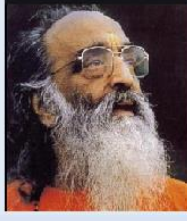




CHINMAYA MISSION CHICAGO

BADRI - A School of Vedantic Studies

Monthly Newsletter – October 2023



Chinmaya

Wisdom Quote

"To mistake the idol for God, or the form of the Guru for the Infinite, is to mistake the container for the contents.." – Swami Chinmayananda

Swamiji's Message



Yoga is not twisting the body but straightening the mind. – Chinmaya

In modern times the term 'Yoga' is widely misunderstood as Yoga-asanas. The above quote corrects our understanding. Yoga-asanas form one of the limbs in the eight-limbed Patanjali Yoga Sutras. Yoga- asanas are important because they help us in keeping the body healthy. An unhealthy body always demands attention upon itself and will not allow the mind to withdraw and meditate on God. Hence a healthy body is unavoidable for all spiritual practices.

But many immature seekers misunderstand the means to be the goal. They conclude that the only purpose of Yoga is to remain physically fit and healthy! When they have mastered all the bodily twistings and bendings, they declare themselves to be Gurus and Yogis of the highest order, and start their own Yoga Institutes charging heavy fees from their ignorant disciples!

Yoga is defined in Bhagavad Geeta as follows:

तं विद्यात् दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् | = Disassociation from our association with sorrow is Yoga.

समत्त्वम् योग उच्यते | = Quietening the mind is Yoga.

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Upcoming Events -

- **Vishnu Sahasranamam:** 10/8 @ 9:15 am
- **Monthly Bhajan:** 10/14 @ 6 – 7:30 pm
 - Host: Smt Bharati Kuntia @ Shrine
- **Badri Narayana Sthapana Day**
 - Puja & Celebration – 10/22 @ 8 am
 - At Badri Shrine – Homam and Puja
- **Navaratri/ Dusserra**
 - Raas Garba – 10/28 @ 6 pm
 - BV Program – 10/29 @ Concluding Sessions

Highlights from Previous Month

The month of September starts with the auspicious days of Janmastamai and Ganesh Chaturthi. Around the same time, our Bala Vihar new session Inauguration also comes by. Both these festivals, having come on weekdays, we also had their respective Bala Vihar celebration over the weekends. We also were blessed by the visit of Swamini Gangananda ji, who is associated with our Mission from the first batch of Sanyasins trained at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya by Gurudev. We were also enthralled by the melodious music at the Hindustani concert towards the end of the month. We also had our regular monthly activities of Vishnu Sahasranamam Chanting and monthly group Vedic Chanting as planned.

1. Bhajan Sandhya

The June month's Bhajan Sandhya was hosted by Smt Shilpa Milapore and Shri Anil Boggaram at their home. The evening was well attended by the Badri family along with several of the host family's friends and several participants sang the Bhajans after all the shlokas were chanted. The event as always practiced, ended with the chanting of Nirvana Shatakam and Aarthi, followed by the distribution of prasadam dinner.



2. Monthly Vedic Chanting

We had our Monthly Group chanting of Vedic mantras and suktams on the last Sunday of the month. We had a larger participation this month. Anyone willing to join the chanting or listening to an hour of Vedic chants, can join the group who conduct this on the last Sunday of every month at our Badri Shrine. We have also started a new Vedic Chanting Beginner batch that has in-person classes on Sundays at 9:15 am CST and Zoom classes for outstation participants on Thursdays at 7:30 pm CST

3. Vishnu Sahasranamam Chanting

The first Sunday of the month always starts with the revibrating chant of Vishnu Sahasranamam at our Badri Narayana's shrine. This month as the first Sunday was a Labor day weekend, we had our regular Vishnu Sahasranamam chanting on the following 2nd Sunday. That was also the Bala Vihar Inauguration day and the chanting provided a great energized environment for the new families who were walking in. We had a good participation and the session concluded with the chanting of Narayana Suktam.



4. Bala Vihar Inauguration

This day is one of the most prominent one for the Bala Vihar teams and overall for the Badri team. Everything starts with the Bala Vihar as when the children join Bala Vihar classes, their respective parents join the Study Groups. Also, after a long summer break, all the families return for the new session along with several new families. The event started with a Ganesh and Saraswathi Puja, followed by chanting of Vedic hymns. Our Swamiji shared a relevant message to all along with his blessings to the children. There was a 'Meet the Teacher' session for clarifying all the questions the parents had. Also, the Bala Vihar and Study Group sevaks were introduced. The celebration ended with a sumptuous lunch for all.



5. Satsang with Swamini Gangananda ji

The devotees at Badri had a good fortune of having a Satsang with Swamini Gangananda ji on one of the weekday evenings. Swamini was a part of the first batch of Gurudev's disciples and there by the first Vedanta course conducted at Sandeepany. Swamini had planned a visit to Chicago and spent a few days visiting the centers in this region. The evening Satsang at Badri was well attended with lot of inquisitive interactions.



6. Hindustani Musical Concert

It has been a tradition at Badri to invite gifted instrumental musicians of the classical music industry for the entertainment of everyone on the community as well as a means of fundraising. This month also we had the opportunity to invite three gifted musicians, 2003 Grammy Award Nominee Pt. Shubhen Chatterjee on the Tabla along with the versatile Vidushi Mita Nag on the Sitar and the sensational Shehnai player Janab Hassan Haider Khan (grandson of Bharat Ratna Ustad Bismillah Khan) on the Shehnai. It was an enthralling evening of divine music and a hall full of enthusiastic audience.



Chinmaya Publications - ॐ ग्रन्थकृते नमः

Chinmaya Publications has its roots in the profound vision and foresight of Pujya Swami Chinmayananda. His vision to spread the teachings of Vedanta from the wisdom found in The Gita, Upanishads and various other texts have been carried forward by all the acharyas of this great Mission. As a result, Chinmaya Publications has blossomed into a diverse collection of publications that span a wide range of subjects over 300 texts.

www.chinmayapublications.com

1. **Bhagavad Gita:**

Dive deep into the timeless teachings of the Gita, unraveling its profound insights.

2. **Vedantic Texts:**

Explore the essence of Vedanta through our thought-provoking texts, guiding you on the path to self-realization.

3. **Children's Books:**

Nourish young minds with engaging and enlightening books that introduce them to spirituality and values.

4. **Balvihar Manuals and Texts**

Empower children with valuable knowledge through our carefully crafted Balvihar materials.

5. **Life Skills Booklets:**

Enhance your life with practical wisdom through our concise booklets designed to teach essential life skills.

6. **Mananam Series:**

Immerse yourself in deep contemplation with our Mananam series, unlocking profound insights.

7. **Learning Sanskrit:**

Embark on a journey to learn Sanskrit, the language of the ancient scriptures.

8. **Regional Language Texts:**

We cater to diverse linguistic preferences with texts available in Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, and Tamil.

9. **Collections on DVD, CDs, and USB Drives:**

Immerse yourself in the teachings and bhajans of revered spiritual leaders.

10. **Unique Gift Items:**

Discover shawls, clothing, lamps, pictures, greeting cards, and more, all adorned with Gurudev's signature OM logo.

Janmastami & Ganesh Chaturthi

These two celestial birth anniversaries are just a few days apart but both being week days, their respective Bala Vihar celebrations were weekends apart. On both the auspicious days, during the specific week day, the respective diety puja was performed at our Shrine, followed by the chanting of Ashtottara, followed by Bhajans. For the Ganesh Puja the Vedic Chanting team was also available to chant the Ganapathyadharvasheershopanishad and Ganesha Suktam from Rig Veda.

On two of the following Sundays, we had the Bala Vihar Children perform during the concluding session at 11:30 am. For Janmastami the children chanted the second part of Chapter 3 of the Bhagavath Geeta, the Madhurashtakam and a melodious bhajan. And for Ganesh Chaturthi, a mix of children from all grades chanted the Vedic hymn, Ganapathyadharvasheershopanishad and yet another melodious bhajan.



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 Yoga | 6:00 – 7:00 pm * | | | | | | 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 : ramesht@gmail.com Sudha Gouthama : sudhagouth@yahoo.com | http://mychinmaya.org/gita-chanting |
| Sanskrit | Venkat Palli : vsp410@gmail.com | https://mychinmaya.org/sanskrit-classes/ |
| Stuti Vandana | Suchi Achar : suchiram@hotmail.com | https://mychinmaya.org/activities/stuti-vandana/ |
| Swaranjali (Bhajans) | Pavithra Anand : pavithra.anand@gmail.com Raman Mahadevan : ramdevan23@gmail.com | https://mychinmaya.org/activities/swaranjali-2/ |
| Vedic Chanting | Sunil Narayanan : pnsunil@outlook.com Sashi Narasimhan : laksharag@gmail.com | https://mychinmaya.org/activities/vedic-chanting/ |
| Vishnu Sahasranamam | Sudha Gouthama : sudhagouth@yahoo.com Sini Narayanan : sini_athul@yahoo.com Venkat Palli : vsp410@gmail.com | |
| Yoga | Shila Sanghani : shilaom@gmail.com | https://mychinmaya.org/activities/yoga-meditation/ |

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 pm |
| Drik Drishya Viveka (on Zoom) | Saturday/ 8 – 9 am |

Updates from around the world -

- [Swadhyaya Series of Self Learning](#) – Online learning with access to materials
- [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
- [Chinmaya Viboothi](#) – Summary of Events
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nYbe5AEqRM>

Experiences with Gurudev

Once when Pujya Gurudev was ill in Sidhbari and was in the hospital, two nurses came into his room to give him a sponge bath. He remarked, "I am immaculate!"

The nurses thought Pujya Gurudev had not understood and repeated that they needed to wash him. Pujya Gurudev said, "I am pure, I am immaculate!"

Again, the nurses thought he had not understood and once again they asked his permission to give him a bath. Finally, Pujya Gurudev relented and said, "Never mind. You can wash this body now."

What is it to be a Witness?

That which feels "I am," this "I" is neither mind nor matter. The external things exist because of the imaginations of this "I".

Swami Chinmayananda

Mark Your Calendars | | Spread the Word

ANNUAL FUNDRAISING BANQUET

Saturday, 2nd December 2023

Waterford Banquet & Conference Center



Swamiji's Message contd...

According to this definition, any one of us can be a Yogi. It is not the Rudraksha, or the ochre cloth, or the forehead-marks or the rituals that make a Yogi. Amidst all the disturbing and challenging situations, if we can keep a balanced mind, then according to Geeta, we are Yogis.

Amidst disobedient children, screaming husband, and the innumerable responsibilities of the household, if the housewife can remain calm and poised then she must be considered a Yogi. Even under work pressure, if the officer is maintaining his equipoise, then he too is a Yogi.

What should happen to a person who practices Yoga sincerely? This incident will make it clear:

A particular Swami had once stayed at the Sivananda Ashram (Divine Life Society) at Rishikesh for a considerable time and had done a lot of work for the Ashram. He then left the Ashram to do intense austerity. After long years, he was again seen in the Ashram premises for a short duration. But he went away without informing anyone. There was a discussion about his attitude towards the Ashram.

Someone reported the matter to Swami Sivananda and said, "Swamiji, perhaps he did not stay on at the Ashram because he was not given a rousing reception he might have expected."

Swamiji said, "What reception? A sannyasin should not have such expectations and desires. He left the Ashram to do intense austerity and sadhana. If he had really done much austerity, he would have developed a loving heart, an entirely changed angle of vision, and this would have electrified whomever he met here. He would have adopted an attitude of humility, of service, of brotherly love towards everyone here. He would thus have endeared himself to everyone. Naturally, a different atmosphere would have been created. This is the way. He should always conquer people's heart through love and service. There is no other way. If he was not able to do that, it means the sadhana was a continuous indulgence in inertia and an increased fattening of the ego."

'Straightening the mind' means eradication of all vices and cultivation of all noble virtues mentioned in the scriptures. Twisting the body is easy; straightening the mind may take lifetimes!

A letter was on Swami Sivanandji's table. A 'great' European Yogi had written to Swamiji requesting him to invite him to India. This was needed to obtain a passport.

Looking at the letter, Swamiji lamented: "What a big show of themselves do these so-called Yogis make? They fly from one country to another with so much pomp and ostentation. The net result? Only grand receptions, parties and farewells. Is it not?"

A visitor remarked, "Yes Swamiji. We have seen many of them move about in regal comforts."

Swamiji smiled mischievously and said, "Some of them should be received with unique honour. Instead of flags and festoons adorning the reception entrance, people should hang old shoes and broom-sticks. What do you say?"

Devotees struggled to control their laughter.

Then Swamiji added, "We should not wait for the thing to happen actually. We should train ourselves. I have done so. I have beaten myself with shoes severely. This I used to do especially on Birthdays – just after returning to my Kutir. After the meetings where people had praised me, glorified me, deified me, I would go into my Kutir and beat myself nicely with a pair of shoes: 'What are you? You wretched flesh-blood-excreta made body? Do you want garlands? Can you not wear torn clothes? Do you think that you are great? Do you want to be prostrated to? Now, take these beatings.' "

It is well said – “Yoga is not beating one’s own drums, but beating oneself to shape.”

A small batch of smartly uniformed school students arrived at the Sivananda Ashram at Rishikesh. In great joy, Swami Sivanandji greeted the youth. They were served tea and light refreshments. After speaking a word or two to each student, Swamiji addressed them all:

“Do you know the drill?”

“Yes, Swamiji.”

“But do you know the Upanishadic drill?”

“What?” The boys looked at one another and ultimately at the teacher with a querying forehead, as if to ask: “Do you?” The teacher and the taught, all were eager to be taught by Swamiji.

The boys were quickly arrayed in two rows.

“Om Tat Sat” - Came the command from Swamiji. The boys instinctively stood to attention as Swamiji himself did so. Now started the drill.

“Matr Devo Bhava” - Palms folded at the chest in salutation.

“Pitr Devo Bhava” – Both hands raised above, vertically.

“Acharya Devo Bhava” – Hands brought down in one swing along with a nice folding at the hip.

“Atithi Devo Bhava” – Palms folded at the chest in salutation.

“Om Tat Sat” – Attention.

Then Swamiji explained the significance of this drill. “This is the Upanishadic drill. The words of command are great utterances of sages in the Upanishads. May your mother be your God. May your father be your God. May your teacher be your God. May your guest be your God. These feelings are roused up when you repeat these sentences. Slowly your inner nature is divinized.”

Then ‘Baithak’ exercise:

‘Sita’- Fists clenched, fore-arms bent at the elbow and raised, then the entire body lowered assuming a ‘sitting on the heels’ position.

‘Rama’- Normal standing position, but with clenched fists, ready for another round.

‘Om tat Sat’: attention.

After a few such exercises, Swamiji then led the students in a march, with the marching tune: Bhum Bhum bhum Mahadeva; Hara Hara Hara Hara Sadashiva;

Then Swamiji lectured to the students on the essence of Yoga. A carpet was spread and Swamiji taught the children Yoga-asanas and explained their usefulness.

Swamiji then encouraged the boys to sing. One boy sang nice songs. There was then an elocution competition. One of the bright students explained in simple language how spiritual institutions were the crying need of the hour.

The students then formed themselves into two groups and requested Swamiji to give a topic for debate. Swamiji gave the topic: “Need for spiritual life.”

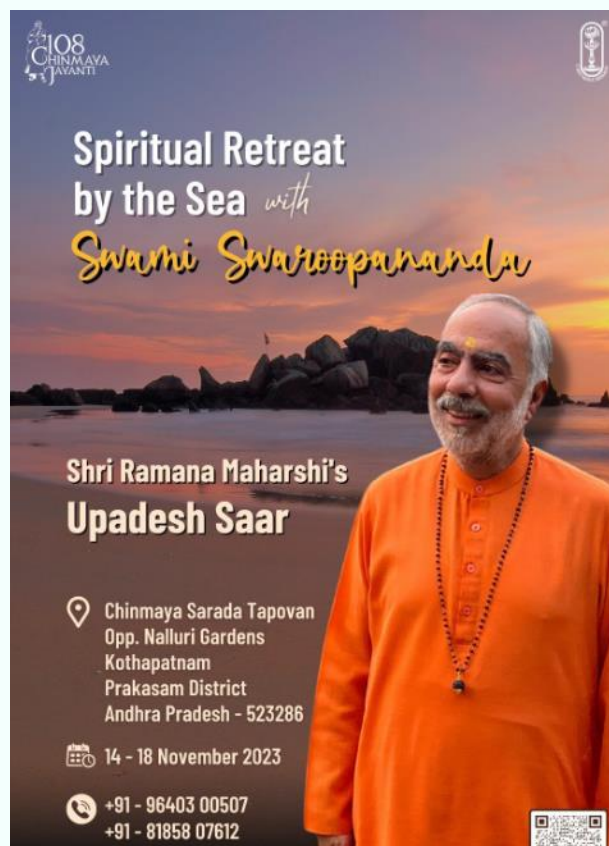
This put to test the boys' creative faculties. It was wonderful how the boys spoke 'for' and 'against' the proposition.

Swamiji distributed prize books to the boys who took part in these competitions. The boys and the teacher were then served with tea and fruits and given a hearty send-off.

Swamiji was highly pleased. Within a brief spell of half-an-hour, he had sown the seed of spiritual life in the hearts of those intelligent boys – the future citizens of this glorious land.

O M T A T S A T

Puja Swamiji Swaroopananda ji's India Camps



Camp on Shri Ramana Maharshi's Upadesh Saar

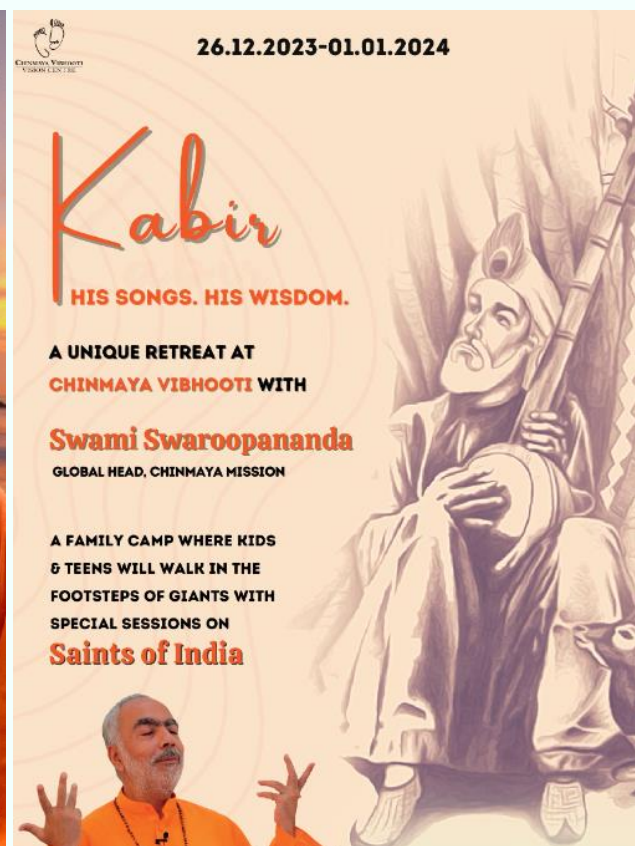
Venue: Chinmaya Sarada Tapovan,
Kothapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

Dates: 14 November to 18 November 2023

Language: English

Highlight: This spiritual retreat is by the Sea and it is the first by Pujya Swamiji at Kothapatnam!

Registrations: www.chinmayamission.com/kothapatnamcamp/



Year-End Retreat on Kabir & Saints of India - for all ages

Venue: Chinmaya Vibhooti Vision Centre,
Kolwan, near Pune, Maharashtra

Dates: 26 December 2023 to 1 January 2024

Language: English

Highlight: Music & Wisdom - the perfect way to bring in the new year!

Registrations:

cvswagat@chinmayamission.com / +91-9689891959