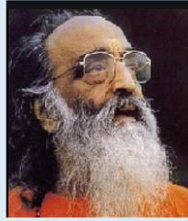




# CHINMAYA MISSION CHICAGO

**BADRI - A School of Vedantic Studies**

Monthly Newsletter – January 2023



# Chinmaya

## Wisdom Quote

Man can change his destiny-not by wishing for it, but by working for it. – **Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda.**

## Gurudev's Message

### We Must – Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda



Stunned stands man today at his own incompetency. In spite of his great and stupendous achievements in all other fields, he is not yet capable of handling satisfactorily his own personal problems, both emotional and intellectual. He is over-whelmed by his own emotional imbalance. He is staggered by the complexities of his own intellectual predicament.

Generally, a man feels that his subtle problems of love and hate, jealousies and greed, in short, his personal lusts and passions, flood him out of himself and his known and recognized efficiencies. He feels paralyzed when his intimate personal problems storm the tiny world of his daily existence. Naturally, life becomes a burden to him. Objects of pleasure, which he so laboriously acquired and accumulated, turn bitter to his own taste. In all relationships he seems to experience a lingering sense of failure at every turn. His entire life thus comes to welter in a pathetic and chronic consciousness of total futility.

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### Upcoming Events -

- **New Year Chanting, Puja & Bhajan**
  - 1/1 @ 6 pm at Badri Shrine
- **Vaikunta Ekadashi on 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan @ 9 am**
  - Vishnu Sahasranamam @ Badri Shrine
- **Monthly Bhajan: 1/8 @ 6 – 7:30 pm**
  - Hosted by Smt Akhila & Shri Venkat Palli
  - In-person @ their home
- **SAT/ ACT Classes Starting on 14<sup>th</sup> Jan**
  - 11:30 am – 2:30 pm | [Register](#)
- **Monthly Group Vedic Chanting**
  - 1/29, 9:00 – 9:55 am @ Badri Shrine

### Highlights from Previous Month

The month of December, though is consumed with holidays, is also a month dedicated to Bhagavad Geeta in more than one way. On 3<sup>rd</sup> December we celebrated Tapovan Jayanthi and Geeta Jayanthi. A large group of devotees gathered at our Shrine to celebrate this and mark the occasion. The following day we also had our much-awaited Annual Fund-Raising Banquet. This was held as an in-person event after a gap of two years owing to the pandemic and the response was much more than expected. The following weekend on Saturday, 10<sup>th</sup> December, the bi-annual Geeta Chanting Competition was conducted at Badri. The participation was much less compared to the virtual event conducted the last two years as even people from far away localities participated. The activities of the month concluded with the Monthly group Vedic Chanting session, for which the participation is gradually increasing as listeners are also joining now.

#### **1. Bhajan Sandhya**

The December month's Bhajan Sandhya was hosted by Smt Sudha & Shri Ravi Yelamanchi's family at our Badri Shrine. The participants chanted all the slokas as a group and well participated in the Bhajans. The event was well attended and concluded with the distribution of prasadam dinner.

#### **2. Monthly Vedic Chanting**

The practice of conducting group chanting of Vedic mantras at our Badri shrine is gaining attention and the participants for both chanting and listening is increasing. This month also participants of the Badri Vedic Chanting group gathered at the Shrine on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday.

Any willing to join the chanting or listen to the chanting of the Vedic mantras can join the group on the last Sunday or the date specified in the 'Upcoming Events' section of this Newsletter.

#### **3. Tapovan Jayanthi/ Geeta Jayanthi**

Every December, the month starts with the vibrancy of a large group of devotees gathering at the feet of Lord Badri Narayanan at his Shrine on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month, and chanting aloud both Tapovana Shatakam and all 18 chapters of Bhagavad Geeta in unison. Much similar to every other year, this year also we had several devotees who volunteered to lead the chanting of Bhagavad Geeta. Hence, around 50 people were assigned approximately 20 verses including the Dhyana slokas and simulating a well-rehearsed sequential chanting, everyone managed their assigned parts in perfection. Prior to chanting all the eighteen chapters of Bhagavad Geeta, the chanting of Tapovana Shatakam was performed by a group of Balavihar children, and joined by all others assembled in the shrine.





#### 4. Geeta Chanting Competition

This year the Geeta Chanting competition too, much similar to most other events, was conducted at our Shrine as an in-person event. There was a lesser participation as participants from distant towns, who found it convenient when it was a virtual event over Zoom during the last two years and couldn't make it this year.





### 5. Annual Fund-Raising Banquet

The much awaited Annual Banquet was planned and organized on Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at the Waterford Banquet hall. The previous two years, this event was conducted over Zoom and it lacked the ambience and spirit that we used to normally experience all the previous years until the pandemic. This year saw an unprecedented full hall, with almost every seat occupied and an astounding amount of monetary donations and contributions. The evening was well blessed with the presence of two of our great Swamis, Sw. Shanthananda ji and Sw. Saranananda ji. There were also some very engrossing programs presented by all the three Chicago centers.



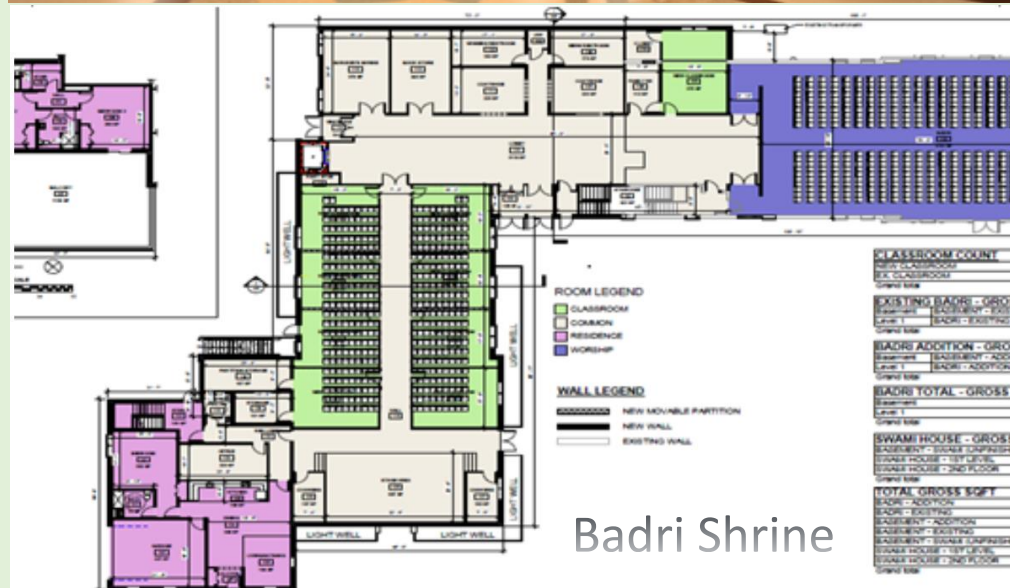




### Badri Expansion – Models & Plans







Badri Shrine



Basement

### 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, when Gurudev had gone to a hospital for a cardiac check-up, a devotee commiserated with him over the condition of his heart. “Don’t worry,” Gurudev told her. **“The heart is the only instrument that is guaranteed for life.”** She was taken aback by his nonchalant attitude.

### Value Points from Study Group Discussions

#### **Bhaja Govindam** (Study Group)

During this winter month of December, the Bhaja Govindam study group discussed two key concepts. The first was around the contemplative statements that are framed as questions by Adi Shankara – Who is your wife? Who is your son? Where did you come from? The other was related to the power of **Satsanga** and its propelling power which ultimately leads to realization.

### Swami Sharananandaji's Weekly Program Schedule

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



### 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
- [Samvada Suktas of Rig Veda](#)
  - 6 days Onsite/ Online camp in English
  - By Prof. Gauri Mahulikar
  - Satsang with Br. Ved Chaitanya
  - 16 0 21 January 2023 @ Adi Shankara Nilayam
- [Workshop: Exploring the Art of Storytelling](#)
  - On 4 Sundays starting from 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023 on Zoom

### Gems from Balavihar

**From Vishwamitra** - This week we reviewed content from previous weeks about Karma Kanda, Upsana Kanda and discussed ***Jnana Kanda, Self-Knowledge, Unity in Diversity, Aspects of God.***

Takeaways from the session were:

- Hindu dharma has one God or one supreme Reality which expresses manifests through various powers.
- We also reviewed a meditation we did last week about our various senses and how to observe them.

### Gurudev's Message Continued...

The Rishis of yore had recognized the inescapable symptom of acute exhaustion of the individual mind. Our mind is a brilliant instrument. It can soar high to the subtlest peaks of knowledge: it can rig with its endless ingenuity, machinery for actualizing its scientific theories into solid contributions to society and people. We have done all these in our own times.

Yet, the very laboriously conceived and ingeniously assembled appliances of power and prosperity, of pleasure and happiness, of productivity and distribution now maliciously turn, as it were, upon the very scientists, who have conceived them, and have multiplied problems for man to solve. Against these arrayed forces of sorrow and destruction, the very creators of the scientific era and the generation who glorify the achievements of the materialistic age, have no remedy at all, nor have they any known defense scheme so far. Under the pressure of the mounting pile of problems—human, social, national and international—a groaning society is listlessly rolling in voiceless agony, sobbing in tearless pain, tearing themselves in disgust with their naked hands ! Is this progress?

Indeed, the individual mind, at moments of its alert quietude and grand poise, can receive intimations from higher knowledge, and in such awful moments of electrified attention, the human mind can gain some glimpses of the laws of nature in the orderly universe around it. But the truth still remains that the

individual mind is limited. Where this fact is not recognized—either due to man’s vanity or due to his negligent enquiry into the range-of-use of ‘mind’, his tool of investigation—there we have a very miserable exhibition of folly, sorrow and suffering from otherwise easily avoidable pain.

When we recognize that an automobile, which can luxuriously run over highways and super-ways, cannot run over water and cross a river, we are not insulting that vehicle, but are only intelligently recognizing its limitations. The human mind has miraculous powers to contact, estimate, recognize and reorganize the objects outside itself. But the very same mind, in itself, has its own imperfections and incapacities. Perplexities scatter our mind when it is used for solving our personal problems that threaten the subjective life of the individual in us. When problems regarding the rights and duties arise, challenging our security and comfort, when problems of emotions crop up, when questions of our right relationship with the world of things and beings burst forth in tidal dimensions, when we face our self-ruinous habits, world-destroying ambitions, disturbing lusts, shattering selfishness, or benumbing sorrows, suddenly we realize that we are torn apart within, and we have no answer to these inner problems. Much less we cannot defend ourselves against them, with all the artillery we have created, the machinery we have rigged, the scientific knowledge we have mounted, or the incomparable age of prosperity and pleasure we have inaugurated.

Still, it is a fact that we have no other choice than to live here—and we have to win the purpose of our life in spite of all these odds that stand against us. The only instrument of defense is our apparently powerful—but in actual fact—very frail mind. How are we to strengthen our fortress against the incessant onslaught of the world of challenges around us? In case man is not capable of meeting these problems, he, being the very creator of it all, will be hounded down by the very ‘Frankenstein’ that he has conceived and created, and has successfully let loose upon himself and his community of fellowmen the Satan embattling with God for Supremacy and power!!

Today the world has no remedy for this excruciating malady of the age. Each problem is diligently met by the modern intellect with yet another and more powerful solution—and each solution instead of confronting the problem and crushing it for us, has been so far joining the array of our enemies and threatening us in added strength, with firmer determination to destroy us, the very creators of them all!!

We must, therefore, seek for strength within to marshal our abilities against our self-created enemies, who surround us on every side. This is done by tuning our limited conditioned mind to the Total-mind, the Universal Creative Energy, and God. This Higher-mind is ever-present, everywhere, for all to partake of Its Infinite strength and endless solace.

This Divine-Mind is ever ready to cooperate; water in a clean lake is ever there for any thirsty pilgrim to partake of its cool comfort. Let us seek and reach this Divine Mind. Let us approach Him through Love. Let us seek Him with Love. Let us surrender unto Him in Love.

When our mind, thus, in love gets tuned up to this Divine Power House we shall get re-charged, and a mind so replenished from His inexhaustible splendor shall feel rejuvenated, replenished, and revived. Once this alliance sacred and divine is made, we shall find how all our actions gain a new luster, a greater fullness, an added momentum. To live in such a true and dynamic atmosphere of sincere “prayer”, in a sense of atonement with the Lord, is the secret of gaining a fuller effectiveness in actions and feeling a greater sense of fulfillment in our life.

Pray we must. And let it be a true prayer—not a clamor for gaining anything from Him. Let us discover a pure love, flooding our bosom and lifting us upon its soaring billows into fresh horizons of the mighty Total-mind...We Must.

Let us reach and claim in love Its Omnipotent power, will and knowledge as our own.....We Must.

Let us in prayerful meditation realize what our real nature is.

-Hari Om-