

Chinmaya Smrithi



A Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC)

Volume 18, Number 3 -- May 11, 2008

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY



Save Mother Earth – Frederick Bala Vihar Activity – see article by Devi Ramaseshan

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Events & Library

- Upcoming Events and Links
- Mahasamadhi Camp Poster
- Purohit Course Poster
- E-Vedanta Course - Savitha Balakrishnan and Acharya Ananta ji
- Upanishad Ganga - Anil Kishore

Bala Vihar Articles and Stories

- Poems on Rama - Sundaram Children
- Hanuman Crossword Puzzle, - Mangala Rao
- What God Means to Me - Nikhil Srinivasan
- Poem on Saints -Nikhil Srinivasan
- The King and the Hunters -

Kamala Harihara Aiyar

Members & Friends

- "Chinmayam Wonderland" - Vandana Bapna
- Mother's Day Thought - Sitaram Kowtha
- New Year Day - Nirmala Limaye
- Pursuit of Happiness - Shashikala Duraiswami

Acharya Uvacha, Study Groups

- Falls Church Study Group – Ram Chandran
- Frederick Study Group – Sangamesh Konaraddi
- Six Schools of Philosophy - Acharya Ananta ji
- Analysis of the Mind - Sadananda ji

Next Issue

- July 2008, Articles due by June 15th 2008
- Email submissions to smrithi@chinmayadc.org. Submission instructions at www.chinmayadc.org, Smrithi link, "Information on publishing in Smrithi"
- Contact us at smrithi@chinmayadc.org with your feedback or questions.

News, Calendar and Upcoming Events

- Registration In Progress
 - Summer Camp (VA: June 23 – July 18; MD: Aug 5 – Aug 15)
 - Mahasamadhi Camp 2008 (July 28th – August 3rd)
- Sathyanarayana Puja – May 17th 9 AM in Virginia
- Bala Vihar Graduation Ceremony, Saturday, May 17th 4PM at Chinmayam
- Sadananda ji Spiritual Camp on Chandogya Upanishad, May 24-25
- Language and Performing Arts Annual Day, June 1
- Bala Vihar Annual Day – June 7, 8 by session
- Bala Vihar Fall Classes Begin – September 7,8 by session

Study Groups

- Please contact Sri Vijay Kumar ji by email at vijaykumar@rocketmail.com, if you are interested in forming or learning more about study groups.

Bookstore/Library

- Please contact Mr Vijay Singh by email at publications@chinmayadc.org to order any publication. Review list of Chinmaya Publications by downloading <http://www.cybermatics2.com/cmadmin/PriceListMay2007.pdf>

Useful Links:

CMWRC – Washington Regional Center

Washington Region – Dulles VA Chapter website

Washington Region – Springfield VA Chapter website

Washington Region – Frederick MD Chapter website

Chinmaya West Website

Chinmaya Mission Trust

Chinmaya International Foundation, E-Vedanta courses

www.chinmayadc.org

www.chinmayadulles.org

www.chinmayava.org

www.chinmayafrederick.org

www.chinmayamission.org

www.chinmayamission.com

www.chinfo.org

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Raju Chidambaram, Sitaram Kowtha, Swami Dheerananda ji, Acharyas, Chapter Coordinators and Teachers.

Bala Vihar students - Asmi Panigrabi, Harsha Neerchal and Srikanth Kowtha

Please contact us if you are interested in joining the editorial staff!



Chinmaya Mission®

Washington Regional Center

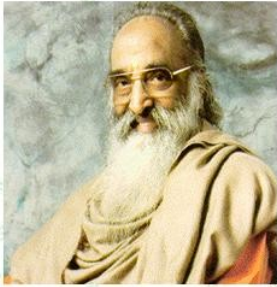
Mahasamadhi Family Camp 2008

Mon. JULY 28 – Sun. AUGUST 3, 2008

At Rocky Gap Resort, Cumberland, MD

NEAR WASHINGTON, DC

Conducted by **Swami Tejomayananda**



Listen to Mundaka Upanishad and absorb the timeless teachings to experience our inner Self, from Swami Tejomayananda, head of Chinmaya Mission worldwide. Several acharyas will be present for meditation, satsangs, and children's activities.

The backdrop for the retreat is the serene, nature-filled, award-winning Rocky Gap Resort and Lodges (www.rockygapresort.com), in Cumberland, Maryland. The resort is surrounded by hills and an alpine lake and is adjacent to Rocky Gap State Park. It combines the best of quiet resort luxury and the calm serenity of mother nature. The entire lodge has been reserved for use by the Mission during the retreat.

ADULTS

- 3 TALKS A DAY BY SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA ON MUNDAKA UPANISHAD
- MORNING GUIDED MEDITATION, GROUP DISCUSSIONS, DISCOURSES BY ACHARYAS
- UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN A MAHASAMADHI DAY PUJA WITH PUJYA GURUJI AND ACHARYAS

YOUTH

- TALKS, DISCUSSION, Q&A LED BY ACHARYAS GEARED TOWARDS COLLEGE STUDENTS & YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
- OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES INCLUDING NATURE TRAILS

CHILDREN

- BALA VIHAR CLASS ACTIVITIES BY ACHARYAS AND DEDICATED TEACHERS
- CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, EVENING BONFIRE AND OUTDOOR GAMES ACTIVITIES

Registration is now open—Download form, more info at www.chinmayadc.org

E-Mail: mahasamadhicamp2008@chinmayadc.org



E-Vedanta

Savitha Balakrishnan and Acharya Ananta Sarma

What makes the difference in the quality of our lives? What changes are needed to raise the quality of life? What is the Science of Achievement? What is the Art of fulfillment?

The answers to many of these questions lie in our wonderful Vedic scriptures. The scriptures teach and empower us to make the right decision at every moment. Vedanta teaches us to discover our own true nature. There is a Vedantic equation similar to the Einstein's theory of relativity equation and that is: "U=I" or "You are that infinite being". Understanding and solving this equation will open the door to eternal happiness for both the individual as well as society. However to solve any equation, we need certain fundamental resources of our sacred scriptures, a teacher etc. In our case, we are incredibly blessed to have all the resources right at our doorstep or should I say at our desktop! The E-Vedanta course will help us solve the equation to eternal success and happiness. Opportunity is knocking at your door and our sincere and earnest hope would be that all of you would seize this wonderful opportunity! The E-Vedanta program is designed for individuals who would like to get the essence of the scriptures without delving deep into it. Our Chinmaya Mission acharyas have done phenomenal work of going through the vast scriptures and extracting the essence from it and presenting it to us in an easy fashion.

Thirty seven students from Chinmayam, Dulles and Springfield groups of CMWRC have taken the first step of registering for the E-Vedanta course. To this group Acharya Anant ji facilitates the learning process by being there to answer questions and explain hard to understand concepts on a bi-weekly basis. Last but not the least, group study is always more fun, easier to understand, and the learning experience is more enriching than if done alone. We truly believe that it's our decisions that determine our destiny and the quality of our lives. Sign up for the E-Vedanta class and embark on this spiritual journey. Remember, the path to success is to take determined action (today)

It is not too late to join this group of motivated students. Please do feel free to ask Anant ji (Anant_Sarma@Hotmail.com), Sankar Parmeshwar (Sankar17@verizon.net), Savitha Balakrishnan (bala_savitha@yahoo.com) or Karthik Balasubramanian (KarthikB@hotmail.com) if you have any questions. For more information regarding the E-Vedanta program and to register, please check out <http://www.chinfo.org/>



**CHINMAYA MISSION
PUROHIT COURSE
2008-2010**



PUJYA SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDAJI

Head of Chinmaya Mission® Worldwide

**invites applications for Chinmaya Mission's Purohit Course
for the study of Puja Vidhis, Shodasha Samskaaras,
Vaidik Chanting, Sanskrit, and Hindu Culture**

Eligibility:	Passed Std. 7
Age:	15 - 30 years
Resident Acharya:	Brahmachari Samvit Chaitanya
Venue:	Chinmaya Gardens, Coimbatore, India
Course Duration:	One-and-a-half-year residential course, no holidays, commencing on Vijaya Dashami, October, 9, 2008
No Course Fee:	Free accommodation, food, clothes, books, and medical care will be provided by Chinmaya Garden Trust
Application Deadline:	June 30, 2008
Interview:	Personal interviews of all candidates will be conducted. Candidates will be informed of the specific interview locations.

**After completing the course, candidates may opt to work for the Chinmaya Mission,
or pursue their individual goals.**

For Application Forms, contact:

Brahmachari Ajit Chaitanya, Chinmaya Vaidik Vidyapeeth

Chinmaya Garden Trust, Nallur Vayal P.O., Siruvani Road, Coimbatore 641 114 India

purohitcourse@gmail.com; (91-422) 261-5637, -3497

Upanishad Ganga

Anil Kishore

Chinmayam Bala Vihar Teacher, CMWRC Web Sevak, Bala Vihar Director

The first episode of **Upanishad Ganga** was presented at Chinmayam on Friday, March 28, 2008. Dr. Apparao Mukkamala, President, Chinmaya Mission West introduced this beautiful video to an audience of many keen members at Chinmayam, including Acharya Anantji and Acharya Vilasiniji. Upanishad Ganga is a historic project envisioned by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayanandaji to bring the stories and teachings of the Upanishads to the public via some fifty 30-minute episodes to be aired on television. This beautiful presentation is a very important worldwide project of Chinmaya Mission. It is unique in the values it showers on audiences of all ages.

The first episode, entitled “Satyakama,” impresses on the need for education. As apparent in the prayer from the Upanishad the darkness of ignorance can only be illumined by knowledge:

*O Lord, Lead Us From Untruth To Truth,
Lead Us From Darkness To Light, Lead Us From
Death To Immortality, Aum (the universal sound of
God) Let There Be Peace Peace Peace*

One passion we have as members of the Chinmaya family is to spiritually nourish our children with the values from our scriptures. A young child with a determination to acquire knowledge can only succeed despite all odds. All barriers of caste, race, religion, language, poverty and family background can be eradicated in the presence of inspiration to learn.

Another concept dramatized in this episode was *Satyameva Jayate* – truth is victorious. When one seeks the truth and nothing but the truth, he is empowered with the wisdom to face all the challenges. Sometimes the truth is bitter and the hardest to face but in truth comes victory in the long run. One who is truthful is therefore always admired by others because of the courage in being truthful despite difficulties.

In each episode the main Upanishad

concepts have been explained through a blend of stories and dialogs with drama, dance, music and captivating stories. Each episode is aimed at illustrations of teachings that have practical implications in daily life. Through stories one can be inspired and transformed into a better person. This visual portrayal of stories can reach the masses and endorse some of the core values to the audience. A team of Chinmaya Mission acharyas and scholars have conceptualized each episode. This production is being done of behalf of Chinmaya Mission by none other than Dr. Chandraprakash Dwivedi (the creative Director of Chanakya fame).

The serial is in Hindi, as its largest audience will be Hindi-speaking. Eventually DVDs with subtitles and/or dubbing will be released in various languages. It is strongly recommended that the members view the episode in Hindi or dubbed in another Indian language. The English subtitles are not likely do justice to the rich nectar inherent to Indian languages. In trying to translate into English, I could feel the helplessness in not being able to do justice to the dialogs and the story.

Finally, as mentioned in some CM websites, *“All problems are due to lack of right thinking. Human life is rare and precious. Its main purpose is to enquire into and realize the Supreme Truth, which is the support of this world and the Self of all beings. This Realization can be gained through purity of mind and the Upanishadic Wisdom learnt from an Enlightened Master. The Realized Master ever remains engaged in the Welfare of all beings.”*

Let us look forward to these episodes and take every opportunity to view them with our families. Let us glow in the glories of our scriptures so that we take the torch of their core values for generations ahead. Please help support this project through your donations. Each episode costs \$30,000 to produce. Donations may be sent to Upanishad Ganga via CMWRC.

Poems on Sri Rama

Sundaram Children, Silver Spring

Rama

By Vikram Nambiar

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Dashrta Nandana Rama Ram

Dhasha Muka Mardana Rama Ram

Pashupati Ranjana Rama Ram

Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Rama

By Lasya

Rama, Rama, he's so great

He is very powerful and never late

Rama always keeps his word

He has three brothers and a wife of course

Rama will always protect us, never forget

He is always there for us if we just pray

Rama

By Karthik Nathan

Rama is kind

He is always positive

He always obeys his elders

He loves his family

He overcame evil in all kinds of forms

Rama

By Abir Muhuri

His brave attitude is his key to heroism

The love in his heart is of billions of mothers

Rama, the hero, the justice of Hinduism

Rama, compassionate to all others

He is the master of bow and arrow

He will immediately heal an injured sparrow

Rama, of Ayodhya he is King

All will praise him with grace and sing



Rama

By Vishnu Veeraraghavan

Righteous

Awesome

Might

Admiring

Rama Poem

By Manisha Sunil

Righteous

Addicted to Dharma

Marvelous child

Amazing Student

Really great prince

Understanding brother

Loving Husband

End to unhappiness

Super !!!

Rama

Aditya Krishnan

R- Radiant as the sun

A- Archery expert

M- Mighty and magnanimous

A- Ayodhya's king was he

Ramayan

Isha Darbari

Ram is religious

And auspicious

Modest too

And Ram's anger-free too

You think of him as your model

And if you don't you should

Now, night, and day

Rama

Abir Muhuri

It is in your heart, a light glowing flare,

To give always never take.

To help others is a wonderful gift,

Even if the help is ever swift

Even if you are fortunate,

Give a slice of your gratitude to those who
are less fortunate,

If everyone in the world gave a coin of gold,

The kindness in us would start to unfold.



Rama

Sandhya Piratla

R is for Radiant

A is for Adoring

M is for Magnificent

A is for Assuring

Rama

Nithin Venkatraman

Righteous

Avatar of Vishnu

Majestic

Attentive

Rama

By Sonam Mehendiratta

Religious

Auspicious

Magnificent

Awesome

Ideal Human

By Atman Panigrahi

Rama killed Ravana
With the help of Sugriva
Rama is very noble
And destroys evil

He is very courageous
And also righteous
Rama is very brave
But definitely not naïve
His is an incarnation of God
Precisely Lord Vishnu

Rama is an example of a wonderful human
being

That hopefully all of us can be!

Rama

By Giridhar Gopal Srinivasan

Brave Rama, Dasharatha's son,
You kept your word.
And killed the ten headed Ravana

When Kaikeyi banished you you never
complained

You broke Shiva's bow.

And you helped Vishwamitra in his time of
need

Brave Rama, Dasharatha's son,

You have taken your chances,

Our respect you have won!



Rama

By Neel Bajan

Rama is great, strong, and brave

Rama strung the bow and got Sita's love

Rama got sent to the forest for 14 years

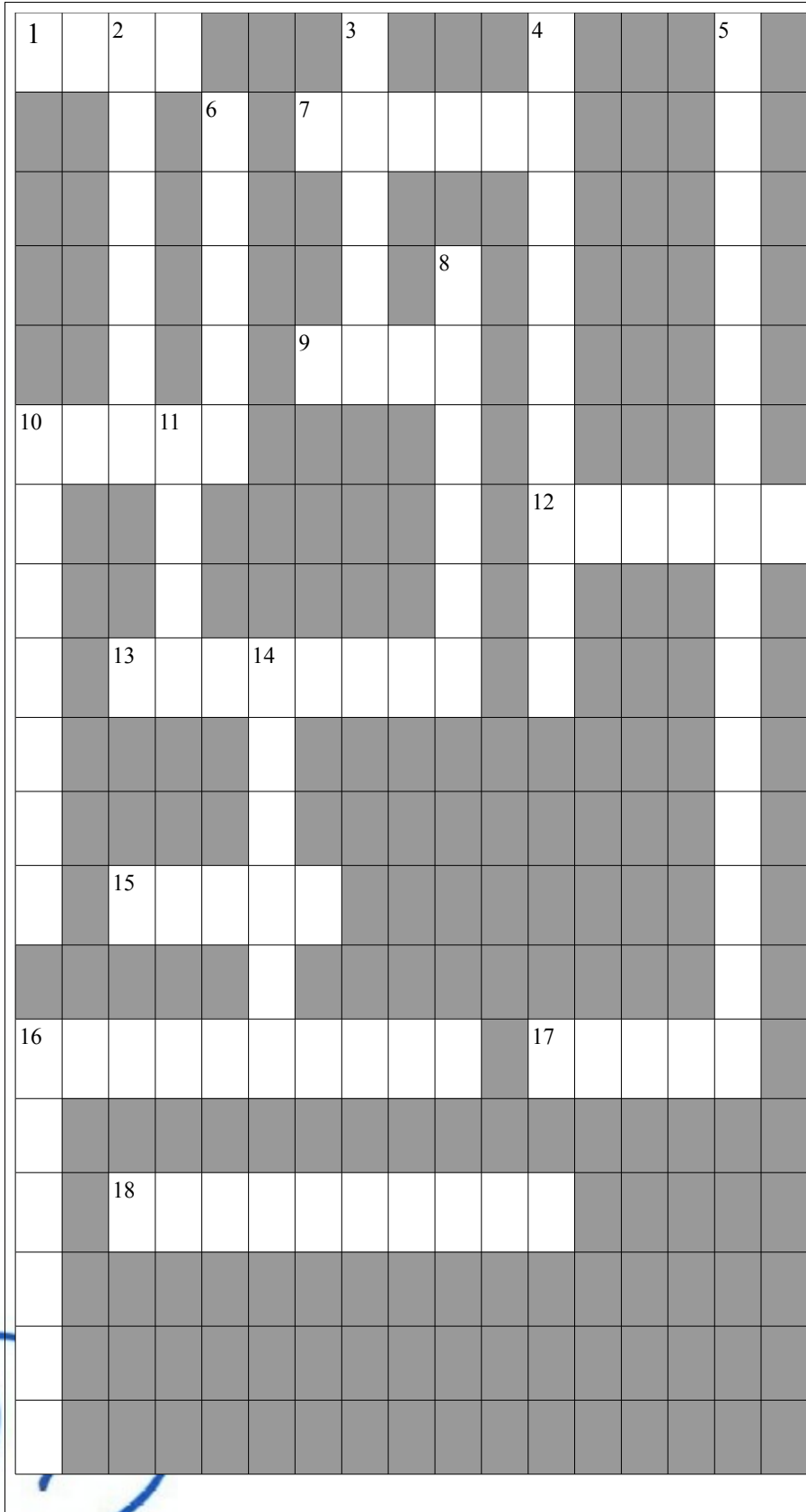
Rama killed Ravana and returned to Ayodhya to
rule as King.

The glory in life is not in 'never falling'.
The true glory consists in rising each time we fall.

- Swami Chinmayananda

Hanuman Crossword Puzzle

Mangala Rao, Bala Vihar Teacher, Silver Spring



ACROSS

1. Hanuman was on this part of Arjuna's chariot
7. The sea monster who tried to stop Hanuman when he was crossing the ocean
9. Hanuman was devoted to....
10. Hanuman is an incarnation of this God
12. Rama is an incarnation of this God
13. Hanuman was his minister
15. Character trait of Hanuman
16. Forest where Sita was held captive
17. Hanuman's brother
18. Herb Hanuman brought to save Lakshmana

DOWN

2. Name of Hanuman's mother
3. Sanskrit name for son
4. He reminded Hanuman about his strength
5. The 40 verses we sing during common time
6. Hanuman's Guru
8. Hanuman's weapon
10. Jatayu's brother
11. Hanuman's father
14. Hanuman went to his court
16. Hanuman broke the bridge of arrows made by...

What God means to me

Nikhil Srinivasan, Springfield

To me, God is like a great helper. When I pray to him, I feel very safe and comforted and believe that in times of need, he always helps me. He is the Supreme and can see my every emotion. I believe that he helps me in one way or another.

I believe that there is only one God and that he can take any form that you want him to. He is called by several names like Brahman, Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, Sarasvathi, Lakshmi, Hanuman, Allah or Jesus. I think these names and forms are given to God to make it easier for everyone to imagine what they think God looks like and to help them concentrate on the image that they like best when they are meditating or praying to God. I like him best as Vishnu, the one who takes many incarnations to help us whenever our world and we are in trouble.

I believe that God is:

Omnipresent meaning he is present everywhere at all times.

Omnipotent meaning he has infinite power and

Omniscient meaning he has infinite knowledge.

My favorite name of God to chant is

“Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya Namaha”. I chant this every night before I go to bed with my mom and I feel safe and secure in the knowing that God will take care of our family and friends and everyone in the world.

Crossword puzzle created on
<http://www.crosswordpuzzlegames.com/cgi-crosswordpuzzlegames/create>

Answers:

ACROSS

DOWN

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Flag | 2. Anjani |
| 7. Surasa | 3. Putra |
| 9. Rama | 4. Jambhavan |
| 10. Shiva | 5. HanumanChalisa |
| 12. Vishnu | 6. Surya |
| 13. Sugreeva | 8. Gaddha |
| 15. Loyal | 10. Sampati |
| 16. Ashokavana | 11. Vayu |
| 17. Bheema | 14. Ravana |
| 18. Sanjeevani | 16. Arjuna |

Poem on Saints

Nikhil Srinivasan, Springfield

Adi Sankaracharya

Shankara was born in Kalady, Kerala

His parents were Sivaguru and Aryamba

He was the form of Lord Shiva

He taught us the Advaita Vedanta

He had four disciples as heads of Mathas

And became Adi Shankaracharya

Gautama Buddha

Siddhartha was born as a royal prince

Never knew anything about human suffering

He had a vision that told him his mission

To save the world and find a way to end suffering

He sat under the bodha tree and became enlightened

He found the middle path that was the eightfold path

That led to Nirvana and was called the Buddha

Ramakrishna Paramahansa

His favorite god was goddess Kali

Worshipping her was his destiny

She came in his vision and he got his mission

To learn and help people with full devotion

He gave everyone joy when they were in his presence

He was totally detached from the world and

Was named Paramahansa

Swami Vivekananda

There was a boy born in Calcutta

His parents named him as Narendra

He wanted a Guru who could answer his questions

And became a disciple of Paramahansa

Who gave him all the knowledge he needed to help humanity

He traveled the world and spread the message

About the great land of India.

He believed service to man was service to lord

And was called Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Chinmayananda

Swami Chinmayananda was born in Kerala

His gurus were Tapovanji and Swami Sivananda

He gained his spiritual knowledge in the Himalayas

And spread his teachings all over India

He wrote many commentaries on Bhagavat Gita

He founded the Chinmaya Mission to teach one and all

He gave us Balvihar so that children can learn

All about India and its culture even in America!

He worked tirelessly even when he was unwell

And his favorite god was Lord Shiva.

Save Bhu Matha (Mother Earth)

Devi Ramaseshan, Frederick Chapter

Recycle, Reduce, Renew, Reuse, Rethink, Respond

Samudra vasane Devi!

Parvatstanamandale!

Vishnupatnim namastubhyam

Padsparsha kshamaswame.

O Mother Earth! O Great Goddess shining in the apparel of the Ocean and conveying maternal, love through the beautiful hills which are your limbs! O beloved Consort of Lord Vishnu who sustains the whole creation! I bow unto Thee, forgive me as I walk and touch Thee with my feet O Mother!

The month of April is special to Mother Earth with the highlight of the month being April 22nd, widely known as Earth Day. During this month, magazines and newspapers highlight topics such as green energy, bio-fuels, xeriscape, natural resources, reducing carbon footprint and other topics related to conserving the environment. These articles create awareness in the minds of people regarding pollution and global warming and the impact it has on our beautiful green planet. We are the “caretakers” of Bhu Matha and the time has come to take appropriate actions in order to pass our Mother Earth to the younger generations in good shape. It is the moral and civic duty of every individual and the collective responsibility of Chinmaya community to be respectful to Bhu Matha.

To bring more awareness in the minds of the young and old alike about global warming and the impact it has on Bhu Matha, Bala Vihar students of Chinmaya Mission, Frederick chapter participated in a poster activity. The students were given grocery bags and were asked to decorate these bags based on the theme “Save Mother Earth” and also write short eco-friendly messages. They were encouraged to use eco-friendly materials to deliver their message. Not only was the event a success among the students, but also it was also well received by the parents. In an effort to recognize the work of these students, we displayed the grocery bags to judges, parents, and other visitors. The students presented their projects to the judges and were awarded ribbons for their efforts. It was truly an educational experience for everyone present. A report with pictures about this activity was posted in the website.

<http://www.earthdaybags.org/db/content/guestview2008.asp>

The next time you clean your garage or home, take the time to stop and think about the mantras, “Reduce, Recycle, Reuse, Renew, Rethink” before acting. It takes us one step closer to conserving our beautiful planet.

Nurture Nature

The King and the Hunters

Kamala Harihara Aiyar

Once upon a time there lived a King who was very proud of his status and huge palaces. Uniformed soldiers guarded the gates day and night. Though he was a good ruler, he had a slight flaw: At times, he lacked compassion.

A hunter and his wife, who lived in a hut near the forest, came to the city and roamed happily for a long time. At dusk they decided to return home and walked in the direction they thought was right. Unfortunately, they were going in the wrong direction. Unaware of this they kept on walking. And where do you think they ended up?

At the palace gates!

They were very tired and thirsty. Seeing the sentry on duty at the gate, they asked for some water to drink as well as directions to go home. After giving them the correct directions, the guard went in to fetch water.

The King was enjoying his beautiful gardens from the palace balcony. He saw the bedraggled couple outside the palace gates and the sentry talking and then walking

back to his quarters. The conversation was inaudible. But the King was angry that the sentry was disturbed by a dirty looking couple.

While the watchman was returning with a pitcher of water, the King shouted to chase the intruders away. Startled by this unexpected admonition, the watchman dropped the jug and the water, disappearing into the soil. Shivering with fear, the fatigued couple went their way. The guard was sorry and ashamed that his master was so mean and heartless so as to deny even a drink of water.

Some time later one fine sunny day the King, with his retinue, went hunting. The hunt was jolly good. After a lovely picnic lunch, while all rested here and there, the King rode alone away from the campsite hoping to return in a while. His ride took him rather deep into the woods. However, being a brave man, he was not afraid of being alone in the forest. The setting sun slowly threw a blanket

of darkness. The night progressed. The King galloped along quickly, but in a direction that took him away from his companions. Hoping to meet his party soon, the King rode on relentlessly.

Suddenly the King saw a flicker of light in the distance. He went towards that dim light and found himself in front of a small thatched hut. Galloping noise brought the residents out. Upon seeing their King, they bowed low and awaited his orders. Dismounting the King said, "I am lost in the woods and thirsty. Can you give me a drink of water please?" The couple ran in and returned with plenty of cool drinking water in a clay pot. They didn't have any cups or tumblers to drink from. The King had to bend forward with cupped hands on the mouth to drink the water! (This is a common sight, even today, at village wells and drinking fountains where people quench their thirst.)

The hunter very carefully and respectfully poured the water into the King's cupped hands. The King drank long and heartily. The horse too drank. The hunter offered to lead the King to the city. The King didn't know then that his companions were searching for him at the wrong place!

The King rode with the couple jogging along beside him. Seeing the city lights and his palace the King warmly thanked them and said "I want to reward you both for your help. Ask any thing you want."

They looked at each other understandingly and said, "Dear Lord! Next time when some poor thirsty hunter is at your gate begging for water to drink, please don't chase him away."

Now the King vividly remembered THAT DAY. This was the couple at his palace gates on that day. After all they were asking only water to drink. He was ashamed and repented his arrogance.

Now the King promised to be kind and compassionate from now on. Needless to add he amply rewarded the pair for their help.

Compassion is a virtue all should cultivate.

Chinmayam Wonderland!

Vandana Bapna

As our first child is ready to go to college after attending Bala Vihar for 12 years, words will not suffice to express the subtle and rewarding experiences that all of us have experienced at Chinmayam. The list is bottomless.

At Chinmayam, the children and the parents receive ample nourishment to live a fulfilling life, something that the school and university education do not provide. The food for the mind and soul encourages the development of healthy attitudes and habits of thought. A healthy mind is capable of channeling the vasanas (inherent tendencies) towards leading a successful and contented life. Enduring success (as measured by the state of peacefulness) is inseparable from a mind purified by healthy attitudes & values.

No matter how conscientious and caring the parents may be, it does take an entire village to raise a child. Chinmayam has been this village of caring and loving acharyas, teachers, volunteers, aunts and uncles, older and littler readymade-siblings and friends. One significant benefit has been in imparting the sense of belonging to a culture that is quite different from the larger culture around the children. There is this peer power (as Swamiji calls it), a sense of gratitude and pride to be a part of two different cultures. Even the essay that Tarang decided to write for his college applications was entitled "I am the best of the East and the West." At age 8, Mayank composed a poem that appreciated the gift of two cultures. The poem was entitled "I feel proud to be an Indian-American."

All the children and adults bring their unique backgrounds, talents and energies to share voluntarily with this large family. Everyone is constantly learning and evolving. I like to think of this second home to us as 'Chinmayam Wonderland', a place where wonderful things happen. All the stories and activities rouse a sense of wonder ...about why, when, how, what if, who am I, what is my goal, where am I going...? The mind is transported to a state where anything and everything is possible, where there is an unfolding of limitless potential.

Chinmayam Wonderland?...such an inspiring, enriching, empowering and enchanting abode! Thank You ALL.

A Mother's Day Thought

Sitaram Kowtha

The phone call came at wee hours of the morning in January. Since it is not usual to get a call at that time, the mind immediately conceived that some bad news was at hand. Sure enough, my mother-in-law had passed away. The next several hours were frantic. Lots of phone calls, planning, coordination and lots of activity. The emotions switching from dealing with the sad news to anxieties of preparations to send my wife on her way to India.

I shared the tragic news with my relatives, friends, neighbors and colleagues. At first I was astonished to see their reaction - I saw their eyes water up, as they expressed their condolences. Then I began to see a pattern, every one related immediately to their own mother. For some, it reminded them of the loss of their mother. To others, it reminded them of parents at a distance, and that they had not spoken to their mother in a while. To others yet, it reminded them of the health and well being of their mother. A thought of loss of mother invokes memories of divine qualities that are universally present in all mothers. Everyone has a mother, and everyone's relationship with their mother is special. Sri Adi Sankara sang in the 'Annapurna Sthothram', invoking Mother's divine qualities - the food provider, the protector, the beautiful personality, the kind personality, the teacher, the queen, the guide to eternal truths of life, the remover of ignorance, the forgiving personality, and so on. Every mother has the same qualities. Thus any mother is my mother, and my mother is our mother.

The scriptures say that human birth is a sign of our advancement in getting close to understanding the eternal truths of life, I guess someone who is born a mother is yet another sign that they have advanced even further. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to say that there is no bad mother, only bad sons, when a disciple complained about his mother. Sri Rama saw only the divine qualities when he smilingly and affectionately looked upon Queen Kaikeyi as she ordered him to exile. It was because of Kaikeyi we came to know the great love of Bharatha for Sri Ram, the service of Lakshmana, the great devotion of Hanuman, Vibhishana and others.

As I reflect upon Indian culture, we are fortunate that motherhood is held with such high esteem. 'Mathru Devo Bhava' (mother is God) comes to mind. So many beautiful songs on Mothers Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi. The Gayathri japa identifies Mother with the divine light of knowledge. India's first national anthem was 'Vande Matharam' (obeisance to mother), before 'Jana Gana Mana' was adopted.

Happy Mother's Day.

The New Year

Nirmala Limaye

Ugadi was celebrated one week ago. It is celebrated as start of a new year in Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh. It is celebrated as gudi padwa in Maharashtra. Different rituals are carried out in different states of India. What does New Year mean? It is a relative division of time created by Different Emperors at different times. In Sanskrit it is said “*raja kaalasya karanum*” The king is the cause of Time (the measurement of time). If we look at history of various calendars, Emperor Vikramaditya started Vikram samvat in 56 B.C. It is followed in north India. The New Year is 3rd day of Diwali in this calendar. In Vedic time Margashirsha was the first month. Hence in Bhagavad Geeta Bhagawan says” Maasanaam Margshirshoham.”

Shaliwahan who was emperor in the south and called it Saka in the year 78 B.C. It is followed as Shaliwahan Saka in South India. Besides these two, there are two other calendars followed in the north such as calendars of Gupta era and Harsha era.

Calendars are based on mathematical calculations and based on Sun’s appearance or based on the phases of the moon called lunar calendars. Others planets are considered in division of the year (nakshatras). Vedic Saur calendar is 1000B.C. It has 360 days in a year that is divided in 12 months. Every 5 years an extra month (adhika maas) is added to keep calculations accurate. However, the month is divided in tithis which depend upon lunar calendar (different phases of the moon). This is adapted to solar reckoning.

The most common calendar used worldwide now is Gregorian Calendar, approved by Pope Gregory on February 24th, 1582 by a papal decree. It calculated 1st year from birth of Jesus Christ. It was prepared by a physician Aloysius Lilius and was based on mathematical calculations. It has 365 days to a year and an extra day is added as February 29th in the leap year every 4 years. To be precise, it has 960 lunar months in 4000 years. Before this period a Julian calendar was used. Most of the world’s calendars are explained by B.C. (Before Christ) or A.D. (after birth of Jesus Christ).

The first New Year for Hebrews started approximately 359 years A.D... Originally it was celebrated 3769 years B.C. but original dates are uncertain. The Jewish calendar is combined Solar/Lunar Calendar. The New Year falls on the new moon about every 354 days. They have four New Year days in a year. Commonly, Rosh Hashanah is considered as a new year for Jewish people. Litturgy described it as a day of judgment. From Rosh Hashanah 10 days are observed for repentance and ends on Yom Kippur. Misnah is used for starting new calendar year. The Jewish New Year falls between September 6th to October 5th of Gregorian calendar. Their new year starts from sunset to next day sunset.

The Muslims use a calendar Ummul qurq and used globally by Muslims. The Islamic calendar is based on Lunar month and began from 1st muharram ul hijra. It is in 1437 A.D. years now. It has 28 days to a month. Hence the New Year is celebrated in different seasons and has no mathematical correlations.

The Zoroastrians have 3 calendars .Quadimi, Fasli and Shahenshahi. Indian Persians follow Fasli which is 1 month ahead of Shahenshshi. The new year is called Nawroz and falls at or around March 21st. Shahenshahi calendars which is followed by the high priests called Dasturs.

The Chinese follow a lunar calendar and consists of 12 zodiac signs such as dog, boar, rooster, dragon, ox, sheep, horse, rabbit, snake, monkey, rat and tiger. Rat is 1st. the time is counted as 12 years cycles. The New Year falls between January and February each year.

Japanese also follow Lunar calendar. Oshogatsu is the name for New Years day.

Most of the calendars are either solar or lunar.

The most mathematically calculated (also involving astrology) calendar is the Saur (vedic) calendar which also includes Moons's phases.

Invariably, people all over the world celebrate New year as an happy occasion and celebrate with good food, family gatherings, visits to the temples, churches or mosques. Many religions include prayers, rituals of different kinds .all peoples ask for a better, prosperous future. Some will pay respects to elders, and relatives .It is a merry making day as well as prayer day.

We can see that a time is divided in a relative way for people to count the years historically. But can time be really divided and counted? It is done for practical purposes only. Hence time is eternal and immeasurable. Therefore our Rishis sang a prayer and stated "Kalaya Tasmei Namah".

Pursuit of Happiness

Shashikala Duraiswami

Bala Vihar Teacher, Silver Spring

Attending the Kaivalya Upanishad Spring Camp in VA with Swami Ishwaranandaji was a wonderful experience. The Kaivalya Upanishad focuses on meditation - a popular technique to quieten and prepare our mind for contemplation and acquiring Self Knowledge. Reading all the Upanishads and truly understanding the Self is by no means a simple task and inarguably a life-long process.

The stages of “inner ascent” through introspection and understanding of the Self, are emphasized using various methods and in varying details in all the Upanishads. But how much of this do we truly understand and practically implement in our daily lives? Attending Gita classes and reading the scriptures (now & then) certainly are the initial steps to leading a Sattvic life. Happiness and goals have different meanings for different people. Those who would like to uplift themselves to another level must consistently lead a disciplined life with fortitude and adequate moral preparation.

Smart marathon runners know that there’s more to racing than gutting it to the finish line. Running takes both planning & discipline such as keeping logs of food intake and exercise routines. Similarly a seeker might find it useful to keep a log of their spiritual life to ensure that they are following the necessary discipline. The following is a first draft of a template that could track one’s effort toward gaining Self Knowledge. Whether one fills out such forms or not is irrelevant, so long as these steps are followed while one is performing the daily duties and they are engraved in his or her minds. Many of you may recognize the template as the timesheet that we use at work to record all the projects that we are associated with.

The template is a self-monitoring checklist to track one’s progress of their spiritual journey, with the attitude of total dedication of the fruits of our actions eventually leading to the dedication of all our actions to the Lord. Any suggestions to make the journey easier are welcome.

The Pursuit of Happiness Template

	NAME: Your Name																															
Mar-08	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total
Disciplines/ Conduct	sa	su	mo	tu	we	th	fr	sa	su	mo	tu	we	th	fr	sa	su	mo	tu	we	th	fr	sa	su	mo	tu	we	th	fr	sa	su	mo	Hrs
Morning Prayer																																0
Meals Prayer																																0
Night Prayer																																0
Peace Invocations																																0
Dedicate Actions/ Results																																0
Meditation																																0
Scripture Reading																																0
																																0
Service																																0
Cont. Education																																0
DAILY TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	<u>Prayers</u>	<u>Meditation</u>	<u>Selfless Service</u>	<u>Continuing Education</u>
Morning	Karagre Vasate Lakshmi	Om Single thought	Not relating to your profession	Scripture Reading
Meals	Brahmaarpanam	Contemplation Choose a topic & reflect	Community Service	Satsang
Night	Karacharana Kritam Vak	Chanting prayer Hanuman Chalisa		Vedanta Class
Peace	Om Sahana Vavatu	Shubam Karoti Kalyanam		
Peace	Om Poornamadaha	Om Namay Shivay		
Dedicate Action/ Results	Kaayena Vaacha			

Deliberate Thoughts behind the daily conducts:

Morning prayer	Remind ourself that we need to do what needs to be done according to dharma - and that we are just an instrument and not the doer itself- and that we are going to do our best
Meals	Think about - we need to take care of this body well enough to be able to reach Parameshwar within us - thanking the lord for giving us this opportunity being born as a human being
Night	Dedicate our entire day to the lord : ask for forgiveness if we have committed unknowingly or knowingly - let go of any doubts with the assurance that we did our best
Peace Invocations	Before scripture reading or any such activity to ensure that we stay on the path and nothing deters us from this goal
Dedicating Actions	Just reminder to ourself that even though we seem to be the doer - we are just an instrument and that we want to willingly dedicate our actions and its associated results to the lord
Meditation	Necessary to calm the mind - reflect on what we have read etc..
Scripture Reading	Essential part of learning & progressing towards the goal
Service & Education	Have separated these from the rest- since these may not necessarily be daily activities - but just need to be folded in our daily lives

Falls Church Study Group

Ram Chandran

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Our Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji, first came to Washington, D.C. in 1978 to conduct a Jnana Yajna at American University. Great enthusiasm for the Chinmaya Mission was generated by Swami Chinmayanandaji's visit that year, and the first Washington Chinmaya Study Group was thus founded in Northern Virginia by Acharya Vilasiniji. She was the first Coordinator of the Falls Church Study Group and this has been in the Falls Church area for nearly 30 years.

It was started at the home of Acharya Vilasiniji and after several moves it has been hosted by Drs. Nirmala and Suresh Limaye for the last 20 years. The group has 10-16 members and meet on alternate Friday evenings at 8 pm. The format is always discussion based on assignment to each individual of specific shlokas or section from the text that is being followed. Communication is through Yahoogroups mailing list server.

The study group was lead by Vilasiniji, Nilkantji and currently by Balanji. Two cycles of Bhagavad Gita text have been completed followed by Atmabodh. The group has recently undertaken the study of Bhajagovindam. In the absence of Balanji, Ram Chandran leads the study group. The group consists of many dedicated students who are eager to learn the vedantic knowledge and who also been active in the Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center. Drs. Nirmala and Suresh Limaye, Prakashji are active participants and are major contributors to the discussions.

The Falls Church Study Group always welcomes interested people either to observe and hopefully join us as members. Given the nature of the Washington DC area there is a constant turnover of people but we have managed to keep a core of regularly attending members. For joining the membership, send an email to ChinmayaFCGitaStudygroup-subscribe@yahoogroups.com or go to

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ChinmayaFCGitaStudygroup/>

Venue: Drs. Nirmala and Suresh Limaye, 3025 Sylvan Drive, Falls Church, VA. 22042

Telephone: 703-241-0579

Frederick Study Group

Sangamesh Konaraddi

Frederick study group started in June 2006, under the guidance of Shri D.C. Raoji. We meet every Friday in Urbana from 7:30 to 9:00 PM. We have covered “Self Unfoldment” and “Meditation & Life” written by Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda.

Why is it important to attend a study group regularly?

- As a group, we help and motivate each other to continue our spiritual journey.
- We don't get stuck, and we learn from each other every time we come across a hurdle.
- A study group helps in keeping the momentum and energizes us spiritually and intellectually.
- Whenever we were under stress or bothered by something, after attending and sharing our problem in the study group, we came out with a smile on our face.
- Material progress will not be carried forward but the spiritual progress will definitely be carried forward in our next birth, that's the assurance given by Lord Krishna in Bhagavad Gita. A study group definitely raises your spiritual bank balance.
- To carve a statue from a stone, one needs to strike with a chisel and a hammer a millions of times. Only after removing the unwanted stuff, then we get to see the statue hiding inside. Similarly we need to keep bombarding our mind millions of times with potent messages through Satsangs, study groups, scriptures, and live discourses to remove the dust and unravel the real Self. Regular Satsangs and study groups ensure the continuity of this process.

What is our source of inspiration?

- Every week we come across a new inspirational quote from the book we follow.
- One of them we would like to constantly remind ourselves of this famous quote by our beloved Gurudev:

*“The process of cleansing or removal of ignorance is called spiritual practice, or **sadhana**. In spiritual practice, it is not how much we read, but how much we understand and reflect and meditate upon the concepts that assure success. The quality, intensity, sincerity, devotion, understanding, and enthusiasm of heart with which we do our **sadhana** determine the true heights to which we rise in our self-mastery.”*

How we learned importance of an experienced teacher or a guide?

- Our earlier attempt to start without a designated guide ended as our egos' talent show.
- Since everybody brought their individual ego, we could not even cover one chapter.
- When we read a few chapters in the beginning, we had a perception that they were easy. When our guide explained the depth and subtle meaning, we were all awestruck.

- Even though we read more thoroughly next time, our guide still threw more light and explained with much more related additional scriptural knowledge.
- We realized that our understanding happens superficially, whereas our guide takes us much deeper.
- Our teacher also gave us guidelines for conducting the study group in his absence. Without this we could not have sustained so far.
- It was impossible to understand the last section of “Meditation & Life” without guidance. In this section while reading “if you blink you miss,” each line is a gem in itself.

Why we decided to repeat the books again?

- After completing the book “Self Unfoldment”, we got a better picture of things, but still had a feeling that, we hadn't really established a better connection or understanding. We felt like we got an overall picture, but hadn't assimilated yet. So, we decided to repeat “Self Unfoldment”.
- Repeating the book really helped us a lot. Now the lessons really started sinking in. The first time it was more of *shravana*, but the repetition turned into a kind of *manana* for us.
- We did not want to take a new book without our teacher guiding us. Without the guide we would have definitely been unable to extract the true essence of the text.
- We are repeating “Meditation & Life” too. This is really helping us to extract more value from the text. Our practice is also becoming much smoother due to repetition.

What changes did the study group bring in our lives?

- We realized how much misdirected our lives were. Life as a human being is rare and we were wasting it prior to joining this study group.
- Now, after almost two years, most of us are so zealous about this study group that we look forward to Fridays.
- Study group is now the real source of energy for us. It empowers us and keeps us cheerful for rest of the week. Our life's battery gets recharged on every Friday.
- We are more focused, calm, enthusiastic, cheerful and happier than earlier.

Whom do we owe for this change in our lives?

- We are thankful to Swami Dheeranandaji and Shri DC Raoji. Without their guidance this would not have been possible.
- We are (indebted) grateful to Swami Chinmayananda for starting Chinmaya Mission and giving the knowledge through his books like Self Unfoldment, Meditation & life and many more such books.
- We owe a lot to all of our rishis and spiritual leaders, who spread and passed on this knowledge from generation to generation.
- Finally we owe everything to our Lord, for giving us a life in a human form.

How long to continue this?

- We are on our path to accumulate that, which will stay with us in this life as well as in next life (or lives) too, till we reach our ultimate “Destination”. How far the destination is unknown, but our journey in right direction is all that matters. As long as we are enjoying our journey and haven't reached the destination we will continue with the Lord's and Gurudev's blessings.

Contact Information: Location: 3520 Connor Pl, Urbana, MD – 21704; Phone # 301-874-5922.

Our Six Schools of Philosophy

Acharya Ananta ji

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About five thousand years before the birth of Christ, Hinduism came to face a great crisis in its spiritual and cultural history created by a decadent society and its own misinterpretations of its great culture. A restatement of the scriptural truths in a language and spirit understandable to the people was the demand of the age, and *Vyasa* came to answer this call.

The eternal truths of the Vedas are no doubt complete and exhaustive. Vedanta as found in the Vedic literature is an exhaustive and scientific theory both in treatment and in content. Such a completely scientific thesis cannot be evolved without the self-dedicated and intense intellectual activity of generations of great men. Thus by the time the *Gita* appeared on the scene of the Hindu intellectual life, we had many schools of philosophy. Many of them, undeveloped then, continued their individual growth to become fully evolved systems of thought in later days.

We have in philosophy today, six main schools of thought. Knowledge available for mankind in the world falls under two distinct groups – **SECULAR** and **SPIRITUAL**. All bits of knowledge that contribute to our better understanding of the world fall under the category of secular knowledge. Spiritual knowledge is that branch of wisdom, in its fulfillment, takes us towards a subjective experience of the Reality that is the life-spark in us behind the phenomenal world. We are not concerned with secular knowledge here, as our theme is the enquiry into the spiritual.

The spiritual knowledge is broadly divided into two groups – **ATHEISTIC** and **THEISTIC**. The division between atheism and theism should not be understood to be lack of faith or faith in a divine Truth or prophet. Atheists neither believe in any fundamental truth other than the body and the world outside nor have any faith in the spiritual truths. In short atheists believe only in knowledge gained through direct perception; since the divine cannot be seen or perceived by direct perception, they refuse to accept the spiritual declarations or believe in the divine possibilities in man.

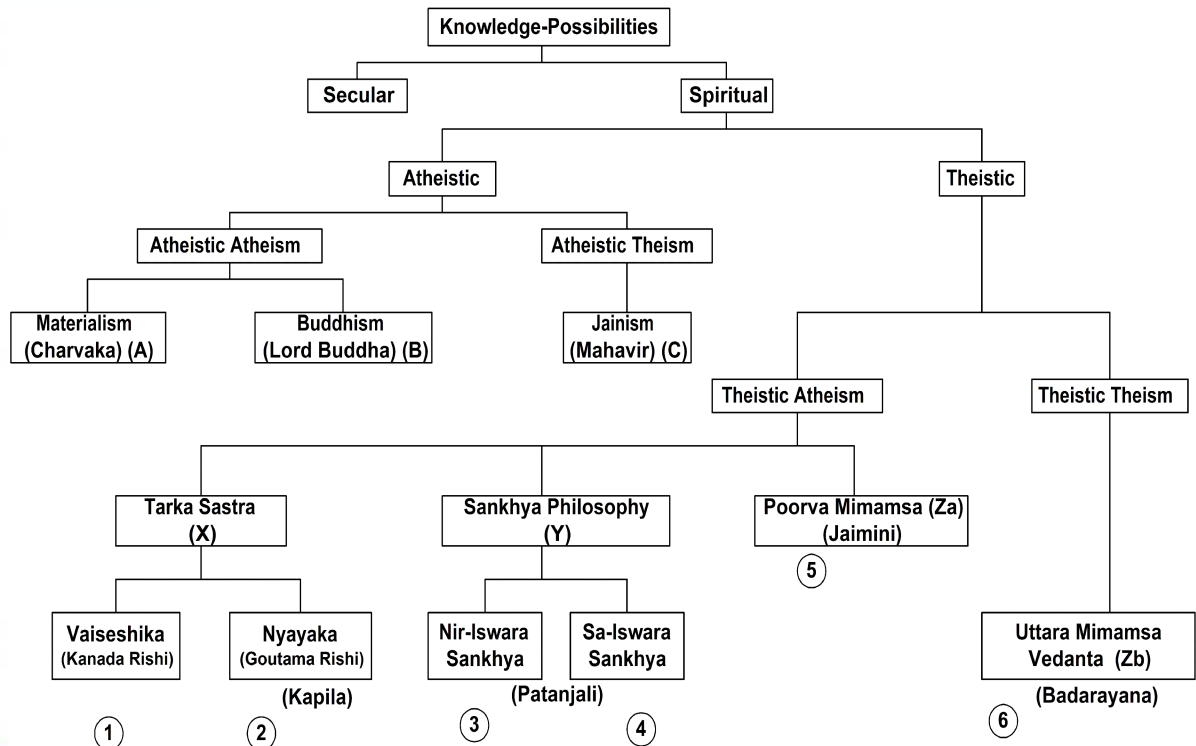
Even among the atheistic we can perceive two types: those who are full-fledged atheists (**ATHEISTIC ATHEISM**) and those who do not believe in the scriptures, but certainly do believe in a subtle truth other than gross body and the objects of the world. The latter we call **ATHEISTIC THEISM**. Materialism (preached by *Charvaka*-s) and Buddhism (propounded by Buddha) fall under **ATHEISTIC ATHEISM**. Jainism falls under **ATHEISTIC THEISM**.

Materialists believe that there is no goal to be achieved in life other than a happy living in complete sensuousness unrestrained by scruples, ethics or morals. They believe that we come from nowhere, go nowhere, but we just are. The only bliss of living here is the joy of eating and indulging – this is the only goal to be considered, and strive for in life. When we say that the Buddhists also fall under the same classification we do not mean the sting in the word ‘atheism’ which the theists have now come to associate with it. It only indicates that the Buddha, as a revolt against the excessive Vedic ritualism of his age, had to deny the Veda all authority. Jainism falls under the classification atheistic theism because it denies the Veda to be the gospel of truth; but it believes in the eternal truth that is constant and permanent, perfect and all blissful.

Among the theistic we can perceive two types: **THEISTIC ATHEISM** and **THEISTIC THEISM**. Theistic atheists believe in Vedic declarations, but do not believe in the One Eternal Divine Factor. Theistic theists believe not only in the Vedas, but also believe in the One Eternal Truth indicated by the *Upanishadic* declarations. *Tarka*, *Sankhya* and *Purva-Mimamsa* are three schools of thought that come under theistic atheism. *Tarka* relies on logical streams of thought, *Sankhya* philosophy is extremely analytical and the most appealing to modern mind of scientific age and *Mimamsa* uses sequence in logical thinking. The prefix 'Purva' means 'earlier' and refer to earlier sections in Vedas.

Pure theistic theism is preached in *Uttara-Mimamsa*, i.e. the latter sections of the Vedas. The analysis is best seen in *Brahma Sutra* whose author is *Badarayana* who is none other than *Vyasa*, the author of *Bhagavad Gita*. The six schools of philosophy may be enumerated as (A) *Charvaka*, (B) *Bauddha*, (C) *Jaina*, (X) *Tarka*, (Y) *Sankhya*, and (Z) *Veda*. Please note that both *Purva-Mimamsa* (Za) and *Uttara-Mimamsa* (Zb) come under the purview of *Veda*. An alternate orthodox enumeration of the six schools is: (1) *Vaisesika*, (2) *Nyaya*, (3) *Nir-Ishwara*, (4) *Sa-Ishwara*, (5) *Purva-Mimamsa* and (6) *Uttara-Mimamsa*. Please refer to the diagram for the different classifications enumerated above.

This is the bird's eye view of the entire extent of schools of Hindu philosophy. In the *Gita*, there is an attempt to synthesize, vitalize and reorient all the points of views of the theistic group with the business of life as we live it. *Gita* shows us the merits and demerits of all the schools of thought and teaches us how to make use of them all without prejudice, so that ultimately we may reach the acme of Perfection.



Analysis of the Mind - 2nd in the Series

Sadananda ji

(Editor's Notes: The first in the series was published in January 2008 issue. Sadananda ji is one of the founding members of CMWRC. He is a retired scientist and a spiritual leader. He regularly conducts Jnana Yagna on Gita and the scriptures. Please check out his upcoming Memorial Day camp on Chandogya Upanishad)

Is mind a matter, or is it separate from matter, or does it matter in our pursuit of happiness? Such questions troubled philosophers as well as psychologists from time immemorial. Western philosophers give credit to Rene Descartes (17th Century) for proposing that mind is not a physical matter, since it has no spatial (or physical) dimensions, and it is identified with consciousness and self-awareness. Even though it is not a physical matter, it closely interacts with the physical matter, particularly with the physical body. For, it is noted that the 'mental moods' of passions such as love, hate, jealousy, fear, happiness, sorrow, etc., and some times even strong emotionally rooted beliefs, can have notable and significant interactions at body level. Mental depressions can affect physical health. Psychosomatic diseases are common. Addictions and drugs can affect mental imbalance and vice versa, that is, strong mental disturbances can generate poisonous chemicals in the body. Thus mind and matter duality appear to be interconnected, since each affects the other. What exactly is the relation between the two is not known although many theories have been proposed. There is a theory called 'Substance Dualism' that states that mind is an independently existing substance separate from the physical matter constituting the body (the brain), but its substantive is not known. There is another theory called 'Property Dualism' which states that substance of the mind is not different from physical matter but its properties are different. There is also a theory called 'Monism' that states that body and mind are ontologically the same. Thus many -isms have been proposed each postulating the relation between the mind and matter. From clinical side, it is evident that mind can be affected by certain chemicals; and addiction to drugs has become a world-wide problem. In the dualistic models, starting from that of Descartes, mind is considered as 'consciousness' or 'self-awareness' or at least 'some-how' related to consciousness. Hence mind-matter duality is ultimately reduced to consciousness-matter duality. The current western thinking is consciousness 'some-how' arises in matter; just the same way as the mind operates in physical body. Many of these concepts are really not new and are borrowed from age-old philosophies, but presented in an acceptable form to be marketable as new theories.

From Vedantic (philosophical truths discussed in the end part of the Vedas called Upanishats) perspective, mind is considered as subtle matter different from gross physical matter. The subtle part of the gross food that we eat sustains the mind. Hence the food that we eat can also affect the mind. For example, mind can be made to be aggressive, passive or lethargic, etc, depending on the type of food we eat. To enhance the contemplativeness of the mind certain foods, called saatvic, are recommended, while certain others, rajasic and tamasic are to be avoided. Similarly, for the mind to be active or aggressive like for worriers, rajasic foods are recommended. Thus it was recognized that gross matter does affect the subtle mind and its properties.

Consciousness and mind are considered separate by some philosophers while others consider conscious mind, where the mind is conscious of objects, as in the waking state, is equated to consciousness. It is recognized, therefore, that there is an interrelation between (or among) consciousness, mind and matter. 'What exactly is the relation between the two or the three?' is not known, although there are many theories and postulates. A person can be made unconscious by

chloroform or to different degrees of unconscious by addictive drugs like morphine, etc. Is consciousness a special property of matter that arises when certain conditions are met, or is it the other way, that is, does matter arise in consciousness? The former is more acceptable for physical or material scientists, while latter may be closure to the truth.

Is there really matter separate from the conscious-mind? There is a theory called 'Theory of Idealism', which maintains that the mind is all that exists, and the external world is either mental projection or an illusion created by the mind. (This theory of Idealism, which is somewhat similar to Vijnaanaavaadins of Buddhism, is different from Advaita Vedanta, although they are some who vehemently argue that they are the same.) For the mind to exist, there has to be locus for its existence, which has to be the body made of matter. This will reduce to a circular argument, if according to the Theory of Idealism the matter is a projection of the mind, since mind depends on the matter and matter is projection of the mind.

Another important question is whether consciousness of 'an object' or of 'the world' different from self-consciousness, that is awareness of one's own self (where subject itself is an object of consciousness, i.e. I am conscious of myself). Some Vedantins (particularly vishiShTaadvaita) argue that there are two types of consciousness; one is self-consciousness and the other is object-consciousness; they are called dharmi jnaanam and dharma bhuuta jnaanam, respectively. The fundamental to this classification is the subject, 'I', is different from object, 'this'. The self-consciousness (dharmi jnaanam) is always present, since it is intrinsic to oneself, while the object-consciousness manifests under conducive environment, when there is an object present that one wants to be conscious of. A question arises at this juncture is whether I can be conscious of myself, that is self-awareness that I am as 'I am', without having object of consciousness, 'this'. When I am conscious of an object 'this', I am conscious of 'I' know 'this' where subject thought 'I' and the object thought 'this' present simultaneously in the mind. This subject-object duality forms essential ingredient of the mind. Can I have awareness of the subject 'I' without the associated object awareness of 'this' in the mind? That is, can I have just the 'I' thought without having 'this', 'this' thoughts, 'this' standing for objects? – If there are no 'this' thoughts, would the mind still be called mind? These are some fundamental philosophical questions in trying to understand the structure of the mind.

The above question boils down to, can the mind operate having just subject consciousness or self-consciousness, without having simultaneously the object consciousness. That is, does the mind always operate in the subject-object dualistic mode or can it have just subject alone without an object. Can there be a thinker (subject) alone without having thoughts (of objects) or does the thinker ceases to exist without the thoughts of the objects? Rene Descartes stated that 'I think, therefore I am' implying first that 'I am' is associated with thinking faculty. Can the conscious entity that 'I am' exist without having to think? Since the subject-object relation arises with the mind or in the mind, ontological status of each or both of them is a philosophical question that is closely related to the analysis of the mind.

It is taken for granted that everybody knows who they are. Most of them have high opinion of themselves (superiority complex) and some have low opinion of themselves (inferiority complex), but everyone has some opinion about himself. Since everybody knows who they are or at least they think they know who they are, no educational system offers courses to learn who they are. All the educational systems are only trying to teach us about 'this', this being any of the objectifiable sciences, such as chemistry, physics, psychology, medicine, how to do?, etc. It sounds

ridiculous if we say that 'We can become experts in all about 'this' without knowing much about our selves'. The funny thing is we misunderstand ourselves about ourselves, while complaining most of the time that others do not understand us.

In one of the Upanishats a student gives a huge list of his expertise in many fields (in our terminology more than 60 Ph.D. s), yet repents that he is still restless and does not have peace of mind. The teacher says you know everything except yourself. Essentially, knowledge of 'who am I?' is not for academic interest like knowledge of any of 'this', the teacher says, it is the very foundation of life itself. Without knowing yourself, it is impossible to have proper contact or relationship with the world. All mental suffering (suffering is mental only) results from this lack of understanding. Hence Vedanta says ignorance of one's own true nature is the root cause of human suffering.

If we ask any body – 'who are you?' – we get a big account of who he is. Some people have pages and pages of their bio-data, in response to the above question. If we examine any bio-data, including our own, all it tells is – I am 'this', I am 'that', etc, starting from physical dimensions to intellectual accomplishments – all pages and pages of information about 'this and that', but nothing about himself. Subject 'I' is different from object 'this' – and our fundamental confusion arises by identifying the subject 'I' with the object 'this'. Analyzing this problem, Vedanta says, when I do not know myself who I am (self-ignorance), I take myself what I am not – as I am 'this or I am 'that'. Subject consciousness or self-awareness is intermixed with object-consciousness, awareness of this. This confusion arise of due to lack correct of knowledge of 'Who I am?'. Now the question is, does this confusion arise because of the subject consciousness and object consciousness cannot be easily separated in the mind? Is this inherent in the structure of the mind? If someone says, after reading this, that he definitely knows who he is, then Vedanta says, that it only means he does not know who he is. This is because, he is only conceptualizing or objectifying who he is and in the very objectification, he misses the subject, himself. Then how does one ever know who he is? Vedanta provides definite clues by which one can evaluate his self-knowledge. It is for self-evaluation and not for others to evaluate him about his self-knowledge.

In the western theories stating from Rene Descartes to Sigmund Freud, conscious mind is identified with 'ego' or notional 'I' which is nothing but notion that 'I am this' – this being whatever I think I am at that time. Hence the famous statement of Descartes, 'I think, therefore I am. Hence we posed the question before – Can I ever be conscious of myself without simultaneously having objective consciousness – that is, without the duality present in the form I and this – as 'I know this' and ultimately 'I am this'. Related to this is, can the mind operate in the realm where there is subject consciousness alone without simultaneous object consciousness. 'I am'.. 'I am'.. 'I am'..period, without any 'I am this'.. 'I am this'.. 'I am this'.., etc.

This identification or equation of the subject 'I' with object 'this' forms the fundamental conditioning of the mind discussed in the introduction, where 'this' that I identify with depends on the conditioning of my mind. Thus I am an Indian, I am an American, I am theist or atheist, Hindu, Christian, Muslim, dvaitin, advaitin, Vedantin, believer or non-believer, etc – identification with concepts, traditions, theologies, beliefs, etc. Deconditioning therefore involves declutching or removing this confused understanding about myself. How to do the deconditioning without reconditioning myself with different notions is the secret of Vedanta – therefore Vedanta is not another religion or path but it is like a mirror which shows who you are in contrast to who you think you are. This is not a fanatical statement but statement born of experiences of many sages,

since time immemorial. The beauty is the solution is not up there in heaven or after the death etc, but right here and right now, since the truth that is infinite has to be eternal that includes here and now. Hence Vedanta is the means of knowledge (pramaana) to know the truth of oneself, since any other means of knowledge including all scientific investigations rely on objective analysis or analysis of 'this' and therefore not valid for the analysis of the subject 'I'. Science can never prove or disprove the truth about myself, since its field of enquiry is limited to objective analysis or analysis of 'this' and not about the subject, I. This also establishes that western method of analysis of even the mind as object of investigation will never give the total picture of the mind, since it can deal with 'this' aspect of the mind which is inert part and not the consciousness aspect of the mind that deal with self-consciousness and object-consciousness.

As it is clear from the perpetuation of many theories and postulates about the nature of the mind that it is not easily amenable for grosser objectification and analysis by conventional scientific tools. The inherent problem is we are using the mind to investigate the mind. So called tools that normally used in scientific experimentation are not fully useful in the inquiry of the mind other at grosser or clinical level. There is also confusion in terms of mapping of the brain is equated to mapping of the mind – it is like investigation of the hard ware to find out about the problems in the soft ware. Experience of pleasures and pains, emotions of love, compassion, fear, anxiety, hatred, etc are also not easily quantifiable to determine cause-effect relations as they are subjective. Understanding of the mind would help us to have a control of our mind or redirect the workings of the mind, instead mind controlling us. This is more important to maximize the efficacy of the mind than trying to change the 'set-up' or the world at large to improve the standard of living. Pressures of the modern society are contributing to more and more of mental problems; man may be more comfortable with modern gadgets but they make him only comfortably unhappy. Absolute eternal happiness is the goal of every being and the key to accomplish that lies in understanding and utilizing the mind properly. In the following we present various classifications of the mind based on its functions and utilities, since understanding of the working of the mind is the first step in controlling it and redirecting it properly.