

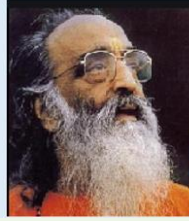


# CHINMAYA MISSION CHICAGO

## BADRI - A School of Vedantic Studies



Monthly Newsletter – February 2023



# Chinmaya

### Wisdom Quote

*Vedas are instructions for how to live life. Ramayana shows us how to emulate those instructions on everyday living.*— Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda

### Vedantic Message

#### The Vedantic Message of the Ramayana

In Ayodhya, (yudhdha means conflict, Ayodhya means where there is no conflict) to King Dasharatha was born the Supreme Lord, Shri Rama as a baby. Shri Rama grows up in Ayodhya and then goes out of Ayodhya with sage Vishwamitra to protect the yagnaas.

Shri Rama gets married to Sita. Janaka is her father. Janaka found her while ploughing the mother earth, the most improbable place to come out from. Ultimately, she goes back to mother earth. So here is someone who came from no-cause and goes back to no-cause, and this is called, in Vedanta, as 'Maaya'.

Thus Shri Rama, the Atman, the Self, gets wedded to Maaya. Once 'Self' gets wedded to Maaya, the Ego, 'I' cannot remain in Ayodhya. Conflict must necessarily start. Thus, Shri Rama goes to jungle with Sita. Jungle means the forest of pluralities, conflicts, in which you and I live today.

There, as long as Sita was looking at Shri Rama, living in Shri Rama, for Shri Rama (the Ego thinking of God only), she never knew the difference between Ayodhya and forest. But in one little moment, she turned her attention outwards and there stood the Golden deer – the delusory golden deer.

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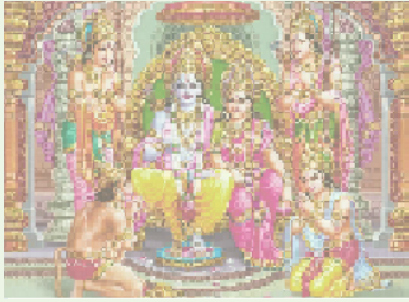
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#### Upcoming Events -

- **Vishnu Sahasranamam:** 2/5 @ 9:15 am
  - At Badri Shrine
  - All are welcome
- **Monthly Bhajan:** 2/11 @ 6 – 7:30 pm
  - Host: Smt Rashmi & Sri Arun Mehrothra
  - In-person @ Badri Shrine
- **Maha Shivarathri:** 2/18 @ 5 pm
  - At Badri Shrine
  - Sri Rudram Chanting, Puja & Bhajans
- **Monthly Group Vedic Chanting**
  - 2/26 @ 9:00 am, Badri Shrine



# Sampoorna Ramayana Saptah

*Based on Ramacharithamahas by Gowami Thulasidas*

Discourses by: **Swami Shantananda**

**Save the date: April 22-29, 2023 @ Badri**

## Highlights from Previous Month

The month of January, that starts with the culmination of holidays, begins on the 1st with a serene event at our Badri shrine. The evening starts with the chanting of Vedic hymns, followed by a Guru Ashtothara Puja and melodious Bhajans. The devotees departed after having the maha prasadam that was distributed. On 4<sup>th</sup> January we celebrated Vaikunta Ekadashi at the Shrine. A large group of devotees assembled at the shrine and chanted Vishnu Sahasranamam twice followed by Badri Narayana Ashtothara. A simple prasadam lunch also was served to all the devotees. 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**

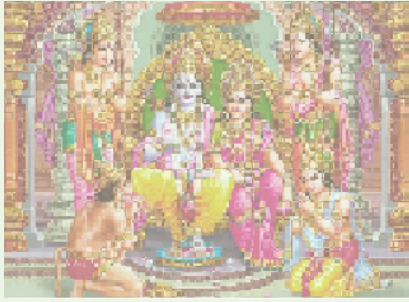
The January month's Bhajan Sandhya was hosted by Smt Akhila & Shri Venkat Palli's family at our Badri Shrine. The participants chanted all the slokas as a group and well participated in the Bhajans. The event was well attended and concluded with the distribution of prasadam dinner.

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

The practice of conducting group chanting of Vedic mantras as 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 last 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.





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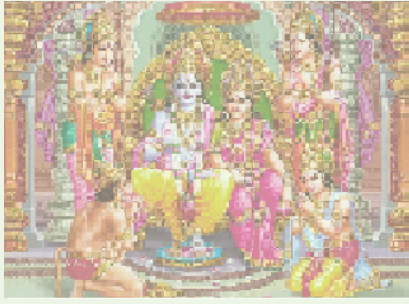
**Save the date: April 22-29, 2023 @ Badri**

### 3. New Year Puja

On the first day of the year, the customary New Year Puja was organized at our Badri Shrine. A sizable number of devotees assembled on that cold evening and the evening started with the chanting of Vedic Suktams, Medha Suktam and Ganapathyadharva Sheershopanishad. This was followed by a Puja accompanied by the chanting of Guru Ashtothara by the Bala Vihar children. The solemn evening ended with some melodious Bhajans by many of the devotees. A dinner prasadam was also served to all. This is always considered a great way to start the year.







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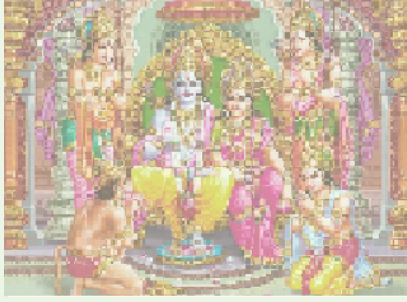
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## 4. Vaikunta Ekadashi

The Vaikunta Ekadashi this year was observed on 4<sup>th</sup> January and it was commemorated in a grand manner. A large group of devotees gathered at Badri in the morning and at 9 am. The day started with Guru Stotram, followed by Purusha Suktam and Vishnu Sahasranamam which was chanted twice. This was then followed by chanting Narayana Suktam and Badri Narayana Ashtothara by the Balavihar children. Our Swamiji then addressed the devotees and the event concluded with an Aarthi. A simple satvik prasad was distributed.

The energy and enthusiasm of the crowd, and a mention by Swamiji about continuing this group chanting as a regular monthly event, created the spark to discuss further and plan this as a monthly event. As a result, it is now decided that on the first Sunday of every month, at 9:15 am, all interested devotees will gather at Badri and chant Vishnu Sahasranamam.





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Save the date: April 22-29, 2023 @ Badri

## Badri Weekly Class Schedule

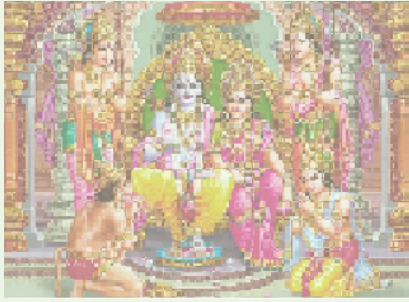
Chinmaya Mission Chicago Badri		Weekly Class Schedule					
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Geeta Chanting	9:15 – 9:45 am 12:00 – 12:30 pm	7:00 – 8:00 pm *					
Sanskrit Classes	7:15 – 8:30 pm *	6:00 – 7:00 pm *			7:00 – 8:00 pm *		
Stuti Vandana			6:00 – 6:30 pm * 6:30 – 7:00 pm *				
Swaranjali (Bhajans)	12:30 – 1:00 pm			7:00 – 8:00 pm *			
Vedic Chanting	9:15 – 9:45 am 7:30 – 8:00 pm *				7:30 – 8:00 pm * 8:00 – 9:00 pm *		
Vishnu Sahasranamam	6:00 – 7:00 pm *						
Yoga							9:30 – 10:30 am

\* - Online Classes – Please check website for details – <http://mychinmaya.org>

Contacts		Please check website for registration and zoom information	
Geeta Chanting	Ramesh Turuvekere : rameshr@gmail.com Sudha Gouthama : sudhagouth@yahoo.com	<a href="http://mychinmaya.org/gita-chanting">http://mychinmaya.org/gita-chanting</a>	
Sanskrit	Venkat Palli : vsp410@gmail.com	<a href="https://mychinmaya.org/sanskrit-classes/">https://mychinmaya.org/sanskrit-classes/</a>	
Stuti Vandana	Suchi Achar : suchiram@hotmail.com	<a href="https://mychinmaya.org/activities/stuti-vandana/">https://mychinmaya.org/activities/stuti-vandana/</a>	
Swaranjali (Bhajans)	Pavithra Anand : pavithra.anand@gmail.com Raman Mahadevan : ramdevan23@gmail.com	<a href="https://mychinmaya.org/activities/swaranjali-2/">https://mychinmaya.org/activities/swaranjali-2/</a>	
Vedic Chanting	Sunil Narayanan : pnsunil@outlook.com Sashi Narasimhan : laksharag@gmail.com	<a href="https://mychinmaya.org/activities/vedic-chanting/">https://mychinmaya.org/activities/vedic-chanting/</a>	
Vishnu Sahasranamam	Sudha Gouthama : sudhagouth@yahoo.com Sini Narayanan : sini_athul@yahoo.com Venkat Palli : vsp410@gmail.com		
Yoga	Shila Sanghani : shilaom@gmail.com	<a href="https://mychinmaya.org/activities/yoga-meditation/">https://mychinmaya.org/activities/yoga-meditation/</a>	

## 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



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Discourses by: **Swami Shantananda**

**Save the date: April 22-29, 2023 @ Badri**

## In HIS Loving Memory –

Once a teenager asked Gurudev: “What if everyone was like you Swamiji? What if everyone in the world took sanyas and ran away from society? What then?”

Gurudev replied: “Try. If it were that easy to renounce, the world would be a happier place.”

## Value Points from Study Group Discussions

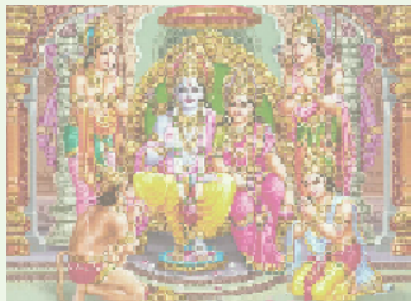
**Kindle Life** (Study Group) – Fundamentals of Living

1. Three disciplines advised for reshaping our personality – Brahmacharya (self-control), Ahimsa (Non-injury), and Satyam (Truthfulness).
2. Brahmacharya means living in self-control with respect to all our sense enjoyments and does not mean their denial.
3. Second discipline Ahimsa means ‘non-injury’. Ahimsa is a mental attitude to our relationship with others in life. Physically a surgeon may appear cruel, but his heart means well.
4. Third disciple Satyam, a value of life on the intellectual plane. Satyam enjoins that one should live honestly with one’s own intellectual convictions. Each of us has ideals, but only few live up to them.
5. The dignity of man lies in living up to his own convictions at all times.

## Gems from Balavihar

**From Vishwamitra –**

- We reviewed the previous class on Faith by watching a video and had a discussion on the message.
- Makar Sankranti - symbolizes “From Darkness to Light” because the days will start becoming longer.
- We explained Uttarayan with and the scientific astrological explanation and photograph path of the sun
- We asked how children celebrated Sankranti at home and special rituals and foods for the occasion like - Pongal, Yellu, Undhiyu etc.
- We then elaborated on the topic of Japa. Japa means a constant remembrance of the Lord’s name. The more we say or think about something, the more we love that thing. Hence, when we do japa, our mind gets focused on God and becomes peaceful.
- Benefits of Japa - It is a mental exercise to focus the mind and prepare it for meditation.



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## 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
- [Puja Vidhanam Course](#)
  - 1 month in-person/ English
  - Swami Sharadananda Sarasvathi
  - Basic and Advanced level courses available
  - 12 Aug – 10 Sept 2023 @ Adi Shankara Nilayam
- [Workshop: Exploring the Art of Storytelling](#)
  - On 4 Sundays starting from 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023 on Zoom

## 30<sup>th</sup> Chinmaya Aradhana Mahasamadhi Camp 2023

With the grace of Puja Gurudev, this year Chinmaya Mission West is bringing together entire Chinmaya family in-person for Puja Gurudev's "**30<sup>th</sup> Chinmaya Aradhana Mahasamadhi Camp 2023**".

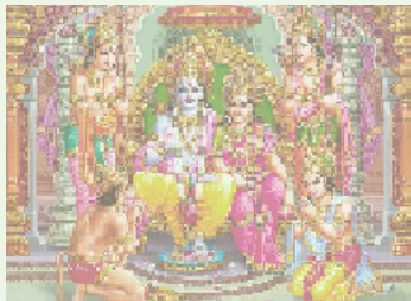
The 30<sup>th</sup> Chinmaya Aradhana Mahasamadhi Camp 2023 will be hosted by Chinmaya Mission Chicago at the Waterford Banquet & Conference Center, 933 S. Riverside Dr. Elmhurst, IL 60126 from **29<sup>th</sup> July to 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2023**. Hotel rooms are available and registration of the 30<sup>th</sup> MSC will open soon. This camp will be led and conducted by Swami Swaroopananda, Global Head, Chinmaya Mission.

Please save the date and spread the word to all members of your center and community. Details are coming soon.

Hari om

In His Service  
(Chinmaya Mission West)





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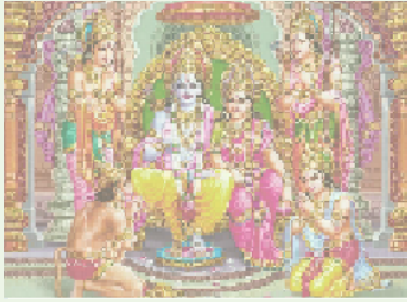
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## Badri Expansion – Models & Plans





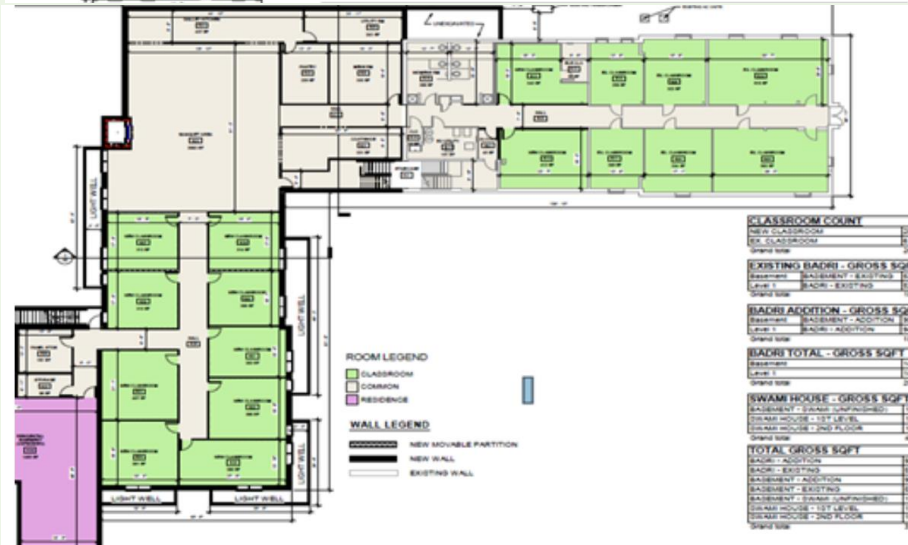


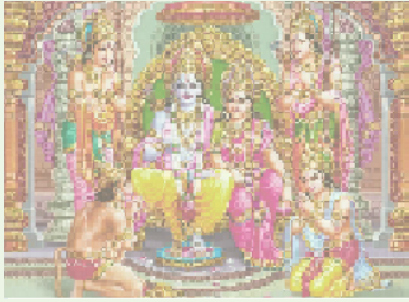
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## Vedantic Message Continued...

And once we see that delusion, we do not want God, we want that delusory thing only. Sita got stung by the desire, rejected Shri Rama, sent him away saying, "I want that Golden deer." Shri Rama goes. The deer is killed no doubt, but it starts crying out and Sita asks Lakshmana also to go. He hesitatingly goes.

It is at this time that Ten-headed monster, Ravana, comes in the guise of a sanyasi Bhikshu. See the anti-thesis. Dasharatha, who has conquered the ten indriyaas, is in Ayodhya, and Dashamukha is in Lanka.

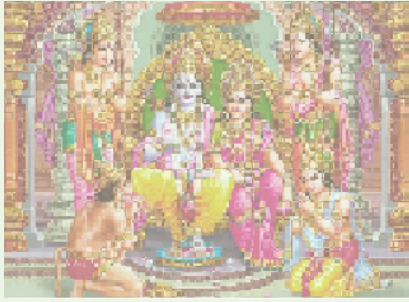
We are like Ravana. Our attention is constantly turned outwards through the ten indriyaas. Materialism enters the bosom of a seeker in a deceitful form. Ravana, the extrovert man, with lusty living came to Sita in a deceitful form. He comes and takes her away and Sita becomes a prisoner in Lanka.

Her fall from Ayodhya to Lanka is the fall of man from greatness of divinity into the present condition of guilt, sorrow, agitation, worries and suffering. Thus, you and I are Sita now in Lanka. What did she do there? We must also go through the same discipline. She refused to co-operate with materialism all around. When she says 'NO', materialism cannot touch her. She remained under Ashoka tree. Shoka is sorrow and Ashoka is sorrowless. Though there is sorrow in all our minds, we refuse to recognise it. There under the Ashoka tree, she contemplated on Shri Rama with a sense of total surrender, recognizing and realizing the terrible mistake that she made and remained there. When we thus remain contemplating on Shri Rama, every seeker will get intimation from the Divine, Shri Rama that 'I am coming'. Hanuman reaches her and gives her the symbol. Her hope increases and she is confident that Shri Rama is coming. She awaits the arrival of Shri Rama.

As Sita weeps for him, Shri Rama also expresses sentimental emotions. Valmiki wants to communicate to us that when we cry for God, he responds. How will he go there? He is in the jungle. The only army he can have is made up of monkeys. We find so much of criticism in Western literature that monkeys cannot make an army. But here it has to be monkeys. Human minds and thoughts are the only ally for the Lord, the spiritual Self, for I and you to reach that state. Monkeys and human minds have the same qualities of 'chanchalatwa' and 'asthiratwa' (lack concentration and attention).

These monkeys can never be the ally of the Lord as long as they are ruled by Vali, the incorrigible lust. As long as our minds are ruled by lust we are not ready to do Shri Rama's work. So Vali is to be destroyed and see who comes to the throne – Sugreeva. Greeva means the reins of horses. Sugreeva – the total self control! Under Sugreeva the monkeys are available to do Shri Rama's work and together they build the bridge – the bridge of contemplation to reach the realm of Ravana – the realm of pure materialism, to destroy the extrovertedness, destroy Ravana and take Sita to Shri Rama.

Sita, the ego, when comes face to face with Shri Rama, the Self, the ego disappears. Just as 'the dreamer I' disappears before 'the waker I', Sita thus disappears. It is Kapila muni who tells Shri Rama that he cannot go back to Ayodhya and bring about Rama Rajya without a queen. Hence Kapila muni makes a delusory Sita with whom Shri Rama returns to Ayodhya and rules for a short time. All men of Realisation, having realised the Truth, always come back to the world for a short time to serve as Saints, Prophets. We cannot work in the world without an ego. But here, it is not a true ego, but an illusory ego. When he thus rules,



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Luva and Kusha are born. Similarly, when a Jnani works in the world, a Bible or a Koran, a Gita or an Upanishad will necessarily emerge out of Him. Then he gives up the world. There is no compulsion on him to give up because it is already an illusory one. It is not a real one. He gives up the world and there ends the masterpiece.

Thus Ramayana, from Ayodhya to Lanka is the process of an individualized Ego, coming into the present state of misconception that I am a limited, individualized ego, and the return of Shri Rama back to Ayodhya from Lanka is the man's pilgrimage fulfilled in the Realized Self. There after they live in the world for a short time serving the mankind and then the story ends.

Thus, there is a spiritual background to the entire story of Ramayana. That is the reason why it is so popular. The average man is happy with the story. To the mediocre man, the idealism that Rama stands for is a great education. But even the man of Realization enjoys Ramayana, because he sees in and through the story, the entire Vedantic Wisdom, echoing and re-echoing as a melody Divine.

-Hari Om-