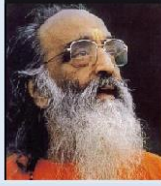




CHINMAYA MISSION CHICAGO

BADRI - A School of Vedantic Studies

Monthly Newsletter – December 2023



Chinmaya

Wisdom Quote

"If we accept and acknowledge the mistake, it is forgiven." – **Swami Chinmayananda**

Swamiji's Message



The Lord is an embodiment of love – a love that is infinite and unconditional. Even an ocean of sins committed by us are forgiven, when we confess to Him, bow down to Him with a heart filled with repentance and remorse.

There is a beautiful story narrated by Lord Jesus in the Holy Bible.

Father Levi was a happy man. He had worked hard all his life and now he owned a big farm. Besides his wealth, he had been blessed with two fine sons.

He looked forward to seeing them married and settled down. Then he might be blessed with little grandchildren, too. He was very happy as he looked out over his cornfields, his sheep and his cattle, his orchards and vineyards.

But his happiness did not last long. Though his elder son was quite content and worked hard every day in the fields, his younger son was restless and bored. He was tired of the dull farm where there was no excitement, and nothing ever happened. He longed to go to the big bright glamorous cities where everything was exciting and where he knew he would be happy. One day he made up his mind. He could not stand the dreary farm anymore. He went to his father.

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Upcoming Events -

- **Annual Fundraising Banquet** – 12/2 @ 5 pm
 - Waterford Banquet & Conf Center
- **Vishnu Sahasranamam**: 12/3 @ 9:15 am
- **Gita Chanting Competition** – 12/9 @ Badri
 - 1 – 4 pm | In-person
- **Group Vedic Chanting** – 11/17 @ 9 am
- **Tapovan & Gita Jayanti** – 12/23; 9 am @ Shrine
 - Chanting of all 18 chapters
- **Vaikunta Ekadasi** - 12/123 @ 1:30 pm @ Shrine
- **Winter Vendata Retreat** - 12/27 – 12/30
 - @ Abhyudaya Retreat Center
 - Partial participation option also available

Highlights from Previous Month

The month of November brings with it the extravagant festival of lights – Deepavali and all the hectic preparations for the only grand fundraising event of the year – the Banquet. With warmer weather overall and a renewed team, the activities were planned and executed with precision aimed at making the second Banquet after the pandemic more rewarding than the previous years. A ‘Sevak’s Appreciation Nite’ was also organized. We also had our regular monthly activities of Bhajan Sandhya, Vishnu Sahasranamam Chanting and monthly group Vedic Chanting as planned.

1. Bhajan Sandhya

The November month’s Bhajan Sandhya was hosted by Smt Sujatha Patnaik and Shri Gyana Patnaik at our Badri Shrine. The evening was well attended by several Badri families 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. Anyone willing to join the chanting or listening to an hour of Vedic chants, can join the group who meet on the last Sunday of every month at our Badri Shrine.

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. We had a good participation and the session concluded with the chanting of Narayana Suktam. The Vishnu Sahasranamam group is getting geared up for the occasion of Vaikunta Ekadashi coming up in December as there will be great celebrations involving chanting and Puja.

4. Blood Donation Drive

Among all the options one has for making a donation, the best way is to donate Blood. Once every few months, at Badri, a Blood drive is scheduled and several volunteers sign up for the same too. This year we had 17 donors who had turned up and having found eligible to donate, **ended up saving 53 lives**, as per the feedback from Versiti.



SEVAK APPRECIATION NITE

One of the greatest things about being a regular visitor to Badri, in addition to progressing in one's own spiritual journey, is having the opportunities to perform selfless service, which is called 'seva'. And anyone who comes forward with that intent is called a 'Sevak' or 'Sevika'. Starting this year, a plan was put in place to celebrate this 'willingness to serve' but organizing a 'Badri Sevak's Appreciation Nite'.

The evening begun with an address by Shankerji followed by a message from our Swamiji on the importance of Seva. After an Aarthi, the whole group moved downstairs where the whole group was split into four teams. For the next hour there were a couple of enjoyable team activities. And the evening ended with a great dinner.



5. Deepavali Celebration

Deepavali is one of the few elaborately celebrated festivals worldwide and the celebration by the Chinmaya family at Badri is no less. This year, the festival was celebrated on Saturday evening, as that schedule suited most of the Chinmaya Family members. The evening started with a puja followed by a short message from our Swamiji. After a series of eye-catching cultural programs, a sumptuous dinner followed. And the evening ended with fireworks which was the most awaited for the children.



Experiences with Gurudev

A POLICE OFFICER'S INTERACTION WITH GURUDEV

At the Chinmaya Birth Centenary Celebrations in Cochin in May 2015, Dr Alexander Jacob, a senior IPS officer has narrated one of his interactions with Pujya Gurudev.

"In 1991, I was in Trivandrum. Ten professors from Harvard University, including the head of the department of philosophy, were visiting Kerala. The Kerala Govt. appointed me as a special officer to attend on those ten professors to give them glimpses of Kerala culture. One evening, I asked them if they would like to listen to a lecture by one of our famous sannyasis, Swami Chinmayananda. They said they would listen for 15 minutes and then leave. Immediately, I called the organizers and reserved 11 seats in the front row. Swamiji spoke for one and a half hours – one of the most fantastic speeches I have ever heard in my life. It was a wonderful exposition of Indian philosophy and the Bhagavad Gita. At the end of 15 minutes, I asked the professors whether they would like to move, but they said they wanted to hear the whole speech. At the end of the talk to my utter surprise, the head of the philosophy department bowed down to Swamiji and touched his feet. He had never heard such a brilliant exposition of the Bhagavad Gita".

"Of all the spiritual leaders I have met in my life, the greatest was Swami Chinmayananda ji. I was a Christian, a police officer in uniform, and yet I became an admirer of Swami ji and was greatly influenced by his teachings, to the extent I became completely different to what I was. For that change and transformation in my life, I bow my head in reverence to Swami Chinmayananda ji."

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)	Monday/ 7:30 – 8:30 pm

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 : rameshrt@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/

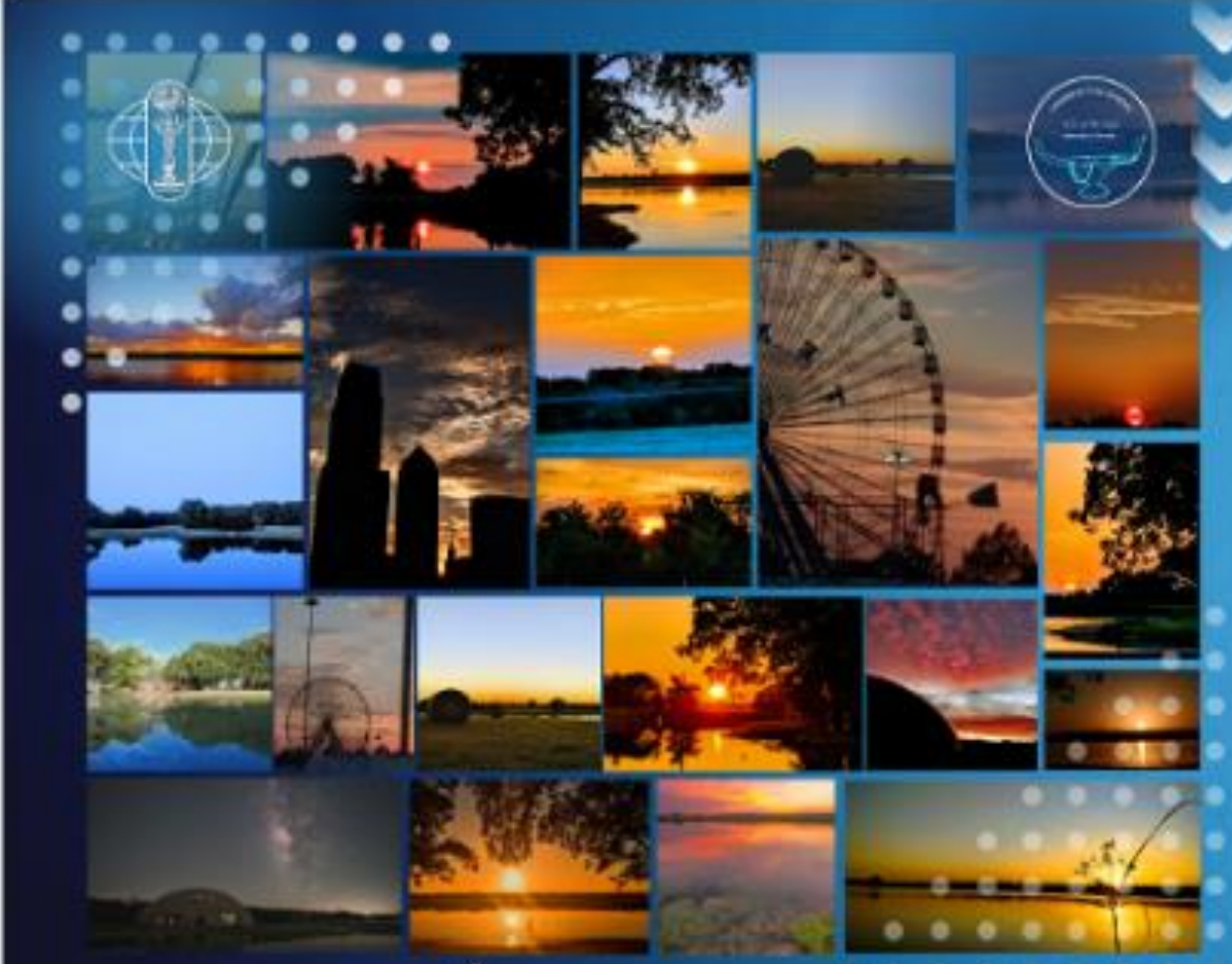
Updates from around the world -

- [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>

We had a very successful Banquet on Dec 2 at Waterford Banquet. Thanks to all volunteer Sevaks and Sevikas and all the donors for supporting Chinmaya mission for a Noble cause


Note: A full article on the Annual Fundraiser Banquet will be included in the next month's newsletter


Youth Empowerment Program




*Youth Empowerment
Program*


L E A R N | S E R V E | G R O W

 CHINMAYA MANGALAM
10470 FM744, Barry, TX 75102

 DATE
JUNE 10 - JULY 19, 2024

 QUESTIONS?
HARI@CHINMAYAMMISSION.ORG

COST
\$2,000





CHINMAYA MISSION CHICAGO

Badri - A School of Vedantic Studies

11S080 Kingery Hwy, Willowbrook, IL 60527 • www.mychinmaya.org



Winter Vedanta Residential Retreat

(Four discourses daily with additional group discussions/Q&A sessions)

Dec 27 - 30, 2023 (Wednesday - Saturday)

Check-in: 12/27 @3:00 pm & Check-out: 12/30 @5:00 pm

Selected Verses from BG
Chapter 12
'Devotion the Ultimate Emotion'

Kaivalya Upanishad
'I am in all, all are in Me'



By
Swami Sharanananda



By
Swami Aparajitananda



Abhyudaya Retreat Center (Next to CM-Badri)
11S250 Kingery Hwy, Willowbrook, IL 60527

"Credit Card
Registration Link"



Registration fees

Full camp (with accomodation): \$375/person
Full camp (without accomodation): \$275/person
Partial registration (day campers): \$100/day/person

Early Bird Discount: 10% before 12/10/23
(only available to full camp participants)

<https://mychinmaya.org/winter-vedanta-residential-retreat-dec-27-30-2023/>

"Zelle/Check/Cash
Registration Link"



Contacts

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Suma Rajashankar: (708)955-3722 Siva Ramamurthy: (630)258-2960

Swamiji's Message contd...

"Father," he said, "Give me my share of your money. I want it now. I am leaving home and going away."

Father Levi was sad when he heard this. He knew that money would not bring happiness to young Simon. But he loved his son too much to force him to stay at home. Besides, Simon must live his own life and learn for himself.

Father Levi was too loving and too wise to try to stop him.

Father Levi sold some of his sheep and cattle and part of his land. He sold exactly one-third of his estate, so that Simon would have all that would come to him by law. Then he gave Simon the bag of silver.

Simon could not wait to be off. He put on his best clothes and tucked the bag of silver safely inside his belt. He could hardly stop to say goodbye. Father Levi watched him as he strode out down the road and disappeared into the distance. He felt sad about losing his son. Now he could only watch and wait and long for him to come back.

How happy Simon was as he got farther and farther away from that dreary farm! Now he would begin to live. What fun and pleasure and excitement he would have!

The jolly young Jew had plenty to spend, and his father's money brought him lots of friends. Life was one long round of parties and Simon loved the music and dancing, the feasting and drinking and merry-making. He was just spending his father's hard-earned money.

At first, Simon did not worry. He had looked after his friends and spent money on them for a long time. Now they would look after him. But he got a shock of his life when he went to them. They turned him away. They wanted nothing more to do with him. Now that his money was gone, his friends were gone too. He sold all his fine new clothes and soon he had nothing left.

Simon was very miserable as he wandered through the city streets. He was not among his own people. There was no one he could turn to for help. He was a stranger in a strange land. He was all alone, without friends and without money.

So Simon left the fine city. He went out into the countryside. Perhaps one of the farmers would give him a job. After all, he could do a good day's work on the land with all that he knew about farming. But no one gave him any work. His clothes were in rags by now, and he was starving. Then, at last, a farmer took pity on him. He said that Simon could look after his pigs. To be a swineherd was the lowest job of all. But Simon was too hungry to be proud. The pigs were fed with the rough pods of the carob tree. Simon was so hungry that he longed to stuff himself with the pigs' food.

Simon had plenty of time to think, as he guarded the pigs. "What a fool I have been," he thought to himself. "I have left my father who loved me so much. He wanted me to be with him. Look at me now. Even my father's servants are much better off than I am. I'll go back. Yes, I will go back to my father. I will apologise to him that I have sinned against God by sinning against him. I will tell him that I have been a bad son, not respecting my father, and not honouring and obeying him. I have had my share of his estates, I know that. I can't expect him to take me back as his son. I will say to him: I am not fit to be treated like your son. Please take me as a mere workman in the fields."

It was a long, long journey back home. Mile after mile Simon hobbled along the dusty roads eating any scraps he could find, sleeping by the roadside. No one would have recognized the dirty tattered beggar as the proud son of Father Levi.

But there was one man who did. Father Levi had been sad and mournful ever since the day his young son had gone away. Every day he went up on the flat roof of his house. He sat there, looking into the distance, hoping and longing for his son to come back to him. It was Father Levi who recognized that form in rags and tatters, limping up the road. He hurried down the steps from the roof. He forgot all about his dignity and importance and ran down the road. He clasped Simon in his arms and hugged him tight, crying out in his joy.

Simon could hardly speak as his father hugged and kissed him. Then he began to confess what a fool he had been. "Father," he said, "I have sinned against God! I have been disrespectful and disobedient to you. I am not fit to be taken back as your son. Just let me be one of your labourers."

But Father Levi did not even listen. He was clasping his hands and calling for the servants. They came running out. "My son has come back home," he said, "Fetch one of my finest robes for him, so that we may honour him. Bring one of my rings for his finger, so that he will have my authority. And don't forget a pair of slippers, too. We can't have him walking around barefoot, like a servant. Then you can kill a fatted calf and prepare a feast. We are going to eat and drink and be merry. My son was dead to me, and now he is alive again. He was lost, and now he is found."

The servants hurried off to obey their master. Soon the whole household was buzzing with the news. Everyone shared in Father Levi's joy.

What a feast they had! After all the eating and drinking came the merrymaking. The flute players played the music for the round dance of the men. There was singing, stamping of the feet, and clapping of the hands. What a noise they made in their happiness! Anyone could have heard it a long way off. Someone did. It was Jude, the elder brother. He had spent a long hard day in the fields and he was walking wearily back home. He heard the noise as he came near to the house. What are they all singing and dancing and shouting about? The servant told him that Simon had come home and that the feast was in his honour. Jude was furious.

The servant ran in to tell Father Levi that Jude was back from the fields. "Then ask Jude to come and take his place of honour at our feast," said Father Levi.

"What?" shouted Jude at the servant when he came back. "Does he think I am going to rejoice, just because that good-for-nothing son of his has come back? Does he imagine I am going to make merry to honour that lazy young rascal?"

The servant told his master what Jude had said. Then Father Levi went out himself to his elder son. He spoke kind and loving words to Jude. But Jude was too furious to listen. He was too angry even to be polite to his father, let alone speak to him respectfully as he ought. He was too rude even to let his father plead with him. "All these years I have slaved on your farm!" He shouted at his father. "I have always obeyed you! I have always served you! Did you ever give me a feast so that I could make merry with my friends? No! But what happens when that wastrel of a son of yours comes back? Nothing is too good for him! All

he has done is to throw away your money, enjoying himself in the big city. But he gets the fatted calf and a grand feast!"

Father Levi loved Jude as much as he loved Simon. He could understand how Jude felt and why he was so angry. He did not speak sternly to him. He did not complain of his lack of love. He simply put his arms around Jude's shoulder. "Jude, my son, my dear son," he said, "You are always here with me. I know that I can rely on you. All that I have belongs to you, now that Simon has had his share. He is my son, just as you are. I love you both dearly. I was only right to welcome him back home again. It makes me so happy to have him with me, just as it makes me happy to have you with me. You see, it is just as if he has come back from the dead. I was afraid I would never see him again when he went away. He was dead, now he is alive again. He was lost, now he has been found. Come in with me, dear Jude. Come in and share my joy."

The story of Simon is our story. Ever ungrateful to the ever-present and ever-loving Lord – the Supreme Self, and abandoning His abode of Sat-Chit-Ananda, we wander in the strange world of the senses as a miserable beggar.

This is all we need to do: Shed the ego. Confess that we have erred. Seek forgiveness for all our mistakes. Surrender unto Him. He will surely accept us and then all will be well.

Poor Lord! He has been waiting with a longing heart from time immemorial for the return of His beloved children.

May we stop being His ungrateful disobedient children. May we not make Him wait and disappoint Him any longer.

O M T A T S A T