

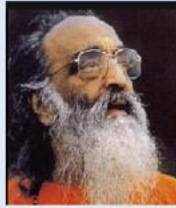


CHINMAYA MISSION CHICAGO

BADRI - A School of Vedantic Studies



Monthly Newsletter – November 2022



Chinmaya

Wisdom Quote

The spirit of advaita is not to keep away from anything, but to keep in tune with everything –
Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda.

Swamiji's Message

The Three Principles – by Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda



To realize our full spiritual Nature is to experience the fullness of life. As long as we have not attained this state of being, our intellect will continue to suggest methods for overcoming feelings of imperfection, which manifest as desires. Desires are nothing but an expression of the ignorance of our real Nature. This ignorance has made us identify with body, mind and intellect, and is the cause of our egocentric life of pains and limitations. Therefore, there is no achievement more sacred and glorious than the realization of our true identity with the unlimited, eternal Self.

The purpose of Religion is to eliminate ignorance through spiritual practices until the devotee comes to gain the light of wisdom. Ignorance, manifesting as desires on the mental plane, extend themselves as actions in the world. Therefore, spiritual masters advise that the most practical way of overcoming ignorance is through controlling our actions. They suggest that we first purify, and regulate these actions. All religions advocate qualities such as goodness, kindness, tolerance, mercy and selflessness. They insist on moral and ethical perfection as the fundamental condition for spiritual evolution. Without these qualities we will end up far short of the goal, even after a lifetime of devotion and worship.

Let us try to understand the scope of these moral and ethical values as explained in Hinduism. The three corner stones upon which the temple of Hinduism has been built are self-control, non-injury and truthfulness.

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Upcoming Events -

- **Monthly Bhajan:** 11/12 @ 6 – 7:30 pm
 - Hosted by Sujatha & Gyana Patnaik
 - In-person @ Badri Shrine. [RSVP](#)
- **Monthly Group Vedic Chanting**
 - 11/20, 9:00 – 9:55 am @ Badri Shrine
- **Gita Jayanthi** – 12/3 @ Badri Shrine/ 8:45 am
- **Annual Banquet** – 12/4 @ 6 pm/ Waterford
- **Gita Chanting Competition**
 - On 12/10 at 1 pm @ Badri
 - [Registration](#) closes on **11/30**

Annual Banquet Dinner – 12/4 @ Waterford Banquet

Highlights from Previous Month

The month of October is always packed with festivals and events at Badri that it creates the much-needed excitement rush for the Annual Banquet Dinner that comes up in December. The two big festivals that we celebrated this month were Navarathri and Diwali. On these two occasions we had a Puja at the shrine and the following Sunday some cultural events by the Balavihar children. We also had the opportunity to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Badri Narayana's Murthi Sthapana and a series of discourses by Swami Ramakrishnananda ji on numerous subjects. We also had our Bhajan Sandhya on the 2nd Saturday hosted by Geeta and Sudharshan Iyengar family and this time it was at their home. This is the first time we are back to having the monthly bhajans in person at the host family's home after the pandemic. We concluded the month with the monthly Group Vedic Chanting at the shrine of Lord Badrinarayana. There are a growing number of people expressing interest not only in chanting but also in listening to the hour long chanting.

1. Bhajan Sandhya

The October month's Bhajan Sandhya was hosted by Smt Geeta & Shri Sudarshan Iyengar family at their home. This marked the return of our practice of gathering at the host family's home for an evening filled with chanting of Slokas, singing of Bhajans and listening to Swamiji's talk. The environment at the Iyengar home was perfectly set and it was an added blessing to have had the company of Sudharshan ji's parents also join in person. Soon the home was filled and the next hour and half went blissfully serene. Everyone from the host family including their son Anirudh sang bhajans. The evening was very rejuvenating and ended with a variety of foods served as prasadam.



2. Navaratri Celebration

Every year Navaratri is celebrated by Hindus worldwide stretching over a period of 9 days and culminating on the 10th day of Vijaya Dasami. At Badri we celebrated Navaratri on two separate days. The Balavihar children's cultural program was on 2nd October. On that same day during the concluding prayers after Balavihar, a short video clip from Mahatma Gandhi's life was also shown as that day was also Gandhi Jayanthi.

The Devi Puja followed by Raas-Garba was celebrated on Saturday, 15th October at Badri. Several families participated in colorful traditional Indian costumes for the Raas-Garba, following which dinner was served.



3. Badri Narayana Murthi Sthapana 30th Anniversary

Every year 23rd October marks a very auspicious day on the Badri calendar as that is the Murthi Sthapana anniversary day. It was 30 years back Badri Narayana's Prana Prathishta (प्राण प्रतिष्ठाः) was performed at the Shrine and thereafter it came to be known as Badri Shrine.

This year the day started early at 8 am with a Homam at Tapovan Hall which was followed by an Abhishekam and Archana at the Shrine. All the Kalashas from the Homam venue were brought to the Shrine in a procession accompanied by traditional Kerala Chenda Melam. The Abhishekam was accompanied by Vedic Chanting under the guidance of our Gurukkal ji. All the participants were served an elaborate lunch prasadam.



4. Deepavali Celebration

This year the Deepavali celebration and Puja was arranged at Badri on Saturday, 29th October from 6 pm. The festive evening started with Goddess Lakshmi Puja, followed by cultural programs presented by Balavihar children. There was an elaborate dinner prasad including mouthwatering Indian sweets arranged for all, after which there was fireworks that excited children and adults alike. This brought the wonderful evening to a close at 9 pm.

In connection with Deepavali, there was a Seva project that was conducted at Badri and details of that can be found in a separate section in this newsletter on 'Seva @ Badri'





5. Seva Program @ Badri

The Seva Program at Badri is such a noble initiative which provides great opportunities for each one of us to put into practice what we learn from Gurudev's teachings – Selfless Service. During the month of October we had two such programs run and the response has been greatly appreciated.

- a. The Diwali Seva project – Donation of non-perishable foods towards a larger initiative by collaborating with several other Hindu/ Spiritual organizations in the Chicagoland area. Along with other organization representatives, we were also recognized for our voluntary efforts by both the City of Aurora and the City of Naperville.



6. Fall Blood Drive @ Badri

Among the several opportunities to provide selfless seva, one of the noblest one is to donate blood as that goes on to save lives and the donor remaining anonymous. Every year a Blood donation drive is organized at Badri, there by giving all participating seekers an opportunity to be a sevak. This year also there was an enthusiastic response and due to a mix up on the eligibility determination, a few couldn't donate. Still a majority of the responders were able to donate, and we received the below note from Versiti, the agency who organized the event.

Thank you so much for sponsoring the blood drive on Sunday and for working to get so many donors interested in giving. Our team registered 24 donors; 11 were deferred and they collected 13 units. Because of you and your donors – up to 39 lives were saved. Of the donors, 21 were NEW to Versiti. And of the TWO times we were out there this year – up to 60 lives were saved! That is wonderful! Thank you!



Swami Sharananandaji's Weekly Program Schedule

Program Name	Details
Saddarshanam (on Zoom)	Sunday/ 8:00 – 8:45 am
Bhagavad Gita Discourse (In-person at Shrine)	Sunday / 10 – 10:30 am
Viveka Choodamani (on Zoom)	Tuesday/ 7 – 8 pm
Mandukya Upanishad (on Zoom)	Wed/ 7 – 8:15 pm
Drik Drishya Viveka (on Zoom)	Saturday/ 8 – 9 am

Badri Programs

<https://mychinmaya.org/activities/weekly-activities/>

- **Swaranjali** (For Balavihar Children)
- **Stuti Vandana** (For Balavihar Children)
- **Geeta Chanting** (For Everyone)
- **Vedic Chanting** (For Everyone)
- **Sri Rudram Chanting** (For Everyone)
- **Sanskrit language** classes (For Everyone)
- **Adult Study Groups** (Registration required)
- **Vishnu Sahasranamam** (For Everyone)
- **ACT/ SAT Classes** (Registration required)

In HIS Loving Memory –

Once a young doctor, who had just joined the medical profession, came to get his copy of Bhagavad Gita signed by Gurudev. He wrote out a prescription for the young man: “Read two stanzas of the Bhagavad Gita three times a day, for three months. If symptoms persist, repeat the dose!!”

Value Points from Study Group Discussions

Below are the ‘Valuable Points from one of the Study Group Discussions last Month’

Bhagavad Gita Ch 13 (Study Group)

Dada Vaswani on cultivating Friendship with Death.

He says, " The day is coming when this body will die--this body of which we make so much , this body of which we are so proud, the body with which many of us are so identified that we think that is all we are. Where will we be then? We shall continue to exist. We have existed before our bodies were born . For all of us are more ancient than the hills, and more ancient than this earth. If we meditate on death, we shall no longer be afraid of death. We shall then know that death is only an illusion, an appearance--- like the sunset is only an appearance, for what is sunset here is sunrise elsewhere. In reality the sun never sets. Likewise, there is no death, for death here is birth elsewhere.

Dada has described death as a bridge between the physical and Astral world (which is better, nobler, more beautiful and more radiant). He has also described it as a door. There are other mansions , other doors to those other worlds.

As we establish this link of Love and Devotion with God, we shall realize that in everything that happens (success, failure, victory, defeat, loss of a dear one, there is meaning to God's Mercy. The most important thing Dada learnt from his Master was ONE word-- KABOOL---I ACCEPT, I ACCEPT. Prasada Buddhi--- in Guruji's words.

Updates from around the world -

- [Swadhyaya Series of Self Learning](#) – Online learning with access to materials for a lifetime
- [CIF – Courses](#) available this month
 - Online mode only
 - Registration required

Gems from Balavihar

From Vishwamitra - We practiced Gita Chanting, chapter 3 verses 11-15, Tapovansatkam along with the preparations and assignments for the concluding prayers.

We continued our discussion on "Purpose of life" based in our text book definition. A good conversation on conquering our mind and finding our true-self.

We also started with one of the prescribed methods to purify our mind i.e. Karma Kanda.

We will continue with Upasana Kanda and Gyan Kanda next week.

Gurudev's Message Continued...

The vast amount of spiritual literature in India is nothing but annotations, amplifications and commentaries upon these three principles. Ancient Indians planned their individual, communal and national life upon these three fundamental duties.

When these values are practiced they enable us to master our mind, which leads to mastery over ourselves, and the world around us. Although these principles are essentially the same in all religions, differences may appear due to the way in which they were presented to meet the needs of the people of the time. These three moral codes of behavior are: self-control (brahmacharya), non-injury (ahimsa), and truthfulness (satyam). They are the source of all values, and refer to the three layers of our personality: physical, emotional and intellectual.

Self Control

The physical body longs for contact with the world of objects in order to gain sense gratification. The eyes wish to see beautiful forms and colors, the tongue craves good food, the nose likes to smell pleasant fragrances and so on. But when we continue to live only for the gratification of our sensual demands, passions multiply and ultimately consume us. To avoid such a condition, discipline (brahmacharya) at the physical level is prescribed. The meaning of the word brahmacharya has been so badly distorted that the real value of this

discipline has been lost. Brahmacharya is an attitude of intelligent contact with the world. It does not mean a total denial of the sense enjoyments, but only insists on not overdoing anything. Thus to read, watch television, talk, or walk too much, or to eat a morsel more than necessary would be considered as breaking the vow of brahmacharya. When we live in self-control we discover in ourselves a renewed dynamism, and become pillars of strength in society.

If this sacred doctrine is not followed, we abdicate our freedom and become slaves to the everchanging circumstances of life. Thus, brahmacharya is a value to be lived at the physical level.

Non-Injury

The second discipline, prescribed for the mental level, is non-injury (ahimsa). Ahimsa does not simply mean non-killing or non-injury at the physical level. It is to be understood as a mental attitude regarding our relationship with others. Non-injury is the spirit that should dominate the realm of our motives. Sometimes it is necessary that our actions be cruel although the underlying motive is totally loving and kind. Shakespeare beautifully expressed this idea in Hamlet, "I am cruel only to be kind." For example, a surgeon may outwardly appear to be cruel while performing an operation but his motive is honorable. Such actions, though causing physical pain, would be considered as ahimsa. Non-injury is not a passive ineffectual attitude. Restraining the wicked to protect the good is the very creed of every true Hindu.

Thus, non-injury as advised by the architects of the Hindu culture is a value of life to be applied at the level of our motives. Our motives should be blessed and pure without any cruelty or hatred. In the execution of a pure motive, we may have to weed out the thorny shrubs to make the garden beautiful again.

Truthfulness

Satyam or truthfulness is the means to govern our inner world of mind and intellect. The outer world is a great university providing us with innumerable opportunities from which to learn. When these experiences have been well churned in our mind and the intellect has come to a firm decision, we must have the honesty and conviction to act upon it. When we do not make the full use of our mind and intellect, they lose their efficiency and we suffer as a result. Religion constantly reminds us to exercise our mind and intellect through its insistence upon the principle, "Be truthful to your previously gained wisdom."

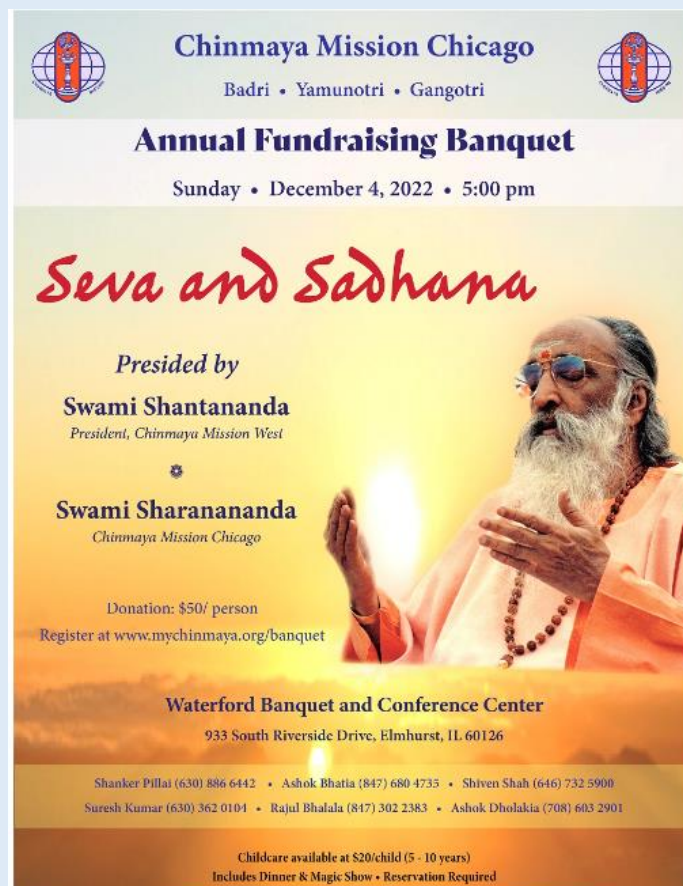
Thus, truthfulness enjoins us to live according to our intellectual convictions. We all have ideals, but we often fall prey to our senses and compromise with them. This is dishonest living. Our dignity depends on our ability to live up to our convictions at all times.

The edifice of life stands on these three great principles. By following them we can integrate our personality and gain inner health. It is by this method alone that we can enjoy living in the world and develop the strength and courage to overcome all our problems in life.

When a person has learned to live in perfect self-control, ever vigilant to gather knowledge from life's experiences, practicing non-injury in his motives, and being truthful to his convictions, he becomes the chosen child of nature to be lifted to the top of the evolutionary ladder.

It is true, no doubt, that there are only a few in society who practice these great principles, but those few grow to such a stature that they lead the world with an irresistible spiritual power. It is these people of heroic personality, with integrated head and heart who will continue to guide humanity to new levels of spiritual evolution.

-Hari Om-



Chinmaya Mission Chicago
Badri • Yamunotri • Gangotri

Annual Fundraising Banquet
Sunday • December 4, 2022 • 5:00 pm

Seva and Sadhana

Presided by
Swami Shantananda
President, Chinmaya Mission West

✻
Swami Sharanananda
Chinmaya Mission Chicago

Donation: \$50/ person
Register at www.mychinmaya.org/banquet

Waterford Banquet and Conference Center
933 South Riverside Drive, Elmhurst, IL 60126

Shanker Pillai (630) 886 6442 • Ashok Bhatia (847) 680 4735 • Shiven Shah (646) 732 5900
Suresh Kumar (630) 362 0104 • Rajul Bhalala (817) 302 2383 • Ashok Dholakia (708) 603 2901

Childcare available at \$20/child (5 - 10 years)
Includes Dinner & Magic Show • Reservation Required