good.

We made our way through the streets of Varanasi, stopping for orange juice from a street vendor. After putting 5-6 whole oranges into a metal machine that turns and juices the oranges into a big pot, they put a spoonful of masalas into each cup—the best orange juice I have ever had.

We found a place to eat nearby and Samvitji asked me to select from the menu. I picked some traditionally rich dishes and stuffed ourselves beyond compare.

Banarasi paan is world famous—so famous that there are songs about it. It is made with a special, smaller leaf that normal, so it fits more easily into the mouth. Almost every man in Banaras (it seems) is chewing paan. Of course, their paan usually has tobacco and...
other dirty-ish ingredients, so they not only get high, but their mouths are always red in color. People spit and talk with \textit{paan} mouthfuls, and sometimes it gets annoying, but nobody seems to notice or care, because everyone does it. So, we got a \textit{paan} for each of us, without tobacco, and I enjoyed it very much.

We next went to Kalabhairava Mandir by rickshaw. Lord Kalabhairava is the “Guardian of the City,” a form of Lord Shiva that has huge eyes, signifying his ever-watchful state on all that is right and wrong. Lord Shiva as Kashi Vishvanath is simply the ruler/owner of the city. We made it into the temple, paid our respects, and left. It was an awesome experience, because Lord Kalabhairava has an effect of humbling the devotee.

I was now craving \textit{lassi}, so as we made our way out of the web of streets that every temple in the city seems to be hidden within, we found a \textit{lassi} stall and I thoroughly enjoyed my one small pot. We weaved our way out of the maze of narrow lanes and came to a beautiful Ganga at sunset, by Scindia Ghat. We sat on a bench under a big, sturdy umbrella made of leaves. This umbrella concept is quite famous in Varanasi.

I saw and called out to Marc, and soon learned that he was heading home on foot. It was 5:30 p.m., so I decided to go with him to make it in time for my 6:30 class. I noticed how much attention white people get from onlookers and how so many try out their bits of English (usually “Hello!” in an annoying tone, or “Thank you!” or “Money?”). Marc was handling the attention well, perhaps because he was used to it, but there was a point when a kid ran up behind him, jabbed his knee, and ran back to his friends barking like a dog. Marc was relatively unperturbed.

We exchanged pleasantries at the main gate, from where he went to his room and I went to Swamiji’s class, right on time.

\textit{March 22}

Today was \textit{Holi}. Once upon a time, thousands of years ago, there was a little boy named Prahlada, whose father, Hiranyakashipu, was a ruthless tyrant. Hiranyakashipu demanded that everyone in his kingdom worship only him, for he believed himself to be even greater than God. He had received several boons through his penance, making him virtually indestructible. Prahlada, however, was a devotee of Lord Vishnu. A jealous and enraged Hiranyakashipu tried many ways to convert Prahlada, and when he found he could not, he decided to kill Prahlada. One of the ways he tried to do this was through his sister, Holika. She had a boon that she could not be burned by fire, so she said she would sit on a wooden pyre and keep Prahlada in her lap, while Hiranyakashipu lit the pyre. But Prahlada chanted the Lord’s name constantly, so it was Holika who burned and Prahlada did not. \textit{Holi} is named after Holika, and on the night before \textit{Holi}, huge bonfires are lit to celebrate faith and devotion to the Lord, and victory of good over evil.

The sight of \textit{Holi} celebrations at the Rajghat Besant School (RBS) was spectacular: Kids covered in different colors, standing on the edges of RBS’s huge amphitheater pit—and what looked like the largest mud fight I’ve ever seen. I had not taken a bath yet for this reason alone—I was going to get super dirty, and I knew it. On our way down the steps to the pit, we were greeted first by teachers with color and then by the youngest kids and their water/color baby water gun. It was too cute, but when we moved on from there, it became a true brawl. I made my way into the center of the amphitheater, where the older kids were playing (some were my \textit{a cappella} music students). Once they saw me, they loaded me up with water and color. I was lost in the crowd of kids, as was Kalpana, who had accompanied me. And we were all slowly becoming the same color—mud.

I was watching the mud fight for a while, and during that time, I got a lot of water and color thrown at me (and threw a lot at
others as well). The mud fight looked like so much fun. I wanted to be part of it, but did not know how to join. Finally, Shayur pushed me into the center of the mud puddle, and I slipped and fell. It was the best feeling ever, and it tasted good! The very second that I fell into the mud, about 10 kids from the 7th grade piled up on me and smashed mud on my head, neck, and every visible part of me. It was one of my most fun experiences. Nobody felt left out, every single person was having fun, and nobody got hurt. When I managed to get up, I looked like everyone else—a mud monster. Without any inhibitions, I plunged into the festivities. At the end, I was soaked, covered in mud/color, hungry, exhausted, and indescribably happy. We climbed up the steps of the amphitheater, received chai and snacks, and made our way back to the guest house.

The night before, we had made our way by boat to a sandbar in the middle of the Ganga, near Raj Ghat. We had spent time there observing the many bonfires along the riverbanks. Today, we wanted to go there to bathe, but didn’t want to go through the one-hour boat ride to get there. We discovered a path by land and walked until we were 40-50 feet from the sandbar. The locals there told us that we wouldn’t be able to make it across because it was too deep. Fortunately we were among the lucky few who knew how to swim, so we started swimming across the river. Interestingly, we noticed as we looked back, we had a whole group of locals started following us in a line.

On the sandbar, I found a place where the meeting of sand and water had not been disturbed in what seemed like ages. I started to explore this little area, a world all on its own, with creatures I had never seen before. The water was clearer than on the bank that we had come from, so I didn’t feel too bad about entering it. I played with the tiny fish that came to explore my leg, dug a little sand with my foot, and enjoyed the feeling of my foot going deeper down, letting Mother Earth speak to me as She willed. I called Shayur over, and we explored this world together, discovering more creatures we had never seen before, becoming like little kids experimenting. We saw a little creature about the size of my thumb, and it resembled a lobster mixed with a grasshopper, with fins instead of wings. We played with it for a while and headed back for lunch.

On our way through the village, a boy of about my age started talking to us, with slurred speech and a sway in his step. He put his arm around my shoulders and started to walk with us, happily introducing himself as Sagar, saying he was pleased to meet us. He asked me where I was from, and I got away with saying, “I’m from Delhi.” His breath smelled strongly of something and I couldn’t place it, but I figured since it was Holi, he was probably drunk on bhang, a natural opiate. It is good advice to not eat or drink anything from outside a trusted home base on and around days like Holi.

I finally made it back to base, without Sagar, and after lunch, took the longest, most relaxing, and most needed bath of my life.

March 26

My evening classes with Swamiji are 6:30-7:30 p.m., alternating between Vedanta and Sanskrit. In Sanskrit class we are reading Valmiki Ramayana, one of the greatest epics ever written. It is so interesting in language, not only because it is written in perfect meter, but also because it is so detailed, yet dispassionate or objective. The work and the language leave me fascinated.

In each Vedanta class, Swamiji takes a new topic and discusses it for one hour. It is always an interesting discussion and leads to intense contemplation later. I am glad that Swamiji is my teacher, for he is extremely intelligent and fun to listen to, and I am, in fact, learning a lot. Never a dull moment here!

to be continued
Blessed Self,

Hari Om! Greetings from Sandeepany!

I am very pleased to inform you that the Overseas Acharyas’ Conference held at Chinmaya Vibhooti in May 2009 was a great success.

The most important point which was brought out overwhelmingly is that the birth centenary year of Pujya Gurudev (2015 - 2016) should be celebrated in a grand manner befitting His stature. In order to do this, we should gear ourselves from now onward, so that the momentum will be created by the year 2015. Even though it will take some time to plan the details of the various programs to be conducted by each wing of the Mission, one thing can be done with immediate effect: To celebrate the three auspicious occasions—Pujya Gurudev’s birthday, Guru Purnima, and Pujya Gurudev’s Mahasamadhi Day—in a more organized and grand way. These days are, in any case, celebrated in all Mission centers each year.

The suggested plan is to conduct a *Samashti Paduka Puja* as the main function in all Mission centers on these three occasions. Those who wish to participate in the puja can make individual offerings in their local currency. Alternative offerings, as listed below, can also be kept so that all are encouraged to participate in the *paduka puja*.

**Offerings for Samashti Paduka Puja:**

- Puja: $108, Arati: $51, Prasad: $25, Mukhya Yajaman: (center to determine)

Each center should have one *mukhya yajaman* for the main altar. The more people participate, the greater will be the joy for all.

The funds raised thus can be disbursed as follows: 60% to be sent to Central Chinmaya Mission Trust and 40% can be retained by the local center. Centers can also promote book sales or organize some program (e.g., a devotional music recital).

In His Service,
Sidhabari: October 25

We started our day with a 7:30 a.m. satsang by Pujya Guruji in Pujya Gurudev’s kutir. Guruji first introduced Shivaramji, who began serving Pujya Gurudev at the age of 22 and continued to serve for over five decades. Shivaramji movingly said that Pujya Gurudev has never left us, and I felt these words to be true.

Guruji then described the history of the Dhauladhar Mountains and their spiritual relevance, further elaborating on the history of the ashram, Kapil Muni’s gufā (cave), and Sidhabari as the “valley of the siddhas.” Kapil Muni, a siddha purusha (enlightened being) and one of Lord Vishnu’s manifestations, gave Brahma-vidya to his mother, Devahuti, near Kapila-gufā. When Devahutiji merged into the Absolute, a rivulet was formed and some of us hiked to this mystical place that had small stone images amid the woods.

We visited the CORD office at 9:30 a.m., where Dr. Kshama Metre and her team gave us a detailed presentation of all the organization’s programs and activities. We were then split into three groups for a tour of the center. Not a single person left there without being touched by the impact that CORD has had on the thousands of people around the villages and its contribution to the sustainable local economy that has helped reverse migration to cities.
CORD Sidhabari has touched the lives of over 55,000 beneficiaries directly and over 275,000 indirectly, in over 561 villages in the Kangra District and a few villages in the Hamirpur District. CORD recently began replicating its work at two sites in Orissa (Deuladhia and Lathikatta) and two sites in Tamil Nadu (Tamaraipakkam and Siruvani). For more information, visit cordusa.org and cord.org.in.

Paduka puja was conducted by Acharya Sharada Kumar and it was wonderful to see how the students of the residential Vedanta course welcomed Guruji into the puja venue with elaborate chanting.

Many yatris made a short trip to McLeod Gunj and visited the monastery of His Holiness Dalai Lama.

In the evening, Guruji introduced Dr. Gopal Dwarakanath (CM Boston) and Dr. D.V. Pillai (CM Los Angeles), and requested them to speak on their experiences with Pujya Gurudev and the Mission. Their heartfelt stories and life-changing moments touched us all.

After dinner, Dr. Dwarakanath left us in stitches with his comedic and theatrical skills when he did a roast of Manisha Khemlani, Deputy CEO of Central Chinmaya Mission Trust.

Sidhabari: October 26

The inspiration and excitement of the CORD visit from the previous day was still very much with us. Dr. Metre and Guruji hosted a CORD Q&A session for all the yatris.

Guruji described the attitude with which service should be performed and went on to describe how various training programs were being added to the Mission, including a Samaj Seva training course for volunteers to learn to serve the local populace under CORD.
Many of the yatris had several questions about the activities of CORD; their amazement and curiosity could not be contained. We met Usha Rao, a college junior from New Jersey, and Nicole, a Canadian trainee who had come through CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency), which helps fund CORD.

Under Dr. Dwarakanath’s encouragement and enthusiasm, the momentum rose. By the end of the 90-minute session, yatris from different CM centers worldwide had committed to supporting the cause both personally and through their centers. True to the Chinmaya spirit of sacrifice and service, giving more than what we take and producing more than what we consume, in the span of a few moments, $500,000 was pledged for CORD.

After lunch, 24 yatris departed from Sidhabari for New Delhi with Swami Mitrananda.

As the day passed, the mountains glittered with the first dusting of snow atop the Dhauladhar Mountains. Sharadaji pointed out the Shiva and Parvati ranges behind Pujya Gurudev’s samadhi sthala. Shiva looked white and majestic in the background, and Parvati followed the same silhouette in the front, in a dark color.

Following the evening arati and paduka puja, we had a brief kirtan and satsang with Guruji. Many brahmacharins attended as well, and sang bhajans in various languages.

Guruji asked us all to reflect on a question: “How many of us truly enjoy our work, and how many consider it a burden?” He went on to explain that the secret of enjoying work is to do the work for someone we love, and that Someone should be God.
We had a late start and some of us went for a walk, cherishing the waning moments of our stay at Sidhabari. Others tried to cram into their overstuffed bags all their purchases from the outlets dedicated to CORD.

We participated in the Guru paduka puja in Gurudev’s kutir after breakfast and then went on to stuffing our bags and taking a last look in the bookstore.

After an early lunch, we went to the airport to board the chartered flight to Delhi. The majestic Himalayas waved us goodbye. We received a warm welcome at Delhi Airport from CM Delhi devotees and the 24 yatris who had arrived earlier. All the yatris connected onto Jet Airways and took off to Bangalore.

Since 1956, when Pujya Gurudev conducted his first yajna in Bangalore, the city has been one of the most active centers on the Chinmaya world map.

**Bangalore: October 28**

We stayed at Hotel Ramanashree, owned by a Chinmaya Mission Trust member, where we received a warm and loving welcome by all.

We set out after breakfast for Chinmaya Mission Bangalore’s Shripada Kshetra, situated in J.P. Nagar. We received a warm welcome at this beautiful new facility that Gurujii had inaugurated in 2005. Under Gurujii’s grace and Pujya Swami Brahmananda’s leadership, CM activities in Karnataka have grown tremendously.

The current Shripada Kshetra auditorium seats over 700 people. Raviji, Secretary of CM Bangalore, told us a moving story of Mr. Soni, a Mission devotee who served and lived like a saint. Upon his passing, he gave all of his belongings to Chinmaya Mission. Brahmaji named the acharya’s kutir at this center after Mr. Soni.

Our arrival at the Chinmaya Vidyalaya in Koramangala was to the beat of a children’s marching band. Mr. Bhatt, head of the regional schools, gave a presentation on Chinmaya
Vidyalaya and the Chinmaya Vision Program. It warmed our hearts to see the bright faces of tiny tots greeting Pujya Guruji with “Hari Om, Swamiji” in a chorus when he passed by their class.

Next we stopped at Deenabandhu Devasthanam in Indira Nagar, where the Vedaputra (students of the Purohit Course) received Guruji with chants. The temple here was inaugurated in 1979, and the presiding deity is the “Savior of Sadhus.” Swami Brahmanandaji gave a short discourse, in which he emphasized that we are the lamps that Pujya Gurudev has lit, and no matter where we are in the world, we are one family.

We had a sumptuous lunch, followed by a visit to the Chinmaya Mission Hospital (CMH). Dr. Chandra Shekhar, CMH’s Chief Medical Director, gave a detailed presentation on the hospital’s vision and approach. In 1969, Drs. Purushottaman, a physician couple, were inspired by Pujya Gurudev and established CMH as an outpatient dispensary with two beds. It has now grown into a 250-bed multi-specialty hospital with state-of-the-art care.

Dinner was hosted by Mr. Shadaskari, Managing Director of the Ramanashree Group. Mr. Narasimhulu Chetty, a senior Chinmaya Mission trustee warmly welcomed us as part of the family and gave each of us a gift. It was a busy day that allowed us a glimpse of Pujya Gurudev’s vision and how far it has reached.

A key feature of this hospital is that 45% of the care is given almost free of charge. The costs associated with patient care are often 40-50% less than other places with similar facilities. On our CMH tour, we saw various departments and met with a wonderful group of committed medical staff who had chosen this path of service over more lucrative positions.

We returned to the hotel and had a evening satsang with Guruji, wherein he beautifully explained the deeper meaning of the first song in Sant Tulasidasji’s *Vinaya Patrika.*

—to be continued—
Abhinandanam
Sanskrit greeting songs composed and sung by Swami Tejomayananda

Chinmaya Samsaranam
Bhajans by Chinmaya Yuva Kendra Bangalore

Come to Me, My Krishna
Devotional songs for children in English by Brahmacharini Arpita

His Eternal Smile
Songs of devotion and meditation in English by Brahmacharini Arpita

Om Chinmaya Sadgurave Namah
Mantra chanting (continuous) by Pandit Ramesh Narayan

Pooja Vidhi
Puja chants by Swami Brahmananda

Prarthana
Bhajans by Brahmacharini Sunita Chaitanya and others

Soundarya Lahari
Chants by Subbalakshmi Krishnamoorthy

Sundar Shyam
Bhajans by Archana Venkatesh
Guru Stotrams and Bhajans
Audio CD, Stotrams and bhajans on Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda and Pujya Swami Tapovan Maharaj + and Chinmaya Arati, Sung by Swami Brahmananda

Chinmaya Vibhooti
Audio CD, Bhajans on Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda, Sung by Swami Brahmananda and CM Devotees, $6

Guru Stotrams and Bhajans
Audio CD, Stotrams and bhajans on Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda and Pujya Swami Tapovan Maharaj + and Chinmaya Arati, Sung by Swami Brahmananda

OM on Chain
7” Hanging copper OM (for car, etc.), $5

Hanumanji Idol
4.5” Acrylic idol of Hanumanji in golden color, $8

Acrylic Keychain
2” Acrylic keychain with pictures of Hanumanji, Lord Jagadishvara, or Pujya Gurudev, with OM symbol on reverse, $2

Lapel Pin
1.25” Lapel pin with Chinmaya Mission logo, $2
**OM Stand**  
1.75” Golden color OM stand, comes with attractive gift box, $5

**OM Symbol in Case**  
3.75” OM symbol in acrylic case, $6

**OM Pendant**  
1.75” Gold-plated OM pendant, comes with attractive gift box, $8

**OM Pin**  
1.5” Gold-plated tie or lapel OM pin, $9

**Silk Pouch**  
6x7” Handmade silk pouches with OM, in assorted colors, $9

**OM Cotton Shawl**  
Golden OM borders on Kerala handloom cotton cloth, $8
Atop the mountain cliffs,
Aloft, with cooling whiffs,
The Blue Cloud hurried on,
Through the woods so grown.

The tall pines wondered,
For, the Blue Cloud always hankered
On his sojourn in the grayish sky,
To play with their frills and fly.

Birds cooed to each other,
"Why does he not about us bother?"
"Every time he stops and kisses,
And tells us the world’s gossips."

It was now the turn of the hillocks,
To murmur to their neighboring folks;
"Hear! Rude is this Blue Cloud,
Not to stop and give us a hello so loud!"

Poppies and Jasmines shouted,
To their cloud-friend, so beloved:
"O You! Come, come, listen to our tales!
We promise you a good time of gales."

And they were all let down,
As the Blue Cloud didn’t stop to listen.
Racing past through the openness,
He hummed a song with joyfulness:
"In the far away country land,
Was a small house with a beautiful window,
Looking at the sky so grand,
Letting into the house all the sun’s glow.

“There I saw a plain little girl,
Dressed in red and green and blue.
In her small hands a blue lotus petal,
Akin to the sky’s wondrous hue.

“She beheld me, the Blue Cloud I am,
Floating by with carelessness and pride.
‘Come, Come, o please come, if you can!’
She said, ‘If you do, I will all my life,
To thee abide!’

“I grumbled and roared, blared and growled,
But seeing her, o, did not my heart melt?
I flew to her, as love in me was aroused,
Quickly before her, I humbly knelt.

“O little girl, tell me, why did you stop me,
In my long wondrous journey?”
With longing in her eyes,
said she with a beam,
‘I have a message, can you please convey?

“‘A message to my loving
Mother and Father,
Who on the distant hill of Chitrakut reside;
In a beautiful hut by the Mandakini river,
Who in their whole being are loving and kind.
‘Enchanting millions of cupids,
With their unsurpassed beauty and virtues, They verily are the source of Bliss, To the devotees, who on them muse.

“‘Trouble not yourself, dear Blue Cloud, About how you can recognize them, For my Father is charmingly Blue-colored, And my Mother is the lightning in His realm.

“‘His name is the One that protects us From falling into this worldly trance. He holds in His hands, our life’s strings, And ever ready to run toward us, full of grace.

“He is Rama, the lotus-eyed One, Holding a bow and arrow in his gentle hands, Brilliant like many a million Suns, On the thorny paths, though a prince, He treads.

“‘He loves me and about me He always thinks, Waiting for my weekly messages Of my little troubles and worries, Bestowing compassion on me, throughout the ages.

“‘To Him, the exquisite One, O Blue Cloud, Can you please convey my love, My intense longing to Him behold; On my behalf, at His lotus feet, can you bow?

“‘Tell Him His name is the only hope, For this small dove, in the cage of bondage. His name and attributes are my only solace; I had so understood from many a sage.

“‘Also, O Blue Cloud, tell Him so, Again and again, nay, again and again, Drowned in the quagmire of pride and ego. I seek His lotus feet to escape from this pain.

“‘Tell my Mother, the most beautiful princess, Repeated muse that I do of Her, without pause. Blue Cloud, you will be rewarded in excess, For my Father is merciful without cause.

“‘Will you not melt beholding Him, And rain to cool His lotus feet? Like not you will, to depart from Him, With love, at His lotus feet you sit!

“‘O Blue Cloud, now hurry on, without delay. Reach out to my Rama and Sita in the forest. Please stop not for fun and play; Speed on at this little one’s behest.

“‘Thank you so much, Blue Cloud, For taking this message to my Beloved.” Thus, in enraptured tone, he sang loud, Hearing which, Nature herself responded:

“Run, run, O Blue Cloud! To Chitrakut, Taking with you our cooling fragrances. Cool and fan their feet so hurt, We, being unable to behold their loving glances.”

Thus, the messenger Blue Cloud sped, To Rama, engaged in making a flower garland, so lovely, Intent on decorating Sita, with His own hand. The little one, waiting here, for Rama’s loving reply.
What Prayers Do
by Anonymous

My dearest Mansi,

Hari Om! Congratulations on winning First Place in the State Level Table Tennis Tournament held in Mumbai! See the power of prayers! If your chanting of the Gayatri mantra can keep out stressful thoughts and help you focus on your game, it can do wonders in the rest of your endeavors, such as studies and spiritual growth.

Pujya Gurudev says, “Prayers don’t change situations for us, but they change us to face the situations.” A prayer, therefore, is not spiritual begging. It is that which helps us transform ourselves. A prayer is the soap with which we wash away all stressful and ugly thoughts from the mind. Prayers bestow on us peace and joy, without leaving behind any stain of past memories.

Prayers keep us ever-fresh and ever-ready to live in the present moment. A mind that is stuck in the dead past or is stretching out to reach the unborn future can’t live in the present. Did you know that human beings have the freedom to live only in the present, for they can neither live in the past nor in the future—so make the most of your present! Today is the best day, and now is the best moment to give your best. If you can’t focus on the present, then let prayers help you to be in the moment. Prayers soaked in love can do wonders.

Lead Me from the Unreal to the Real
by Neetij Krishnan (Grade 6)

Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda would joke, “In India, people are unhappy. In America, people are comfortably unhappy.” Despite having all kinds of luxury and material objects, despite believing they can become happier by getting more material objects, people don’t realize these cannot give true happiness. To understand where true happiness comes from, one needs to think carefully about what is real.

Vedanta defines as “real” that which remains unchanged in all three periods of time—past, present, and future. Pujya Gurudev gave many examples to indicate what is real and unreal: The Earth moves and is round; this may not be seen, but it is true. The sky appears to be blue, the sun appears to set—these are seen, but are not true. Energy in the atom, the Earth’s gravitational force—not seen, but true. Mirages, dreams, hallucinations—seen, but not true. Like this, this entire world may be seen, but it is not real. So, too, the Truth may not be seen, but it is true.

Anything that changes is not real, because it appears one moment and is gone the next, similar to the bubbles or waves in the ocean that come and go. Pujya Gurudev would say that compared to the lifespan of the Earth, 4.6 billion years, a human lifespan of 70 years is a mere bubble. So, too, compared to the lifespan of the universe, the Earth’s lifespan is a mere bubble. If we make the measure of time long enough, all existence as we know it appears to be a bubble, doesn’t it?

Vedanta says the universe and all the objects in it are created, change, and perish, similar to a newborn child who is created or born, changes to a 15-year-old, and after 90 years, perishes. Anything created must perish. When we look at the things and beings around us, they all have names and forms, and temporarily exist. But anything with a name also must perish, and therefore, it is not real.

True, we can perceive and feel everything around us. We do this in our dream also, but we know the dream is not real as soon as we awaken. Just as the dream world seems to temporarily exist while we were dreaming, so, too, the things and beings in our waking world also appear to exist until we awaken to the Truth. As the dream is temporary, so is this world. And what is temporary cannot be real, for “real” means that which is eternal, permanent, unborn, and undying. Therefore, the only real thing must be the nameless, formless, endless—the Infinite, which is called by many names, such as Brahman.

Brahman is a name without a form; it is used to indicate the one Truth or Source of everything, in everything. Pujya Gurudev said that the Source is in everything, but it is not
those things. For example, you can use Lego toy pieces to make a house, car, plane, and boat. But you don’t call them Legos; you call them a house, car, plane, and boat, though in essence, they are all Legos. You could even say that they are plastic. The things that you have made are like the things in the world—they are all made of a “building block” that has always been and will always be; this is indicated by Brahman. We should not mistake Brahman to be an object, for all objects have name and form, a beginning and end.

Hinduism teaches certain basic values such as truth, charity, compassion, selflessness, and honesty, just like any other religion. Beyond this, Hindu philosophy simply states that individuals must choose their own path to God. Their actions in life will have consequences that they must bear.

Just because something is a sense object, it isn’t non-real. It is “real” in that in it is only “temporarily real.” [That which cannot be said to exist (as real, unchanging), and that which cannot be said to be nonexistent (because it is perceived), is called an appearance, illusion, maya.] So we must experience the world with the right attitude. If we become attached to worldly things, and believe they will make us truly happy, we will be disappointed sooner or later. In life, our search is always for true or eternal happiness, and changing, temporary things cannot provide this.

Interestingly, if nothing can provide true happiness, why go looking for it? This is exactly the point. What two words make up the word “nothing”? No thing. No thing can give us true happiness. Brahman is no thing, and therefore it alone is the source of true, unchanging, infinite Happiness.

One may ask, “Then why not just cut yourself off from society if the outside world cannot give true happiness?” Pujya Gurudev taught that just because the world cannot provide true happiness, doesn’t mean one should not interact in it. For living beings, interaction is unavoidable, so it just needs to be done with the right attitude. We can enjoy and experience the world by living a dharmik life, following basic values, but we should not become sad when things that we enjoy go away. Once we change our perspective about the world, and our expectations from it, we can turn our attention to Vedantic teachings and our Guru’s guidance to help us attain the Eternal. Om Shri Chinmaya Sadgurave Namaha.

My Guru Is in the Driver’s Seat
by Anonymous

It has been more than a decade, and yet the memories are so fresh in the mind. Living in Pujya Gurudev’s remembrance is meditation itself. Where is “me”? Peace alone prevails. It is His presence felt everywhere, here and now.

Just this morning, while driving in rush hour, looking at the slow flow of traffic, I felt as though all the cars were heading toward the same Goal. Sitting in my car, I did not know where everyone was going, but I felt like every car, every road sign was leading me to my destination. Consciously or unconsciously, we hold each other’s hands and go ahead.

But beyond me is my Pujya Gurudev, mightier and higher, leading me, seated in my heart. When he leads, he takes me only to where I belong, and when he guides, it is always lovingly, caringly. He has made life effortless.
Ever rising, ever falling with the waves of time, still rolling on I go
From fleeting scene to scene ephemeral, with life’s currents’ ebb and flow.
Oh! I am sick of this unending force; these shows they please no more.
This ever running, never reaching, nor e’en a distant glimpse of shore!
From life to life I’m waiting at the gates, alas, they open not.
Dim are my eyes with vain attempt to catch one ray long sought.
On little life’s high, narrow bridge I stand and see below
The struggling, crying, laughing throng.
For what?
No one can know.
In front yon gates stand frowning dark, and say: “No farther away.
This is the limit; tempt not Fate, bear it as best you may;
Go, mix with them and drink this cup and be as mad as they.
Who dares to know but comes to grief; stop then, and with them stay.”

Alas for me, I cannot rest. This floating bubble, earth—
Its hollow form, its hollow name, its hollow death and birth—
For me is nothing.
How I long to get beyond the crust of name and form!

Ah, open the gates; to me they open must.
Open the gates of light, O Mother, to me Thy tired son.
I long, oh, long to return home! Mother, my play is done.
You sent me out in the dark to play and wore a frightful mask;
Then hope departed, terror came, and play became a task.

Tossed to and fro, from wave to wave in this seething, surging sea
Of passions strong and sorrows deep, grief is, and joy to be.
Where life is living death, alas! and death who knows but 'tis
Another start, another round of this old wheel of grief and bliss?
Where children dream bright, golden dreams, too soon to find them dust.
And, aye, look back to hope long lost and life a mass of rust!

Too late, the knowledge age doth gain; scare from the wheel we're gone.
When fresh, young lives put their strength to the wheel, which thus goes on
From day to day and year to year. 'Tis but delusion's toy,
False hope its motor; desire, nave; its spokes are grief and joy.

I go adrift and know not whither. Save from this fire!
Rescue me, merciful Mother, from floating with desire!
Turn not to me Thy awful face, 'tis more than I can bear.
Be merciful and kind to me, to chide my faults forbear.

Take me, O Mother, to those shores where strifes for ever cease;
Beyond all sorrows, beyond tears, beyond e'en earthly bliss;
Whose glory neither sun, nor moon, nor stars that twinkle bright,
Nor flash of lightning can express. They but reflect its light.
Let never more delusive dreams veil off Thy face from me.
My play is done; O Mother, break my chains and make me free!
In the silence of Meditation

There I Request!

“Make my hands respect things and beings
You have made;
Make my ears sharp
To hear your soft voice;
And make my mind grateful
For all your endless gifts.”

Demand Astakam | 4

In the silence of Meditation

There I insist!

“Make me wise
So that I may understand
The things you have taught my people,
And learn the art of discovering You
As my own Self.”

Demand Astakam | 5

- Designed by Ranith (CMYK)
CIF's Correspondence Vedanta Course

The Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF) is pleased to invite all spiritual students to enroll in its progressive home-study program for Vedantic studies.

Objective

The primary aim of these courses is to provide clarity and depth in a seeker’s Vedantic studies. Each course covers, in a series of 24 detailed lessons, various central Vedantic concepts as taught in introductory texts such as Vivekachudamani, Atma Bodha, Tattva Bodha, Vakya Vritti, and Panchadashi.

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CIF’s one-year correspondence Vedanta Course is offered on two levels, Basic/Foundation and Advanced. While students must have general Vedantic knowledge before opting for the advanced course, CIF’s specific basic course is not a pre-requisite to sign up for the advanced course, which provides an in-depth understanding of principal Vedantic concepts.

About CIF

Established in 1989, CIF is a research center for Sanskrit and Indology, recognized by the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala, India. Swami Chinmayananda visualized CIF as a bridge between East and West, past and present, science and spirituality, pundit and public. CIF is located in Kerala, India, at the maternal ancestral home and birthplace of the Advaita Vedantin, Adi Shankara.

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Whoever offers Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, that I accept, offered by the pure-minded with devotion.

- Bhagwad Gita 9.26

For More Details Contact

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Adi Sankara Nilayam
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Chinmaya International Foundation (CIF) is located in the sacred precincts of Adi Sankara Nilayam.
A Brilliant Mahotsava and Jnana Yajna at Chinmaya Prabha, Houston
by Padmashree Rao

Chinmaya Prabha, home to the Shri Soumyakashi Shivalaya temple, glowed with joy throughout the weeklong celebrations, December 13-20, 2009, during which the temple deities were adorned with the decorative arches called prabhavalis.

The celebrations began on the morning of December 13 with a unique puja performed by over 400 Bala Vihar children. The stage of the Chinmaya Smrti hall was decorated with the kalashas that would be used during the prabhavali installation around the Lord Ganesha, Lord Shiva, Sita-Rama and Radha-Krishna idols. Each child performed the Shiva Pancakshara puja to his own personal idol of Soumyakashi Shiva—a beautiful etched image of the meditative Lord in a clear glass block, a treasured memento of this occasion.

Bala Vihar teacher, Priti Parikh, led the children through the highlights of the traditional shodashopachara (16-step) puja, which was enhanced by a Powerpoint presentation designed by Acharya Darshana Nanavaty. Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty then addressed all the children with the joyful pride of a father. All parents were overjoyed that the celebrations began with the little hands that will strengthen the future of Chinmaya Mission.

Every evening, December 13-19, the prabhavalis were worshiped with a puja conducted by the resident temple priest. On December 18, Chinmaya Prabha acquired a greater glow with the arrival Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda. The very skies of Houston shone with joy as Guruji began his jnana yajna on the topic, “I am the Brilliance of the Brilliant.” In his three-day talks, Guruji elaborated on the meaning of true brilliance and the story and significance of prabhavalis in a shrine.

All the Bala Vihar children were blessed to have a very special satsanga with Guruji on December 19. The younger children welcomed Guruji with a song of love and surrender, and Guruji became a child in their midst, enlightening them with his simple but profound story of how to see the richness of human life. The older children then came to Guruji singing his composition of Prarthana Gitam. He spoke to them on “The Six A-s of Success.”

December 20, 2009 marked the actual prabhavali installation. In his address, Guruji asked all devotees to remember Lord Rama for dharma, Lord Shiva for meditation, Lord Krishna for practical wisdom, Lord Ganesha as the giver of right knowledge, the divine Consorts who bless us with their shakti, and Guru-bhakti which is the key to divine grace.

All the prabhavalis were then taken in a joyful procession to the temple and installed. This mahotsava will indeed be a treasured memory of bhakti and jnana bliss.

New Properties for CM Centers

It is with great joy and love that CMW heartily congratulates our Chinmaya Mission Alpharetta Family, our Chinmaya Mission Washington DC Regional Family, and our Chinmaya Mission Northwest Indiana Family for a momentous start to the New Year of 2010! By the Lord’s grace, Pujya Gurudev’s blessings, and Pujya Guruji’s guidance, both centers recently acquired property for their centers, in the respective areas of Alpharetta, Georgia; Chantilly, Virginia; and Merrillville, Indiana. Pujya Guruji has name the Merrillville ashram, “Chinmaya Omkara.”

In addition, our Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles Family has purchased a vast new property that combines its two previous locations in Anaheim and Tustin. The beautiful new center is called “Chinmaya Rameshwaram.”

On behalf of CMW’s Board of Directors and the entire CMW Family, we wish all these centers a smooth, powerful, and
Prabhavalis Installed in CM Houston’s Shivalaya
inspiring expansion that spreads joy to all, and establishes Pujya Gurudev’s vision and mission in their respective communities.

**Bhumi Puja in Virginia**
Report submitted by CM Washington DC

With Pujya Gurudev’s grace and Pujya Guruji’s blessings, the bhumi puja of CM Washington DC’s newly acquired property was conducted on Pleasant Valley Drive in Chantilly, Virginia, on January 14, 2010. Through the initiative of resident acharya Swami Dheerananda, the date for the ceremony was fixed on the auspicious day of Makara Sankranti. On this beautiful and sunny winter morning, Bhaskar Sastrigal conducted the purvanga (initial) puja at the residence of Shrikumar and Jaya Gopalakrishna, under the auspices of Swami Dheerananda, Acharya Anant Sarma, and Acharya Pramila Poudel. The event was attended by several key Mission sevaks.

The bhumi puja included Ganesha puja, kalasha puja, and navagraha puja, after which the group carried the consecrated kalasha water and sanctified bricks to the site. Swamiji did the groundbreaking ceremony and offered prayers for the new center’s success. The bricks were laid one by one on the land and kalasha water, milk, and flowers were offered to them. These bricks will be used during construction at the front entrance of the new center to bring it success and help it fulfill Pujya Gurudev’s vision.

As the event drew closer, camp enrollment exceeded expectations many times over. The facilities team had the challenging task of ensuring that the venue would meet the rapidly multiplying needs.

CM DFW’s family camp was themed, “The Journey from Change to Changeless,” and hosted at the DFW Lakes Hilton, December 24-30. After the acclaimed and delightful inaugural invocation by the CM DFW singers and musicians, Pujya Guruji formally inaugurated the camp souvenir, a compilation of prayers, articles, camp schedules, and other pertinent information.

CM Dallas/Fort Worth Family Camp
by Manju Menon

CM Dallas Fort-Worth (CM DFW) members eagerly anticipated the end of 2009 for the long-awaited family camp to finally commence. The sevaks and sevikas had spent the greater part of the year preparing for this special event. December 2009 marked the tenth anniversary of CM DFW’s Saaket ashram, which Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda had inaugurated in December 1999. The Mission’s Bala Vihar had grown from a handful of children in 1989, to 120 students in 1999, to nearly 1,000 students in 2009.
Swami Sharanananda (CM Chicago) simultaneously taught yoga to the children.

In his morning talks, Guruji skillfully navigated us through the poetic verses and systematic verses of Kaivalya Upanishad. Swami Shantananda presented a gopi’s perspective on sublime devotion to the Lord through his talks on Gopika Gitam. Pujya Gurudev’s blessings were sought in the daily guru paduka puja, which was recited by a team of Bala Vihar students trained in the 16 steps of puja. In the afternoons, satsangs were conducted by different acharyas on the practical application of karma yoga in the workplace, marriage, parenting, etc. Children worked on chanting, presentations, props, and scripts for their cultural show and many campers chose to relax by the pool or through other onsite recreational activities.

Pujya Guruji’s evening yajna on Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 17 was open to the public, and followed by a cultural program. Programs included musical performances, dance/dramas, Upanishad Ganga screenings, and Guruji’s overview of Mission accomplishments worldwide and the soaring vision of Chinmaya Vibhooti.

Midway through the camp, CM DFW held its annual fundraising banquet, which was marked by an inspiring keynote address from Pujya Guruji, followed by the highly anticipated unveiling of the CM DFW Family Tree of donors. There were also music and dance performances beautifully rendered by Bala Vihar students.

Featured on the last night of the camp was an elaborate production entitled, Narada Vishada Yoga, presented by all ages, from Pre-K to CHYK. The production showcased the campers’ multifaceted talents. The enthusiastic CHYK force also pitched in at critical times to supervise younger kids, manage food distribution, and perform a plethora of services onsite. Their help was indispensable in the camp’s success.

There were 650 attendees, of which 200 were children and 100 were CHYKs. Pujya Gurudev visited each and every classroom and met all of the children and CHYKs, answering their questions in his inimitable style—a memory that the young attendees will cherish for a long time.

By Pujya Gurudev’s grace and Pujya Guruji’s blessings, CM DFW is fortunate to have hosted this Chinmaya Family Camp, through which the common bonds and shared memories forged will serve to further strengthen the Chinmaya Family worldwide.
New Year’s Day was particularly significant for Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles: Members gathered in full force to not only usher in 2010, but also participate in the religious ceremonies that marked the opening of their new center, “Chinmaya Rameshwaram.”

The excitement was palpable as devotees toured the 28,000 sq. ft. two-storey building, estimated at a little over $5 million. The purchase was made in late December, and volunteers immediately swung into action planning the move from the two existing centers at Anaheim (Kashi ashram) and Tustin (Mithila ashram) to consolidating all activities in the new ashram. The fact that just a month later Chinmaya Rameshwaram was able to host hundreds to an elaborate homa was testimony to the dedication of the volunteers, said Swami Ishwarananda, resident acharya of CM Los Angeles.

The new ashram has ample parking, a huge auditorium with seating capacity for 800 people, a stage with wings, a state-of-the-art audio, lighting and visual equipment, a fully-equipped kitchen and dining hall, a caterers’ entrance and planned service counter, and over 16 classrooms on the first and second floors that all have closed-circuit television and video capability.

The morning of January 1 began with several homas propitiating the Lord in various forms. Lord Ganesha, the lord of new beginnings, was first invoked for blessings. This was followed by vaastu homa to bring good energy. Navagraha homa was offered to encourage positive planetary influences. Sudarshana homa was performed to assuage any negativity, and replace them with divine and auspicious energies. Click here to view the extensive photo album of this event.

CM Los Angeles, with its many chapters in neighboring areas, has around 2,000 Bala Vihar students in total. The new term for Chinmaya Bala Vihar at Rameshwaram, began on January 3 with over 750 students (from the combined Anaheim and Tustin ashrams) gathering in two sessions. Swamiji told the congregation that the name Rameshwaram referred to both Lord Rama and to Lord Shiva. The ashram will house both these deities from the two previous ashrams of Mithila and Kashi, respectively.

The formal punah-sthapana, or “reinstallation,” of the deities took place on Sunday, January 17 in accordance with Vedic rituals and norms. The elaborate oblations were offered along with the chanting of sacred stotrams, “Om namah Shivaya,” and “Shri Rama jaya Rama, jaya jaya Rama.” The deities were placed in decorated vehicles and transported in a procession to the new center, where over a thousand devotees were singing bhajans led by the local Chinmaya Svaranjali group.

From the building entrance to the altar, a red carpet was laid out, along which the smaller deities were carried in the arms of devotees, and the larger idols were pushed on decorated rathas. Amidst the festive sounds of the chenda drums and the blowing of the conch, Lord Ganesha was ushered in with appropriate chants, followed by Pujya Gurudev’s padukas and portrait, and the murtis of Shri Rama, Mother Sita, Lakshmanji, and Hanumanji. There was a crescendo of emotion on the arrival of the serene marble figure of Lord Shiva. Also ceremoniously installed were the symbols of Mother Ganga and the four Vedas. The ashtottara-nama-valis to each deity were recited. Swami Ishwarananda, the center’s resident acharya who spearheaded the growth of the Mission, and Acharya Mahadevan, a stalwart, senior, and dynamic Mission devotee, led the guru paduka puja to pay homage to the Guru-parampara.

From safely and securely transporting the deities, to the immaculate altar and shrine decorations, a well-orchestrated process of detailed planning was successfully completed. After the arati, devotees stood in long lines for darshan, echoing a sight so common in India on auspicious days. This was followed by a sumptuous mahaprasad for all.

2010 Chicago CHYK Retreat

by Ankita Khandai

“Life is a Gift, Living an Art”: Inspiring, fantastic, refreshing, family. These are just
Chinmaya Rameshwaram
The Logic of Spirituality
July 1-5, 2010
11th Annual CHYK Chicago Retreat

Chinmaya Mission Chicago
Badri Aahram
11 S. 80, Route 83, Willowbrook, IL 60527

Full retreat $250, Daily rate $65, Early registration by June 15 $215

More information and registration:
www.chinmaya-chicago.org/chyk
chykchicago@gmail.com
Nitin Goyal 630-806-5917
Jatin Khanna 630-303-1861
some of the words the attending delegates used to describe the 2010 CHYK (Chinmaya Yuva Kendra) retreat held at Chinmaya Mission Chicago’s Badri ashram, January 15-17. Delegates, 18-25 years, came from all over the US and Canada, and included high school seniors and professionals. Two days of lectures, discussions, skits, snowball fights, dance moves, music making, and pure joy. Just two days, and we were family. This is the power of spirituality and satsanga, and of the true friendships formed in CHYK.

The weekend began with prayers and opening addresses by Swami Sharanananda and Acharya Shanker Pillai (CM Chicago), and the camp’s presiding Acharya Vivek Gupta (CM Niagara Falls). The first night included a discourse on “Valuing Peace” by Vivekji, a home-cooked dinner, and icebreakers. The next two days began with yoga in the morning, followed by a series of discourses, discussions, and activities. On Saturday evening, charismatic guest speaker and ABC7 television news anchor, Ravi Baichwal, spoke about success, his life, and the role of spirituality in it, and then joined us for a banquet thereafter.

The theme for this retreat was “Life is a Gift, Living an Art.” Vivekji spoke to us “aboot” everything from stress and time management, to synergy in relationships, to transcending the rat race, to the value of peace. His lectures did not evoke unattainable ideals, but rather focused on spirituality in everyday life, and the small things we can do to make our lives happier and the world around us better. “A spiritual person does not do different things,” he had said in one lecture, “but does things differently.” His down-to-earth quality resonated with the attending young adults, as did his jokes, pop culture references, and chosen select topics. Vivekji also introduced the concept of kaizen, the Japanese term for “continuous improvement.” The discussions concluded that only we can choose to be better than we are now if we have the vision to work toward that goal.

On a personal note, for me as well as most of the attendees, the best part of camp was not only the lessons learned about the art of living, but the community that we developed. There really is no other word for the people I have met than “family.” Between resounding choruses of “Where is the love?” and imaginary picnics that brought along everything from nectarines to Bollywood actors, we created bonds and memories that will last forever. It was amazing to see so many people come together with such warmth and good humor to find ways to help improve ourselves and each other.

Even now, the satsanga we started at the camp stays alive. Through CHYK discussion groups, blogs, emails, and Facebook groups, everyone is trying to take Vivekji’s words to heart and actually apply spirituality to their lives.

We welcome all 18-25 year-old seekers to join the CHYK family. Chicago CHYKs plan to host a July 4th retreat on “The Logic of Spirituality.” The summer of 2010 also marks the fifth anniversary of CHYK West. Additional CHYK camps will be hosted this year in Toronto and Washington DC. For more information, visit chykwest.com.

CM San Diego’s Ninth Anniversary

by Venu Babla

Chinmaya Mission San Diego (CMSD) celebrated its ninth anniversary on January 23, 2010, with Swami Siddhananda leading a bhajan sandhya,
which was preceded by a warm welcome from Srinivas and Lakshmi Sukumar and a progress report on Chinmaya Jyoti by Nikhil Varaiya, and which was followed by a festive banquet.

Swamiji’s bhakti-filled bhajans involved both the young and old, encouraging everyone to sing the praises of the Lord. He was accompanied by a professional tabla player, Jyoti Prakas, and instrumentalists Maya and Asha Sukumar on keyboard, violin, mandolin, and guitar. The melodious evening held the packed auditorium spellbound. Even though Swamiji sang for 90 minutes, the evening flew by, with many audience members wishing for the bhajans and music to continue.

Swamiji then spoke of his joy when singing, describing how he felt Pujya Gurudev’s presence when he sang Guru bhajans. He graciously thanked CMSD for inviting him and remarked on the good fortune of the local members to be able to build a center where Pujya Gurudev had chosen to leave his mortal coil.

After the sumptuous homemade feast, the guests departed, humming music and looking forward to the beginning of CMSD’s tenth year. CMSD started off its tenth year on Sunday, January 31, 2010 with a wonderful Japathon on the site of the planned Chinmaya Jyoti ashram. “Om namah Shivaya” was chanted by over 250 adults and children as they walked on the crisp, sunny day. The continuous japa lasted for approximately an hour as young and old (ages 3 to 80+ years) navigated one of the two trails on the eight beautiful acres of land of Chinmaya Jyoti.

At the end of the hour, all the members gathered and chanted at the base of the mountain named “Tapovan Giri.” The high-energy vibrations permeated the air and seeped into the earth. The innovative Japathon concluded with arati and united CMSD devotees in their pledge, “Chinmaya Jyoti: We will keep it glowing!”

CHYK Austin Film Workshop

by Sharanya Rao

CHYK Austin launched a unique and innovative two-day workshop on film for the very first time on November 14-15, 2009. The workshop was offered with the understanding that film is a powerful means of education and provides an excellent avenue to explore concepts of Vedanta through creative self-expression. Since it is used also extensively by schools and colleges in student projects, it is practical and relevant to today’s high-tech generation. The workshop was conducted by experienced filmmakers in the Austin film industry and facilitated primarily by Austin CHYK Sushma Parmer, a director and producer.

Ten teenagers, grades 7-12, benefited from this workshop, which provided this innovative outlet for teenagers to discover spirituality through their own lens and trained them in the craft of film. CM Austin’s resident acharya, Brahmachari Girish Chaitanya, addressed the students,
expounding on values taught in *Vibhishana Gita*. The students were then asked to focus on any three values to explore in their film projects. After learning the nuts and bolts of the film making process, each team was assigned a spiritual theme. The participants learned to work in a team to film, edit, and produce a three-minute short film, which was to be screened for family and friends. Sushma mentored the groups as they took on the challenge to produce a three-minute film in 24 hours.

Parents were delighted by the results of their children’s work, and many said they would highly recommend such workshops to their friends. The participants were all inspired by the workshop, through which they learned how media can be used to express and convey meaningful themes. To see the videos and photos of this event, go to chykaustin.com.

**CM New York’s CORD Walkathon**

*Report submitted by CM NY CHYK*

Chinmaya Mission New York CHYKs hosted a CORD walkathon in the beautiful and scenic Riverside Park in Manhattan, New York on Saturday, September 19, 2009. The 20+ enthusiastic attendees enjoyed walking in the sunny and crisp Fall weather along with Acharya Krishna Moorthy (CM NY). They also enjoyed their opportunity to discuss topics such as CHYK study groups, Chinmaya Mission activities, and more with Krishna Moorthyji and senior study group sevak, George Romney. CM NY raised over $700 for CORD and looks forward to a more successful walkathon in 2010.

After the walkathon, many of the participants feasted at a nearby vegetarian restaurant and went for coffee elsewhere, discussing exciting plans and goals for CHYK NY and CM NY in 2010.

CHYK Preeta Raghavan said, “It was a wonderful experience for me to help organize the walkathon. I just moved to New York a few months ago and was active before in CM Princeton. It was a great opportunity to meet other CHYKs and start building a CHYK Study Group in Manhattan.”

**Kenopanishad at CM Niagara Falls**

*by Sujata Shah*

The community of Niagara Falls, Canada was blessed by the insights of Acharya Gaurang Nanavaty (CM Houston) during his five-day *jnana yajna*, November 28-December 2, 2009. CM devotees consider Gaurangji as their own, for he has been annually visiting the center for years, proving to be an invaluable teacher, leader, and friend. During the five-day *yajna*, Gaurangji guided us in morning meditation and expounded on *Kena Upanishad* in the evenings. The *yajna* attracted devotees to the Chinmaya Dhara ashram from Buffalo, Toronto, and many cities in between.

Acharya Vivek Gupta offered a vote of thanks to Gaurangji on the last day for painstakingly guiding the mind to seek the Beyond, and for striving to remove all layers of doubt so that each student was left with a clear understanding of the message of guiding the mind to seek the scriptures and meditation. Devotees concurred that with a teacher like Gaurangji, being a student is easy, enjoyable, and enlightening.

**CM Minneapolis Events**

*by Manu Madhok*

CM Minneapolis’s ashram of Chinmaya Ganapati hosted a *jnana yajna* on *Kenopanishad* by Swami Shantananda, January 27-30, 2010. Swamiji addressed
the children and parents during the Sunday session. He told the story of two parent birds trying to empty the ocean in search of their eggs, which were swept away by a wave. Through the story, he emphasized getting started on a daunting task by taking little steps: “Do your best and leave the rest.”

Chinmaya Ganapati celebrated Makara Sakranti and Vasanta Panchami in a Sunday assembly. Mahashivaratri was celebrated on Sunday, February 14 with all the families offering abhishekam to the Shiva linga, to the accompaniment of Rudram and Lingashtakam chanting.
With the blessings of His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda, Head of Chinmaya Mission worldwide, Chinmaya Mission West (CMW) is pleased to announce its one-year, residential Vedanta Course at CMW’s headquarters, the ashram of Krishnalaya in Northern California, amidst the serene Redwoods.

This residential, full-time course, without any holidays, will be conducted in English.

**ELIGIBILITY**
This Course is open to sincere seekers between the ages of 20 and 70 years.

**REGISTRATION**
$12,000 (covers registration, lodging, boarding, and books; payable in installments)

**DATES / ACHARYAS**
The course will commence on August 7, 2010 and conclude in August 2011.

Full-time Resident Acharya
Acharya Smt. Sharada Kumar

August 2010
Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

August-October 2010
Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya

November-December 2010
Swami Ishwarananda

January 2011
Swami Shantananda

February-March 2011
Swami Ishwarananda

April-May 2011
Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya

July 2011
Acharya Smt. Sharada Kumar

August 2011
Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda

**TEXTS**
His Holiness Swami Tejomayananda: Mandukya Upanishad, Tattva Bodha, Essence of Shrimad Bhagavatam and Ramayana

Swami Shantananda: Dakshinamurti Stotram, Sat Darshanam

Swami Ishwarananda: Shrimad Bhagavad Gita

Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya: Upadesha Sara, Atma Bodha, Drg Drshya Viveka, Panchadashi Ch. 1, and Upanishads (Ishavasya, Kena, Katha, Mundaka)

Acharya Sharada Kumar: Taittiriya Upanishad, Vivekachudamani, Vedic Chanting, Sanskrit, Sahasranamavali, Bhajans

**TO REGISTER**
Complete the online form at www.chinmayamission.org/piercy

All applications received will be reviewed. Eligible candidates will be asked to schedule a personal interview, the details of which will be provided at a later date.

For more information: prabodh@chinmayamission.org (707) 207-5011
Chinmaya Mission Chicago
2010 Vedic Heritage Youth Camps

June 21-27
Yamunotri Ashram
“GOD-SYMBOLISM and RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES”
30877 N. Fairfield Rd., Grayslake, IL 60030

July 19-26
Badri Ashram
“MOTHER GODDESS: DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS”
11 S. 80 Rt. 83, Willowbrook, IL 60527

An Upanayanam (Sacred Thread) Ceremony for children will be conducted at both camps. Contact us for details.

CAMP FEES, per family
1 child $200  2 siblings $375  3 or more siblings $450
Children Attending Both Camps: 50% for the second camp

Free accommodation and local transportation for out-of-state children, 10 years and older

Register by Mail or Online
www.chinmaya-chicago.org
camp@chinmaya-chicago.org
(630) 548-3448 • (847) 295-2383 • (847) 680-8555

Roshni Jhanjee (Age 13)