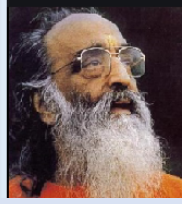




# CHINMAYA MISSION CHICAGO

**BADRI - A School of Vedantic Studies**

Monthly Newsletter – February 2024



# Chinmaya



## Wisdom Quote

*"Detachment from the world of objects is never possible without attaching ourselves to something nobler and diviner."* – **Swami Chinmayananda**

## Swamiji's Message



**RAMAYANA** – the poem was written by a man well-established in the Ultimate Reality, who was expressing through his work, the pure Advaita Philosophy, the contents of the Upanishads. The glory of the poem is that the ideal "states of living" are expressed – the ideal brother, son, king, enemy, friend and the ideal man living in society. But all this is mere paraphernalia. The core of this poem is utterly divine – which explains why the glorious story of Rama is so popular even today!

RAMA itself means "Sarveshu Ramante iti Ramah" — that which revels in every one of us, the pure Light of Consciousness, the Atman, the Self, the Atma-Rama. This spiritual essence in us, can come out only as a son of Dasaratha, one who has conquered all the ten indriyas – five jnanendriyas and the five karmendriyas. It will be born in you and reborn only in Ayodhya (yuddha means conflict, Ayodhya means where there is no conflict, meaning, where all conflict has ended). In that Ayodhya which is ruled by the self-controlled Dasaratha, RAMA is born.

This Rama, the pure Self, cannot enter into any active participation in life unless wedded to the mind. Sita (the mind) is ready. She was not born to Janaka by wedlock.

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### Upcoming Events -

- **Vishnu Sahasranamam:** 2/3 @ 9:15 am
- **Bhajan Sandhya – 2/10 @ 6 pm**
  - Host – Suma Rajashankar
  - Venue – Badri Shrine
- **Lalitha Sahasranama – 2/16 @ 6:30 pm**
  - Puja & Chanting @ Badri
- **Group Vedic Chanting – 2/25 @ 9 am**
- **Shiva Purana Saptah** - Sw. Shantananda ji
  - Apr 27 – May 4 @ Badri
  - Shiva Mahima stotram & Kenopanishad
- **Silent Residential Retreat**
  - March 10 – 13 @ Abhyudaya
- **JCHYK Day Retreat**
  - 7 am – 7 pm, March 3 @ Yamunotri

## Highlights from Previous Month

The month of January is always special being the first month of the year and hence the first day starts with a Puja. The month also had some key auspicious occasions given that this year brings Gurudev Jayanti's 108<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the celebrations were kicking off during this month. We also had our bi-annual blood drive planned during this month. In addition, we have our regular monthly group activities that are scheduled on various weekends at Badri.

### **1. Monthly Vedic Chanting**

We had our Monthly Group chanting of Vedic mantras and suktams on the 28<sup>th</sup> Jan with a smaller participant crowd. 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.

### **2. 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 it was scheduled on 7<sup>th</sup> Jan at 9:15 am.

### **3. Bhajan Sandhya**

The Bhajan Sandhya for the first month of the year was hosted by Smt Bansari & Shri Uday Mehta at their home. The auspicious evening started with the chanting of the slokas and was followed by some melodious bhajans by several of the devotees present. And the great event ended with the chanting of Nirvana Shatakam and Arathi.

### **4. Blood Donation Drive**

This month we had a great opportunity of organizing a Blood Drive, which provided a convenient option for several of our devotees to donate their blood. This Blood Drive is one of the several ones arranged during the year. This time we had 16 donors who contributed a total of 14 pints of blood, as per the information received from Versiti.



## NEW YEAR PUJA

The year starts with a Puja on the first of Jan. This has been a tradition at Badri for a very long time. Several of our devotees brave the cold and prioritize this event over all other personal programs planned over the long weekend.

The evening began with a Guru Paduka puja in which several of our devotees participated and this was followed by some melodious bhajans. With the limitation of time, we had to conclude the melodies, after which Swamiji shared a profound message. The program ended with an arathi and a wide variety of Mahaprasad dinner.





### Gurudev's 108th Jayanti Celebration Kick Off

This year is marked as a very auspicious one for Chinmaya Mission worldwide as we will be celebrating Gurudev's 108<sup>th</sup> Jayanti. The entire year will be lined up with celebrations and events to mark the occasion. And January 19<sup>th</sup> was marked as the day leading to 108 days from Gurudev Jayanti. On this day, here at Badri we had organized a Puja followed by the chanting of Vishnu Sahasranamam 108 times.

The event started at 8:30 am with a Ganesh puja followed by a Badri Narayana Puja along with vedic chanting. Then all the devotees who had assembled chanted the Vishnu Sahasranamam together. In order to confirm that we touch the target of 108, we all chanted it twice. The event concluded with an arathi and a grand Mahaprasadam Lunch.



### Lord Ram Lalla Pranprathista Celebration

On 21<sup>st</sup> Jan evening, several devotes gathered at our Badri shrine to commemorate and celebrate the Pranprathista of Lord Ram Lalla at his birth place, Ayodhya. The celebration of the Ayodhya event reverberated all over the world and we at Badri also experienced this enthralling experience.

As a part of our celebration, we performed a Puja, followed by the chanting of sections from the Ramcharitamanas and a variety of cultural programs including melodious bhajans and dance performances. The celebration that evening ended with an arathi in which everyone participated followed by Prasadam dinner.





### Experiences 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
<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 pm
<b>Drik Drishya Viveka (on Zoom)</b>	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 <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_atul@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>

## 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
- [Chinmaya Viboothi](#) – Summary of Events
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nYbe5AEqRM>
- [Soundarya Lahari Residential Camp](#)
  - By Sw. Sharadananda Saraswati
  - In-person camp at Adi Shankara Nilayam, Kerala
  - March 21 – 25, 2024

## JCHYK DAY RETREAT – Developing Resilience



3<sup>rd</sup> March 2024 | 7 am – 7 pm | Yamunotri Center

Open to 8<sup>th</sup> Graders and Highschoolers

Join us with Sw. Aparijitananda ji

Topic: **Developing Resilience** – Be in tune with Body and Mind





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118080 Kingery Hwy, Willowbrook, IL 60527 [www.mychinmaya.org](http://www.mychinmaya.org)



# Lalitha Sahasranamam Puja

Friday, February 16, 2024 | 6:30-8:45 PM |

Presided by Swami Sharanananda

- Lalitha Sahasranamam Puja
- Samoohika Lalitha Sahasranamam Chanting
- Veda Parayanam
- Aarti

Mahaprasadam and Dinner  
will be served after the puja



Use the QR Code or visit [bit.ly/Badri2024LS](http://bit.ly/Badri2024LS)  
to sign up for chanting



Ashok Dholakia 708.602.3901 | Neha Raval 630.881.9263 | Bharati Khuntia 630.631.6934 |  
Sudha Gouthama 630.502.9341 | Sabitha Ramakrishnan 630.248.4884 | Anand Ram 630.440.8148





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# Shiva Purana Saptah

Based on *Shiva Mahimna Stotram*

&

## Kenopanishad

**Saturday, April 27 - Saturday, May 4, 2024**



Discourses by **Swami Shantananda**

*Shiva Mahimna Stotram is a homage offered to Lord Shiva for His grace. It is interwoven with stories of Lord Shiva's greatness and glories that inspire devotion.*



President, Chinmaya Mission West  
Chinmaya Mission Princeton

### SCHEDULE

<b>Saturday</b> <b>April 27</b>	9:15 am - 10:30 am	Rudrabhishekam & Archana
	4:30 pm - 6:00 pm	Pothi Puja & Yatra
	6:00 pm - 7:30 pm	Welcome and Discourse
	7:30 pm	Dinner
<b>Sunday</b> <b>April 28</b> to <b>Friday</b> <b>May 3</b>	7:30 am - 8:30 am	Kenopanishad
	9:15 am - 10:30 am	Rudrabhishekam & Archana
	5:30 pm - 6:45 pm	Dinner
	6:45 pm - 7:15 pm	Swaranjali /Cultural Program
	7:15 pm - 7:30 pm	Aarti
<b>Saturday</b> <b>May 4</b>	7:30 pm - 8:30 pm	Shiva Purana
	8:00 am - 10:30 am	Panchakshari Homam
	11:00 am - 1:00 pm	Shiva Parvati Vivah
	1:00 pm	Mahaprasad Lunch

### SPONSORSHIPS

Mukhya Yajaman - \$3001

Daily Yajaman - \$1001

Annadanam - \$501

Shiva Parvati Vivah - \$501

Panchakshari Homam - \$501 (Suggested)

Rudrabhishekam & Archana - \$151

Evening Aarti - \$101

For more details:

<https://mychinmaya.org/saptah/>



*Complimentary meals will be provided | Campus accommodations available at nominal cost*

Abhijit Joshi (312) 296 1477 | Siva Ramamurthy (630) 258 2960 | Venkat Palli (848) 218 0432

Rajul Bhalala (847) 302 2383 | Ashok Dholakia (708) 602 3901 | Deepak Chande (708) 253 3570

### Swamiji's Message cont....

While ploughing the land, he finds Sita. The mind appeared from the most inappropriate place ever. It is absurd to enquire deep into this. Later you find that the same Sita disappears into Mother Earth. From Mother Earth she came, to Mother Earth she went back. From where the mind comes, and where it disappears during samadhi, nobody can tell. This is Maya !!

Wedded to the mind when Rama returns, he finds that he cannot live in Ayodhya. For, once the mind has come, you start expressing through it. You have to enter the 'forest of life', self-exiled as it were. Some cause or other must emerge as one enters the 'forest of existence'. So long as Sita was looking up to Rama, living in Rama, for Rama, by Rama, she never found any difference between Ayodhya and a jungle. But how long can the mind remain constantly centred in the higher divine potential in us? It has to become extrovert. And this is just what happened the moment Sita looked away from Rama. The golden deer was noticed. The finite, ephemeral, ever-changing objects, start pulling you towards them. The mind demands them. Rama may argue, and all the Scriptures might also argue, that it is all Maya, that it is not real, that it is only a Rakshasa. Yet even Sita, Rama's own consort, will not accept it, and she will exile Rama in search of the sense-object. Once desire-polluted, you fall. Rama goes.... and Sita is left in Lakshmana's charge.

Lakshman represents Tapas (austerity). He had no reason to go to the jungle. But he left of his own accord, and he lives in perfect Brahmacharya, even without sleep. It is perfect Tapas. But then, one cannot live in Tapas. The delusion of the other world will force you to give it up. The moment Sita hears the sound of Rama's voice, she forgets Rama's glory and might and becomes anxious about his safety. She even urges Lakshmana to go to her husband's aid. And when Lakshmana assures her that the great Rama will never come to any harm, for there is none to match him in skill and valour, Sita severely rebuffs him. When the beautiful ideal woman Sita utters such malignant words, Lakshmana is shocked into silence. He goes away, drawing a line of demarcation round the hut, urging her not to go beyond it.

Once desire enters your bosom, as an ordinary individual you cannot constantly live in Tapas. But you can at least draw a line — thus far and no further. But once Tapas has been given up, such lines are of no use. You readily step over them. And when you do this instead of Dasaratha, you are confronted by Dasamukha, the opposite character. The latter is an extrovert as the former is self-controlled. The sensuous materialistic power persuades Sita to cross over the line because, as long as you are within the moral boundary, it cannot affect you. You go beyond it, and permissiveness starts, and Dasamukha ensnares you.

Dasamukha does not mean having five heads on the right and another five on the left, with one neck in between. What is meant here is that the five jnanendriyas and the five karmendriyas together constitute the Dasamukha. A totally extrovert man lives in the flesh, for the flesh, and by the flesh — it is the rule of the flesh. Such a man is a sensualist and a total extrovert. Materially he can become great as did Ravana who ruled over a prosperous land, Lanka. In Lanka, nobody worked, everybody was supported by the socialist government, and people from all over the world came to pay homage to Ravana, who was supremely powerful. But does materialism provide anything more than mere physical comfort? It is not a solution to the problem of life. Spiritual and cultural values alone can save the world. This idea is brought out in the Ramayana.

Sita was abducted and taken away. She was no more a citizen of Aryavarta, the hallowed and cultural land any longer. She will be given a place in Lanka, another island, no doubt very near, but altogether another



land. Even there she was exiled. We are all at this moment “Sitas” in exile. Should we give in to sensuality? To gain back our original Ayodhya, what should we do? We should do exactly what Sita did. She realised she had fallen and to prevent a further fall, she firmly said ‘No’ to Ravana and remained in the garden under an Ashoka tree. Shoka means ‘dukha’, i.e., sorrow, Ashoka therefore means ‘not dukha’ (devoid of sorrow). You and I will have sorrow but we do not recognise it. This is the ‘Ashoka’ state. Under the “tree of non-recognition of sorrows”, when we want to remain steadfast in character, we will doubtless be tempted and put to a lot of strain. But in that Ashoka-attitude, we should remain steadfast, constantly remembering Rama.

Sita was constantly and vigorously thinking of Rama. And we cannot say that Rama did not respond. In the Ramayana, we will find that the scene is alternately changing — once Lanka is shown, the next moment Rama is shown in the jungle. This shows that there is a secret communication between them. The more intense Sita’s cry, the more frenzied does Rama’s search for her becomes. He weeps like an ordinary mortal, not because he is attached to her, but because of his longing to help a devotee.

The spiritual essence in man can kill and destroy Ravan, the ten-headed monstrosity of extrovertedness. It can do it with the army of monkeys. An educated man reading this should know what the monkeys refer to. The monkey has two qualities – *asthiratwa* and *chanchalatwa* – instability and restlessness. The thoughts in the human mind have these two qualities. They cannot remain – stable. The monkey cannot remain on one branch, it jumps from one branch to another and from tree to tree. If it gets tired and sits on a tree, it will still be restless. Thus, it cannot keep quiet even for a minute. So too, our thoughts. They can never remain quiet, but keep jumping from topic to topic. The army of thoughts is to be controlled. But, at this moment, Vali, who stands for lust, controls them. This has to be destroyed. And how? It can be only done from behind. From the front, every time it is your lust that wins, and not you. So, if ever you want to conquer this lust, you have to shoot it from behind the tree. Vali had such great power, that anytime an enemy approached him, half the strength of the enemy would drain away and Vali himself would become three times stronger. So, Rama had to kill him from behind. To whom should he then give the kingship of the monkey-clan – the “thoughts?” To whom better than Sugreeva? “Greeva” means reins, “Sugreeva” means well-reined, i.e., well-controlled. When the thoughts are under one’s control, the army is then available to cross the frontiers and reach Lanka to kill the ten-headed monster and bring back Sita.

When Rama regains Sita after having destroyed extrovertedness, the mind that is no longer extrovert is no mind at all. It (Sita) has to disappear. Without Sita, Rama cannot bring about “Rama-Rajya”. He cannot rule without a wife. Therefore, Kapila comes and offers him a Mithya Sita or Maya Sita. And with Maya Sita, Rama returns to rule Ayodhya, with a tranquil and poised mind in a state of perfection, having regained his spiritual status. Though he returns with a mind, it is not really there. It is like the sky which allows everything to remain in space without getting contaminated. So too, Rama, the Man of Perfection, allows the mind to remain in him, but is not affected by it. Since Rama functioned in the world outside with a perfectly controlled mind, the result had to be a RAMA-RAJYA !!!

**O M     T A T     S A T**