

Chinmaya Smrithi



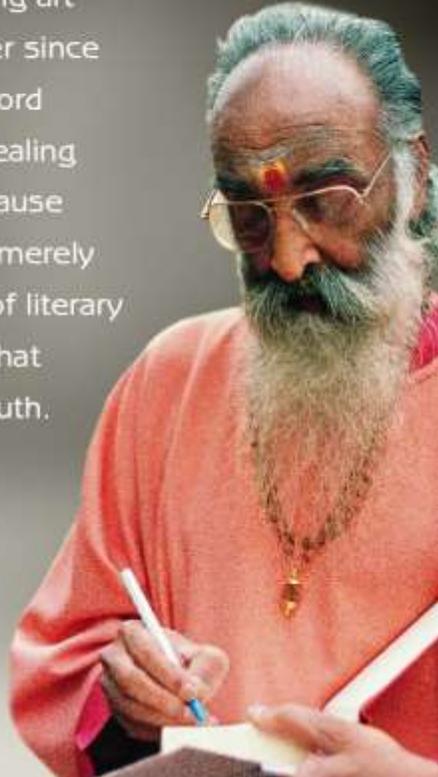
A Bi-Monthly News Magazine of the Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC)

Volume 31, Number 3, May 2021

CMWRC

Geeta has been an inviting art of Divine Beauty to me ever since I read it. I find that every word in it is a detail, at once revealing and inspiring. To me, the pause between the verses is not merely an inevitable blank-period of literary necessity, but something that suggests many a hidden truth.

- Swami Chinmayananda





Om Gita Jnaana Yagna Pracharakaaya Namah

Foreword: Swamiji's Message



Editor's Note: [Our beloved resident Swamiji, Swami Dheerananda is continuing his weekly classes on Vivekachoodamani. Please find below an excerpt from his class on verse 15].

अतो विचारः कर्तव्यो जिज्ञासोरात्मवस्तुनः ॥
समासाद्य दयासिन्धुं गुरुं ब्रह्मविदुत्तमम् ॥ 15 ॥

*ato vicārah kartavyo jijñāsorātmavastunah ॥
samāsādya dayāsindhum gurum brahmadviduttamam ॥ 15 ॥*

Meaning: Therefore, a true seeker of the Self should learn to enquire and meditate after duly approaching a Guru who is himself established in the experience of the Self and who is an ocean of kindness.

A true seeker is one who has the three qualities of humaneness, desire for liberation and the refuge of a realized Master. What enquiry should such an Adhikari (qualified seeker) conduct? In the Updesha Sara (verses 17 through 19), Ramana Maharishi has advised the seeker to enquire about the nature of the mind. Upon enquiry, one realizes that there is no such thing as the mind i.e., the mind does not have an independent existence. In the direct path (Vihanga marga – like a bird), this is the recommended line of enquiry. The other path is the Pippillika Marga (like an ant).

Matam is to think. One should enquire whether the mind is real or unreal. That which is not negated in the three periods of time (past, present and future) and has independent existence is real. That is also called Satyam. The real never changes and is ever independent. The mind is constantly changing. It is not always present either. Can we then say that it is unreal e.g., the horns of a rabbit? If it is unreal, it cannot be experienced. The ears of a rabbit look like horns but horns don't exist on a rabbit. The mind does exist since all material transactions are with the mind. That which appears to exist but on enquiry is found

to not exist is illusory. It is very important to remember that all illusion can only exist on a real substratum; so one has to realize the substratum (rope which supports the illusion of a snake). The rope never becomes a snake; similarly, the Brahman never becomes Jeeva.

Further enquiry into the mind leads to the realization that the mind is nothing but thoughts. Every thought is made up of two parts, the subject and the object. This is technically referred to as Aham and Idam. The Idam thoughts are many; the Aham (I-thought) seems to be changeless, but it does change. It is constant with reference to the Idam thought (Vritti). All other thoughts are dependent on the I-thought and disappear in the absence of the I-thought.

When a person goes to sleep, the I-thought disappears. The I-thought is rising and falling; from where is it rising and into where is it falling? This is the next step in enquiry addressed in Verse 19 of Upadesha Sara. When you look into where the I-thought arises from, the "I" falls. This is called Nija Vicharanam. The ego is nothing but Karta, Bhokta, Jnata – doer, enjoyer, knower. From where does the ego arise? Can the ego arise from the Aatma (Self) or the Anatma? It cannot rise from Anatma which is inert. IT cannot rise from Aatma which is Akarta and Abhokta.

But we are experiencing it. The illusion is so powerful – it is referred to as Chitta Jada Granthi (or knot). Swamiji then illustrated this with the story of the marriage which is disrupted by Ayyasamy the ego – he is neither related to the bride or the groom but comes to the marriage and orders people around. Initially, both the bride and groom defer to him thinking he must be related to the other party but when they realize that he is an uninvited guest, they drive him out. Similarly, through enquiry, one should realize that the ego is the creation of the illusory Maya and drop it to realize the Self.

Calendar and Upcoming Events

Upcoming Events

- June 21st – July 16th : online summer camp for rising first graders to Rising college freshmen conducted by Pujya Swami Dheerananda. The theme is Ramayana.
- June 14 – July 30th : E-BV Summer Camp based on Tulasi Ramayana. Led by various Acharyas.
- July 12 – July 16: Managing Me – A virtual youth camp for rising ninth graders to rising college freshmen led by Vivekji.
- July 29 – Aug 3: Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Family Camp followed by Aaradhana Day on Aug 3rd.

Study Groups

- Please contact Sri Sangamesh Konaraddi by email at sang.kona@gmail.com, if you are interested in learning more about study groups.

Bookstore/Library

- Browse Books, CDs, DVDs, etc. online at www.chinmayapublications.com. Contact Sevak to order (Vijay Singh at Chinmayam, Subbarao Kari at Chinmaya Somnath and Bijay Dash at Frederick)

Next Edition of Chinmaya Smrithi

- Articles for the next regular bi-monthly edition – July 2021, are due by June 30, 2021
- Email submissions to smrithi-editor@chinmayadc.org.
- Browse Past editions at www.chinmayadc.org/Smrithi/Smrithi.htm

Useful Links:

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust www.chinmayamission.com

Chinmaya Mission West www.chinmayamission.org

Chinmaya International Foundation, E-Vedanta Courses www.chinfo.org

Chinmayam Chapter – Silver Spring MD website <http://chinmayam.chinmayadc.org/chinmayam-chapter/>

Chinmaya Somnath Chapter – Chantilly VA website www.chinmayasomnath.org

Chinmaya Frederick Chapter – Urbana MD website <http://www.frederick.cmwrc.org/>

Chinmaya Richmond Chapter – Richmond VA website www.chinmayarichmond.org

CMWRC – Washington Regional Center www.chinmayadc.org

Please Note

The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of Chinmaya Mission or CMWRC

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BV students – Please contact the editorial staff if interested to volunteer.

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

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News & Tidbits

Gurudev's Jayanti

Gurudev's 105th Jayanti was celebrated in a grand manner by all the chapters. At Chinmayam, a virtual play was put on by the members and there was also a Kahoot quiz contest for the entire family. A Haiku competition and a photo competition was organized and received a very enthusiastic response across age groups. At Chinmaya Somnath, Gurudev Jayanti was observed on May 9th with Paduka Puja followed by Guru Stotram and Ashtothara Shata Namavali. Children participated with great enthusiasm in the interactive Puja which was followed by a message from Swami Dheerananda. This year, Gurudev's Jayanti was celebrated globally through the launch of the E-Yagna on Chapter 7. The 18 day Yagna was broadcast through the Chinmaya Youtube channel. Gurudev's inspiring message from the Yagna in 1981 was made available to a whole new generation of Sevaks. Apart from the main Yagna, the program also highlighted the excellent work being done by Chinmaya Mission through various schools and colleges across India.

Tilak Ceremony

The annual Tilak ceremony was held virtually on May 22 for students graduating from the Balavihar Chinmayam class and entering the next chapter of their life. A special Smrithi edition containing the details and profiles of the various graduating students will be available separately. The ceremony featured messages from Lakshmi K Ravipati (Lucky Didi) and the invocation from Taitirriya Upanishad rendered by Dr. Nair. The graduating students spoke briefly about the values they learnt over the years in Balavihar and their plans for further studies in college. Swami Dheerananda also gave his inspiring message to the graduating class.

Appeal for COVID-19 Relief

India continues to fight against the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Swami Swaroopananda has appealed to members to donate towards Chinmaya Mission's [India Covid Relief Fund](#), share stories of the good work being done through Facebook (use hashtag #EachOneReachOne) and pray for everyone's well-being.

Food Drive

In order to alleviate the distress caused due to the pandemic and in keeping with the spirit of giving back to the local community, Sevaks have organized a monthly food drive where bags of groceries are distributed to needy families. Please review the flyers and weekly announcements to get more information on details of how you can help and contribute to this noble cause.

Arpanam

Please refer to the CMWRC website to learn more about this exciting new consolidated fundraising initiative. It offers the Chinmaya family an opportunity to donate at various levels on an on-going basis to support the current and future growth of CMWRC. Inspired by Gurudev's message that true loving is not in passive taking but in dynamic giving, the program is expected to help the mission pay down its debt while also positioning it for future growth to continue to spread the spiritual message of Vedanta. Donors making an Arpanam pledge may fulfill the pledge during the calendar year, and all tax-deductible offerings, such as Gita chanting registration, membership, Bala Vihar, enrichment, Guru Dakshina, event sponsorship, etc. are recognized towards the fulfillment of the pledge.

Please make your pledge today



Chinmaya Mission® Washington Regional Center



||श्री राम प्रसन्न||



श्रीमद दासबोध

समर्थ श्री रामदास स्वामी

श्री. अरविंद भागवत यांचे मराठीतून विवेचन
[इंटरनेट माध्यमातून]

दर सोमवारी संध्या. ७.०० ते ८. १५ व
दर मंगळवारी संध्या. ७. ४५ ते ९.००
(East Coast time)

Every Monday 7 pm – 8.15 pm and
Every Tuesday 7.45 pm – 9.0 pm
[East Coast time]

Both sessions are Live and
cover identical portions

Lectures will be in
Marathi language

For Zoom code send E-mail:
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<https://tinyurl.com/dasbodh>

STUDY VIVEKACUDAMANI with Swami Dheerananda

Every Thursday
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm (EST)
at Kailas Niwas

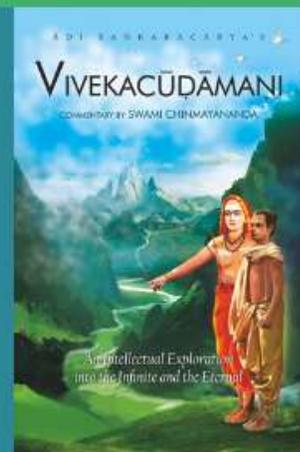
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FOOD FOR THE NEEDY

Chinmaya Mission has been distributing food through non-profit organizations in our communities whose values align with the CMWRC vision of serving the needy, by collecting food and donations from Mission members. CMWRC relies on YOUR generous contributions and volunteer services to serve the needy in the community.

WAYS TO DONATE



- Make a check payable to CMWRC (in the memo section please write "Food for the Needy")
- Online - with eCheck (preferred) or with Credit Card at www.chinmayadc.org/Food-For-The-Needy.

YOU CAN ALSO DROP-OFF non-perishable, unexpired, unopened Food Supplies at

KAILAS NIWAS (Rear Entrance)

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Arpanam

An Offering of Gratitude | Annual Donation Pledge

True loving is not a passive 'taking' but a dynamic 'giving'
- Swami Chinmayananda



**GROW SPIRITUALLY AND HELP OUR
CENTER EXPAND TO SERVE MORE**

*Whoever offers me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, that I accept,
offered by the pure-minded with devotion - Geeta Chapter 9, Verse 26*

Pledge Today Generously

- 🌿 Patram (Leaf) - \$2700 and above
- 🌸 Pushpam (Flower) - \$5400 and above
- 🍌 Phalam (Fruit) - \$10,800 and above
- 💧 Toyam (Water) - \$21,600 and above

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For any questions, email director@chinmayasomnath.org

Bala Vihar

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'Children are not vessels to be filled, but lamps to be lit.'
- Pujya Swami Chinmayananda

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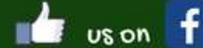
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Chinmayam Devi Group

led by Medha ji

UPANISHAD GANGA

Upanishad Ganga is a television serial produced by Chinmaya Mission and directed by Dr. Chandraprakash Dwivedi (director of famous TV serial Chanakya).

It covers the entire gamut of Indian culture, heritage, philosophy and wisdom. It addresses, in the form of a drama, the universal questions such as who am I, what are my duties, how to be happy and successful.

Join and discuss the practical applications of the knowledge in our day to day life.

Every Tuesday | 8.30 pm - 9:45 pm
via Zoom (Online)

Smt. Medha Bhagwat, a scientist by profession, CMWRC member since 1988, serving currently as a Vedanta Teacher, formerly as a Bala Vihar teacher.

**To register, interested Devis can contact
Chinmayam Devi Group Coordinators:**

Pratima Jadhav | Deepa Krishnan

Email: chinmayam_devigroup@chinmayadc.org

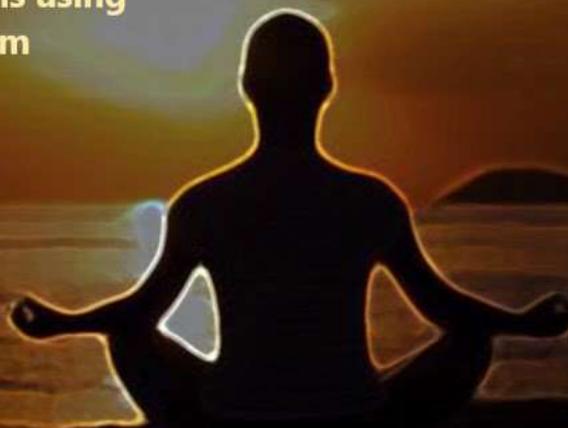


Tuesday Meditation

"Like the butter hidden in the cream, Pure Consciousness resides in every Being. It is to be constantly churned, with Mind as the churning rod.... Knowledge of the Self is gained through meditation." -- Svetasvatara Upanishad

**With Gurudev's Grace and Swamiji's Blessings,
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Sadhana Samvad

A virtual dialogue offering Sadhakas an opportunity to discuss, comprehend, and clarify any questions or doubts about Sadhana.

Sadhakas (those who are engaged in adhyatmik sadhana or wish to start) will have the opportunity to interact, discuss and clarify issues pertaining to sadhana such as:

- *Understanding Concepts and their implications*
- *Clarify the meaning of specific texts*
- *Identify how to deepen their practice*
- *How to overcome obstacles encountered*
- *How to design an efficient program for sadhana*

Join us online via Zoom - <https://bit.ly/2020SadhanaSamvad>
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*for rising Ninth Graders
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July 12 - 16, 2021
2:00 - 4:00 pm ET

Registration
Opens
on May 8

Youth Camp 2021



Program is ONLINE

<https://tinyurl.com/2021youthcamp>

For more information contact
jchyk@chinmayadc.org

Led by
Vivek ji





*yad-yad-ācarati śreṣṭhaḥ tat-tad-ebetaro jaṇaḥ |
sa yat-pramāṇaṁ kurute lokas-tad-anuvartate |*

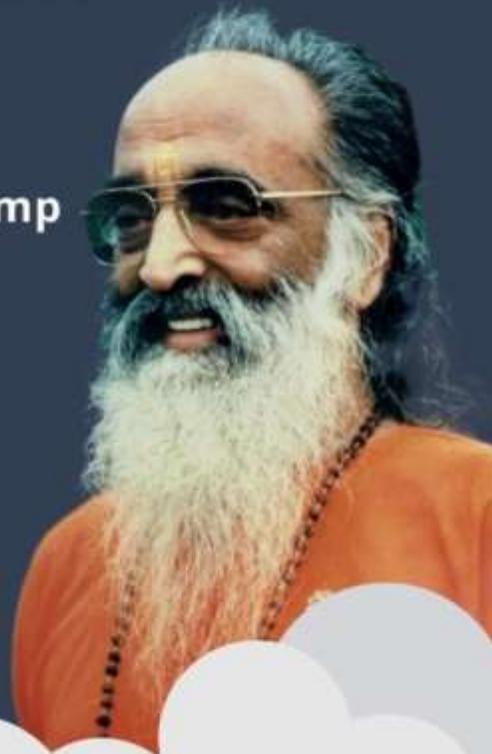
**Bhagavad Gītā
3.21**

LAUNCH INTO ACTION

HE did it - Let's follow HIM!

**Virtual
Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Family Camp
July 29 - August 2**

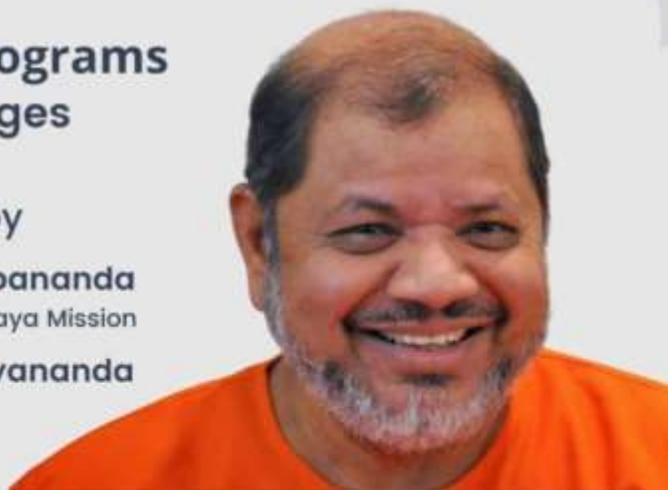
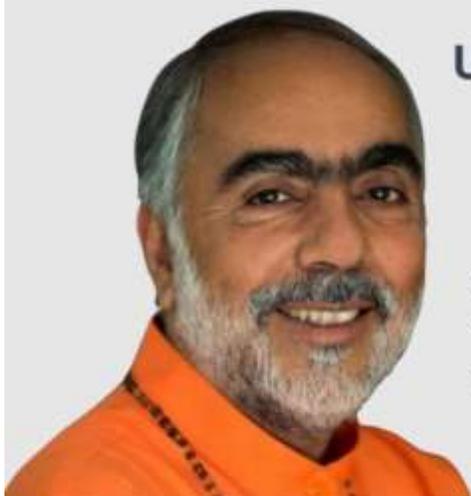
**Mahasamadhi Aradhana Day
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Talks by

Swami Swaroopananda
Global Head, Chinmaya Mission
Swami Tejomayananda



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Registration Fee (For CHYKs): \$54

EARLY REGISTRATION (Ends May 31, 2021): \$81

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Washington Regional Center

For more details, please visit
www.chinmayadc.org/Mahasamadhi2021



Dharmena Dhaaryate Lokah

"The world is upheld, nourished, sustained and integrated by Dharma"

Dharma in Sanskrit means that which is the very essence and substratum which upholds, nourishes, sustains and integrates. Sweetness is the dharma of sugar for without sweetness sugar is not sugar.

Values uphold one's character, nourish our lives, sustains joy, gives meaning to life and integrates the society. Hence values are called Dharma. At a deeper level the Lord Himself is called Dharma. He is the very essence of the world of names and forms and sustains and nourishes it.

Then who is a Dharma Sevak? He is one who humbly and daringly nourishes the right values, seeks the Lord within and serves Him through service to Mankind.



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The Sallient features

- ★ Experience the joy of Gurukula living
- ★ Learn the fundamentals of Vedanta/ Jnana Yoga (Prakarana granthas, Upanishads, Geeta), Bhakti Yoga (Portions of Ramayana and Bhagvatam), Karma Yoga and Ashtanga Yoga (Asana, Pranayama)
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- ★ Celebrate auspicious occasions like Naga Panchami, Raksha Bandan, Independence Day, Janmashtami, Ganesh Chaturthi.
- ★ Bond with the Global Chinmaya Mission through the various activities and learn how to be a sevak/sevika of grass root activities like Baia Vihar and Study Classes.

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Food: Sattvik North Indian and South Indian vegetarian food will be served.

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- ★ Rs. 9,000/- (140 US \$) for persons below 25 years
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- ★ Rs. 18,000/- (270 US \$) for persons 40 to 65 years
- ★ Rs. 20,000/- (295 US \$) for persons above 65 years
- ★ Rs. 28,000/- (410 US \$) for Air Conditioned Accommodation
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For registration and further enquiries

Course Co-ordinator :
Mohan Satish, Administrator : +91 95819 82323
Shradha Vyas : +91 94270 74290

Chinmaya Gardens
Swami Chinmayananda Lane,
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Chinmaya Dharma Sevak Course

(Foundation Course in Vedanta)

In English

by

Swamini Vimalananda

Assisted by

Swamini Sampratishthananda



at **Chinmaya Gardens,**
Coimbatore

From :

22nd July to 1st Sep. 2021

The Founder and the Mission



Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji is one of the greatest saints and visionaries of our times. The Chinmaya Mission has over 300 centres worldwide and has been rendering yeoman service in the spiritual, cultural, educational and social fields thereby transforming the lives of millions. Under the guidance of Pujya Guruj Swami Tejomayanandaji, a strong band of Acharyas and devotees was formed and are carrying out the multifaceted activities and projects of the mission.

Chinmaya Dharma Sevak Course

(Foundation Course in Vedanta)

It is a short-term Vedanta Course aimed at giving knowledge and training to sincere seekers with the essence of Vedanta and set them firmly on the spiritual path. The student of the course will live the life of a seeker (sadhaka) in the Gurukula, under the guidance of the Acharya. **The course is designed to bring about an inner transformation. On completion of the course the students will be able to contribute to the society as Chinmaya Dharma Sevaks / Sevikas** by propagating the culture and spiritual knowledge gained. The Chinmaya Mission provides a platform for becoming "Dedicated Sevaks of Dharma". **Each Dharma Sevak / Sevika will be awarded a certificate.**

The Temple of Learning

The venue of the Chinmaya Dharma Sevak Course is the **Chinmaya Gardens**, which is nestled at the foothills of the verdant Nilgiri ranges. The ashram is about 30kms away from the hustle and bustle of Coimbatore. The ashram is beautiful, serene and spiritually elevating.

Course Acharya : Swami

Vimalananda is posted at Chinmaya Mission, Coimbatore. She has traveled throughout the world and has conducted many Gnana Yagnas, Seminars and public talks in English, Hindi, and Gujarati Courses and Camps for children, youth and elders. Her simple style of talking has captivated the intellectual and faithful alike. She has been the Acharya of the previous successfully conducted 17 Dharma Sevak, 6 Vedanta Darshan and 9 Meditation Demystified courses at Coimbatore.



Course Upacharya: Swami Sampratishtananda, is the Acharya in-charge of Chinmaya Mission, Coimbatore. She did the Vedanta Course in 2005 and was the Acharya of the 3rd Tamil / English Vedanta Course conducted at Chinmaya Gardens (2017 - 2019). She has assisted in conducting many Dharma Sevak and Vedanta Courses.

Course Students

Candidates must be below 65 years and of sound health. Those above 65 years need to get special permission from course acharya. They must have a strong desire to gain spiritual knowledge and live a spiritual life. They must have sufficient grasp of English. Knowledge of Sanskrit is not a must. Students above 65 years will only be taken with special permission.



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Online Registration <http://bit.ly/18dsc2021>

Date :

Signature





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E-BV SUMMER CAMP 2021 TULASI RAMAYANA



Join us for a fun-filled adventure as we discover the power of Lord Rama, the strength of Mother Sita, and devotion of Sri Hanuman!



**JUN 14 -
JULY 30, 2021**

**8-10 AM PT
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11-1 PM ET**



FACULTY:

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BRAMHACHARINS,
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<http://chinmayamissionwest.com/summercamp/>



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June 21, 2021 - July 16, 2021

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**Theme:
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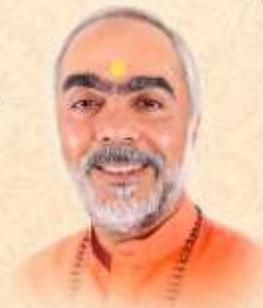


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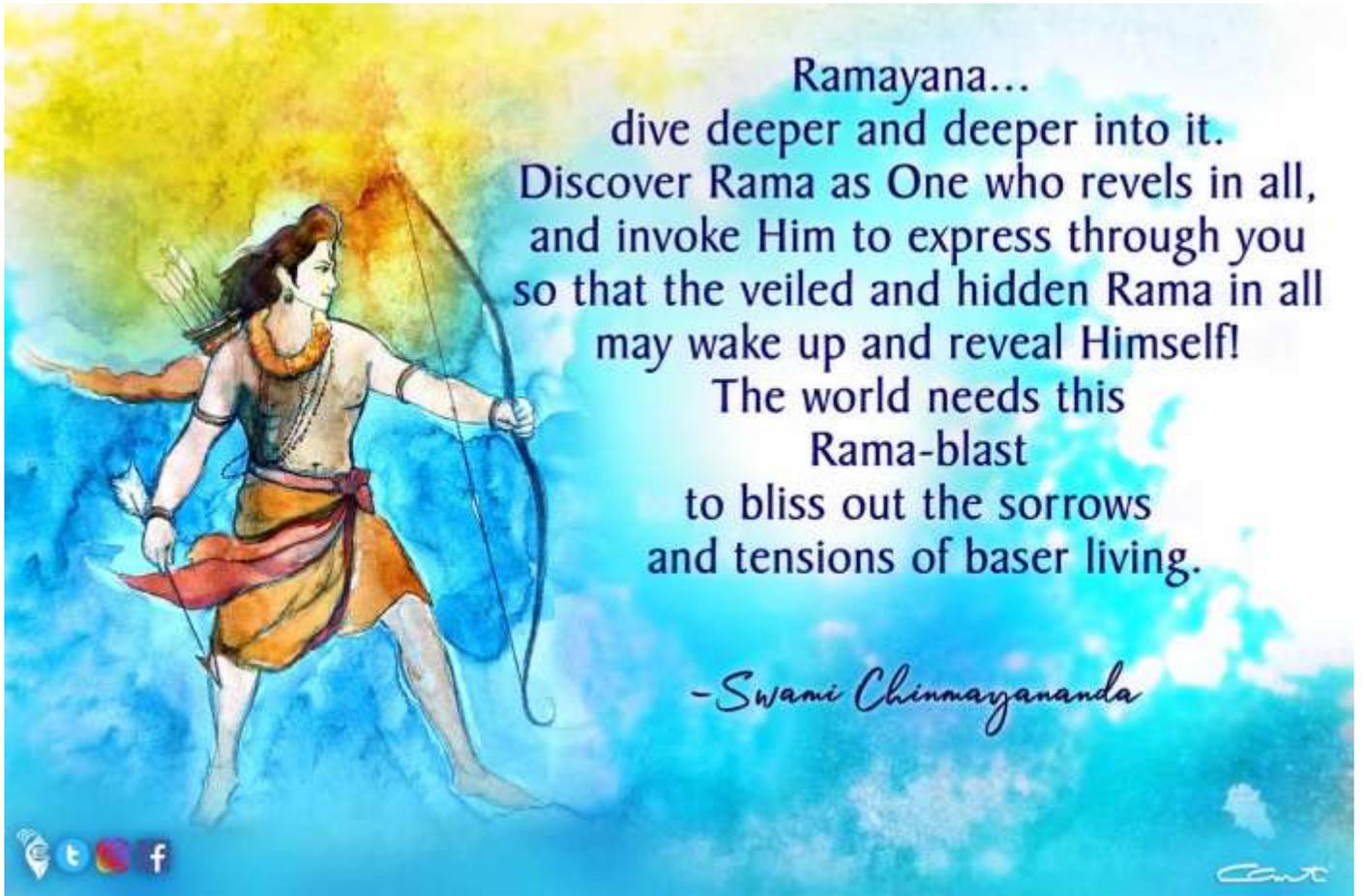
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Ramayana...
dive deeper and deeper into it.
Discover Rama as One who revels in all,
and invoke Him to express through you
so that the veiled and hidden Rama in all
may wake up and reveal Himself!
The world needs this
Rama-blast
to bliss out the sorrows
and tensions of baser living.

-Swami Chinmayananda



Cent



Turn
towards the
light;
you will find
Him
everywhere.

SWAMI SWAROOPANANDA



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Yet, this 'thought personality' cannot bring out its potential might and beauty.
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that knowledge (Hanuman) bows down to Rama, the Spiritual Essence.

-Swami Chinmayananda





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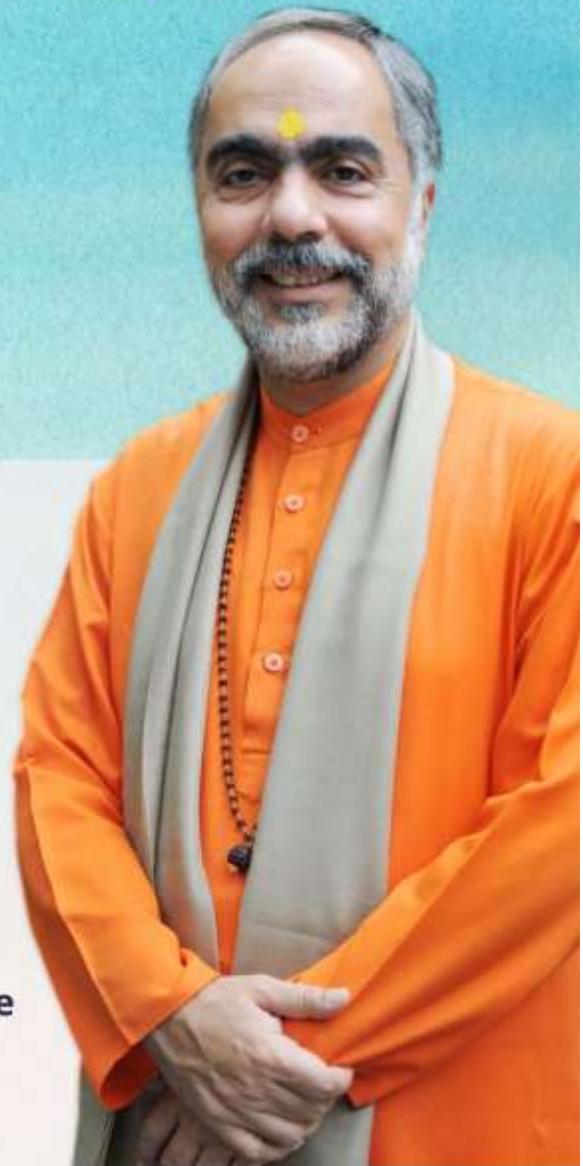
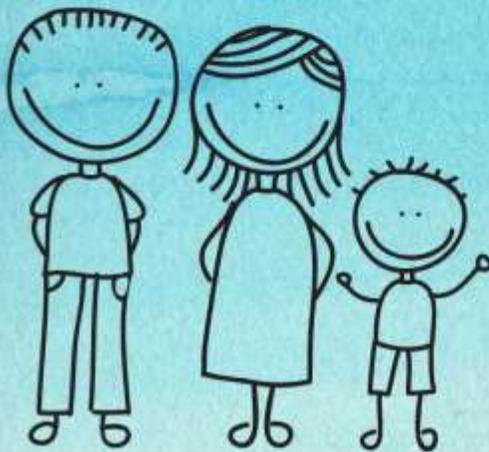


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Gita Chanting Competition 2021 Writing Submissions

Various Authors

The first line of verse eleven that is spoken by the Lord means that you should not pity those who have gone against dharma and are a menace to society. In this story, the Kauravas (Arjuna's cousins) are the force that is causing dharma not to prevail and society to suffer. This is because the Kauravas broke the contract: after 14 years of exile the Pandavas will have their kingdom back. They also ruin their citizens by their wickedness and ego. If the Kauravas took over the kingdom and ruled the people, they would have slowly destroyed society and dharma would fall. For the benefit of the people, Arjuna needed to defeat the Kauravas. The next line that is spoken by the Lord confirms that Arjuna did speak some truth when he was talking in the previous chapters, but now his inability to understand who should be grieved for is a hindrance. Something about verse eleven that impressed me is when Lord Shri Krishna says, "The wise grieve neither of the living nor for the dead." This line means that the wise understand that there must be the death of the wicked if it is for the benefit and progress of society. Therefore, they do not see it as killing the being, rather as slaying the ego and evil inside of them. For me it means, the man who knows the true nature of the Lord and his creation understands that each and every person that has been in our life was only there for an intended purpose and a specific amount of time. The person has not died, but it was only their body which has become no longer of use. But their soul, which is their true form, has never died or become old. They only pass on to a new body since it will help them on their path of God realization compared to their old body and life. However, the body that is still living must also realize that everyone you have met is there for a reason, and not for you to get attached. After each birth, the soul becomes wiser and spiritually advances in its journey to God. The wise understand that nothing is permanent except for the love the Lord has for each and everything. So, they do not become attached to any being and live in the moment and enjoy the time that they have. When the body is gone, the wise are not affected by death and instead see it as a normal occurrence in life leading to evolution of the soul.

Akhil Shastry.

de-hi-no's-min-ya-thā de-he kau-mā-ram yau-va-nam ja-rā ta-thā de-hān-ta-ra-prāp-tiḥ dhī-ras-tat-ra na muh-ya-ti (2. 13)

"Just as in this body the embodied (soul) passes into childhood, youth and old age, so also does he pass into another body; the firm man does not grieve at it."

This verse provides the basis for our beliefs in reincarnation and the eternal immortality of the soul (atman) that resides within every one of us. Just as we grow and develop through our lifetimes, shed our past and move towards the future, each of our souls leaves the memories of its past lives. We embark on a new path on our journey towards moksha, released from the cycle of birth and death.

Many of us have experienced loss at some point in our lives, or will experience loss in the future. I myself mourned the death of two family members within the past two years, both of whom were extremely close to me. It is a comfort to remember that death is not an end, nor a beginning. It is merely a necessary part of a never ending cycle. Allow yourself to grieve, but recognize that every lifetime is temporary and that it is part of our destiny to continue to move forward past the challenges of this lifetime.

Not only does this verse shed light on our future after "death," it also provides an explanation for the qualities with which we came into this life. Our Chinmayam class continually emphasized the concept of "vasanas," or impressions in our mind that are a consequence of our past lives and actions. These vasanas describe our tendencies, and exist as the barrier between ourselves as individuals, and ourselves as the eternal Atman. I spoke about this verse in my Philosophy class in high school when we discussed the concept of reincarnation of Hinduism; how else can we explain the differences in our birth, in our social classes, or even our skills? How else can we explain the way the different inclinations that exist within each of us? We each have qualities and attributes that are a product of our "nature," and one of the few explanations that we can provide for this phenomenon is in the idea of previous experiences that guided us to this point. We let go of memories on death's door, but we enter each new life with the impressions of those memories waiting to guide us in the new. Yet, we must let

go of those impressions in order to recognize ourselves as no different from the supreme being.

Akshaya Balaji

Vishada Thinking

As we live and operate in the world and play different roles e.g. children, parents, grandparents, uncles or aunts etc., we often get stuck in the quagmire of vishada, not unlike the great archer himself. It is this vishada which is the topic of this writeup.

The child is extremely despondent and thinks, "What is the point of all this wealth and success if my parents don't live with me and as a result, I am not able to take care of them?" The parent feels hurt. "My child, who I raised so painstakingly is not available when I need him the most."

Like the hero archer, the child's mind is consumed with pity and deep sadness and his heart tainted with dejection. The parent in turn is engulfed with the disease of self-misidentification and a misdiagnosis of the situation. And that is just the first part of the problem. The second part of the problem generated from this thinking is unlike how Partha surrenders in verse seven, unequivocally admitting to the state of his *karpanya*-mind, we sadhakas completely forget our divine nature and let the so-called situation drive our helpless thinking.

So, what then is the solution. Should the child ignore his parents and engulf himself with material joys. Should the parent just be resigned to their physical and emotional frailties? The thought process itself is not unlike our hero thinking it would be better to live like a beggar than lord over the victories obtained by slaying the icons of his age in the form of his grandsire Bhishma and his teacher Dronacharya. What we miss is the fact that both those maharathis and their accomplishments are not encased within their bodies; rather their true radiance lies first their mind and intellect and second, the learnings and values they have imparted to him and the other pandavas. The divine consciousness within them that taught Arjuna the military strategies by his teacher and the impeccable values by his grandsire and never be demolished by any arrow or man-made weapon whatsoever.

This is beautifully explained when Vasudev says in the sixteenth verse that what is real always exists, i.e. there was never a time when *it* was not there and there will never be a time when *it* will cease to exist. He later goes

on to explain that *it* cannot be wet by water, dried by air or cut by fire. The Lord goes on to explain that this Self thus is immutable as there is no birth or death of this entity. He wants the child and the parents in us to realize that beneath the cinema of millions of experiences that we have in our lives via our body, our mind and our intellect, there is a curtain on which this movie is being played, a string of which is holding together the pearls of our moments. And as soon as we start identifying with that unchanging, Pure Awareness within ourselves, we will realize that these so-called vishadas will melt away from our existence and we will know what we truly are: Sat-Chit-Ananda.

Amit Mukherjee

The meaning of this verse (11) is: You have grieved for those that should not be grieved for; yet, you speak words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living or the dead. What this verse is trying to say is that when you lose something very valuable to you, it will make you sad for a very long time. Arjuna was sad during the war, but Krishna told him if he didn't defeat the Kauravas, his kingdom would be lost. He also told him not to grieve about attacking his relatives, his teacher and his friends because if the Pandavas accepted defeat, their cousins would rule their kingdom.

How I relate myself to the verse: If I lost a book that was very valuable to me, (After all, I love books so the next sentence would probably be true if I lost a book) that was very valued by me, I would be very sad about it getting lost. But, I shouldn't worry about too much because if I get very attached to it, I wouldn't focus on anything except it which might get me into trouble. I understand that losing a book isn't as bad as losing people but life has to go on and we have to move on.

Arjuna listened to Krishna and in the war, he and the other Pandavas had no problem fighting their relatives. In conclusion, the Pandavas won the war and got their rightful place on the throne.

Arush Kantareddy

In Chapter 2, Verse 7 in the Bhagavat Gita, Arjuna pleads to Krishna saying "Karpanya doso pahata svabavaha, pricchami twam dharma sam mudha cheetah, yachre yasyanis chi tam bru hi tan me, sis yas te ham sadhi mam twam prapanam!". In this verse, Arjuna is saying, karpanya - dhosha - the flaw of cowardice; upatahah -

besieged. What this means is Arjuna is showing "the flaw of cowardice" to or against the opposing side of the battlefield. He is also upataha or besieged. This verse describes how Arjuna is telling Krishna, he is showing the flaws of cowardness in battle.

Arya Bhavansikar

na tve-vā-haṁ jā-tu nā-saṁ

na tvaṁ ne-me ja-nā-dhi-pāḥ ।

na cai-va na bha-viṣ-yā-maḥ

sar-ve va-yam-ataḥ pa-ram ॥ (2.12)

It is not that at any time (in the past), indeed was I not, nor were you, nor these rulers of men. Nor verily, shall we all ever cease to be hereafter.

In this verse, Bhagavan speaks of **Atman** which remains the same throughout. The Lord says that He Himself, Arjuna, and all the Kings who are assembled on the battlefield are eternal, non-dual and all-pervasive individual beings. That which exists now but does not exist in the past or future cannot be real. Only **Atman** passes this test of reality and persists through all periods of time. It pervades the waking, dream and deep sleep states and exists beyond death. This **Atman**, not our body, mind or intellect, is our real Self – “I.” Bhagavan differentiates between the “body,” which is perishable, and the “I” which is NOT in the body. This “earthly,” everchanging **body** belongs to the **Earth** while this “heavenly,” everlasting **Atman** belongs to **God**.

The verse brings out the Central doctrine of the immortality of the “**Self**”. This is the Eternal truth of all religions. We are more than just creatures of merely flesh and blood, born yesterday and to die tomorrow. The “**I**” in us is permanent. “**I**” is the unchanging factor that pervades all our experiences. “**I**” always was, and it will always be. “**I**” is imperishable; it is not born with the body nor does it age with the body. It is not a prey to diseases of the body, nor does it die with the passing of the body. It is that self which we all are; it is like the ever-shining Sun.

This verse is appropriate for the current pandemic situation. We identify ourselves with the physical layers and get crushed by their changes. We have seen people get distressed when loved ones suffer due to COVID (and other illnesses) or death in general. If we assent to this verse intellectually, we can face the situation with a better understanding that only their “body” is lost, and “they” remain forever. Our family was able to cope with

two tough situations that we had: when we couldn’t travel to India to send my father-in-law off after he died and when our beloved pet passed away unexpectedly. Although it took a toll on us, we bounced back and accepted the fact that they are all divine, immortal beings who concluded this worldly journey; we instead cherish their memories and tried to move on heavily heartedly with our lives. We attributed to the fact that we are all eternal/divine beings undergoing human/worldly experiences rather than human beings seeking spiritual experiences.

By shifting our attention to **Atman**, we can certainly remain calm and become free from the fluctuations of this world. Every moment passed is a moment closer to the end of this journey. Live your life with Joyous curiosity and an eternal smile!!

Balaji Ramakrishnan

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| अन्तवन्त इमे देहाः | an-ta-van-ta ime de-hāḥ |
| नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः । | nit-yas-yok-tāḥ śa-ri-ri-ṇaḥ । |
| अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य | anā-si-no'-pra-me-yas-ya |
| तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥ १८ ॥ | tas-mād-yudh-yas-va bhā-ra-ta ॥ 18 ॥ |

God’s command to fight brought me joy and anxiety. His command takes the fear out of living freely and yet it is still scary. The passage felt scary because we go through life worrying about all the consequences we must face with every decision we make. However, this constant concern and worry stifles us and stops us from living life as our true selves.

We are taught from a very young age to think before you act. It is important to understand the consequences of your actions, but it’s less important if the worrying about the future stops you from acting or living to your full potential. The command to live and fight is almost permission to live freely because you have faith and knowledge to guide you. This is a concept so basic and yet takes time to appreciate. We know our life is precious and short here on Earth in the physical and emotional sense, but to embrace the notion that this is not IT opens up the heart and mind to live with more faith.

Especially during this time in our history, we are faced with so many fears about how to live life safely and still with the idea that we must continue to act despite our fears about what may come. As I raise our kids with my husband, we work to instill the idea that life goes on and to not worry too much about the past and the future. Bringing in the idea that living with faith and knowing that the knowledge we have in our hearts and mind with guide us is cathartic. This release of anxiety and fear that came

from reading this passage and entire chapter brought on a sense of calm, which is needed today and every day going forward.

Bhavna Lee on Verse 18

It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to arrive at the right answers in life by asking the wrong questions. Arjuna unwittingly asked Krishna such a question in verse 4: "How, O Madhusudana, shall I in battle fight with arrows against Bhishma and Drona[?]" And though Krishna would soon explain that Arjuna was creating a false crisis – the atman of Arjuna, Bhishma or Drona could never be destroyed – Arjuna's question nevertheless created an unnecessary roadblock to his taking right action.

Like Arjuna, we unintentionally obstruct our own paths by asking wrong questions. We imagine terrible dilemmas and project crushing defeats. We cloud our vision and hinder our growth. All because we forget our true Identity. Indeed, Arjuna shows us that the way out of even the most daunting of these unchecked internal dialogues, up to and including the topics of death and loss, begins with refocusing on our True Self and its eternal nature. Krishna clarifies this truth for Arjuna in verses 11-18.

To bypass *apparent* reality and re-anchor to *changeless* reality is easier said than done, of course, for it is innately human to think first according to appearances. As a result of this common tendency and other persistent paradigms, we all have personal blind spots in our thinking that sometimes bias us to ask the wrong questions.

What sets Arjuna apart, however, and what I want to follow, is his openness and humility in sharing his feelings, doubts and questions, and his receptivity to the correction, guidance and wisdom of someone of greater spiritual stature willing to help him more clearly see and move forward in the Eternal Reality that is beyond our natural senses.

If, by doing so, I can grow to fully embrace the unchanging Reality of the Supreme Life in me, I too, like Arjuna, will be able to see more clearly and therefore arrive at right answers that allow me to increasingly unfold into an existence reflective of the Great I Am.

Corey Lee

In Chapter 2, verses 13 and 17 stuck out to me. Verse 13, stating "Just as in this body the

embodied (soul) passes into childhood, youth and old age, so also does he pass

into another body; the firm man does not grieve at it," helps me come to a realization that we are not our body. This life that we spend so long trying to perfect, ultimately, does not matter to the soul since it will move onto a different body or will attain Moksha after this body passes. This verse also helps me realize that the problems I will face or am facing in this life are really not as big or as important as I make them out to be.

Verse 17 means "Know That to be Indestructible by which all this is pervaded. None can cause the destruction of That - the Imperishable." Krishna is explaining to Arjuna in verse 17 that the soul can never be destroyed, it is everlasting. Kind of like Newton's first law, energy cannot be created or destroyed! It will always be there. Our soul will always be there, no matter what happens to the body that is holding the soul temporarily. Both of these verses help me grasp the separation of the body and soul. Although it will be difficult to comprehend fully who I truly am, the Bhagavad Gita will improve my understanding as I continue to learn and understand the scriptures.

Harshini Parandapalli on Verse 13 and 17

The second chapter of the Gita is widely recognized as the chapter with the key to living life. Verse 11 of this chapter is similarly known as one that holds a message that all people must learn in their life. Arjuna, in all of his worries, voices one that seems, to be honest, quite practical in its sentiments. His worry about fighting his own teachers, about hurting his own family, is one that makes a lot of sense to have in real life. I would likely have the same reaction to being in his situation, making this verse harder to understand but simultaneously an important lesson to learn.

Verse 11 offers a way for both Arjuna and for us to understand what grief is, and really, how we should approach it. While I have not faced the same amount of grief in my life that many people have, I have always needed a way to approach any and all the grief in my life in a way that doesn't involve an immeasurable amount of sorrow and pity. Krishna, in this verse, allows people to confront the root of grief, and how it affects them, in different ways. His advice, when he says that the wise people "grieve neither for the living, nor for the dead," explains what one should do in the face of grief.

When faced with the crushing sorrow of grief, the immediate reaction is to mourn and succumb to a sadness that lends itself to depression. Krishna's advice in this verse offers a way out of that depressive spiral, which is what makes this verse so important even now. The Vedantic

way of life is difficult to live, because of the eventual demand for renunciation, but Krishna, in this verse, hands us a first step on the path of a Vedantic life, but additionally makes it easier to transition from the material world to the immaterial.

This verse begins the pathway to attaining moksha - as described in chapter 18, verse 66 - and so was so impactful to me because of the gravity of how important it is in my journey to happiness.

Jahnvi Kirkire

I chose to reflect on Chapter 2 Verse 11 of the Gita, which is said by Krishna and is translated to “*You have grieved for those that should not be grieved for; yet, you speak words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.*” I chose this verse primarily because it is something that I have heard before, and also because I can see the effects of this verse almost every single day. I see this verse as a way to tell yourself that sometimes, it is best to not dwell on things that are unchangeable or are simply not healthy to constantly think about. For example, a few years ago, my grandfather passed away due to age, heart problems, and diabetes. My grandmother suffered a lot soon after he passed, and still does today. She always seems to be thinking about how life is hard without him and how she would rather be in heaven rather than still be on the Earth. Unbeknownst to my grandmother, she is not quite at that stage yet. During the day, she may spend a lot of time in her room praying and watching videos of temples, and even though she is still very sociable, it is hard to take her away from sad thoughts about my grandfather. She does have a lot of wisdom about life in India and tells amazing stories about her life and mine as well. I have always tried to tell her that she should enjoy her life right now and not forget about my grandfather, but celebrate him instead. By living in a dark place continuously, one may waste precious time that could be spent hanging out with family and doing other activities. Many other examples could be provided about grieving for the living and the dead, but I felt that providing an example of someone who is an inspiration to me would be best. Krishna demonstrates to Arjuna that worrying about fighting against his cousins is not the right thing to do for someone who is so valorous and knowledgeable in so many areas. Everyone can use this verse to benefit themselves in times of difficulty where inspiration or motivation is needed to move on.

Keshav Sriram

Chapter 2, Verse 16:

नासतो विद्यते भावः

नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।

उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तः

त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥ १६ ॥

nā-sa-to vid-ya-te bhā-vaḥ

nā-bhā-vo vid-ya-te sa-taḥ ।

u-bha-yor-api dr̥ṣ-to'n-taḥ

tva-na-yos-tat-tva-dar-śi-bhiḥ ॥ 16 ॥

Meaning: The unreal has no being; there is no non-being of the Real; the truth about both of these has been seen by the Knowers of the Truth. (Seers of the Essence).

This verse, while apparently stating a very simple truth, contains a deep spiritual significance. We can all agree that the “*unreal*” has no existence while the “*real*” can never cease to exist. However, just as every science has terminology that conveys a deeper meaning, these words convey an eternal truth to the spiritual seeker. That which is real has two characteristics: it is forever constant (*unchanging*) and it has an *independent existence*.

When we come across some of the statements in Vedanta such as the famous statement attributed to Adi Shankara “*Brahma Satyam; Jagat Mithya*”; it sounds contradictory. After all, we are seeing and experiencing the world every day. Then, how can it be unreal? When one thinks about the definition of “*real*” using the perspective explained above, one realizes that the external world (as well as the internal world of thoughts, mind and intellect) does not have an independent existence. It only exists in the presence of the Self.

Furthermore, one also realizes that the world of objects, emotions and thoughts (OET) is constantly changing. The equipment through which the Self (conditioned by its current BMI) is experiencing the world is also constantly changing. This is most evident in the body which is subject to birth, growth, decay and death. But the mind and intellect also undergo changes over the lifetime of a person.

The Light of Consciousness, which illumines all the experiences and in Whose presence alone all experiences are possible, is unchanging. It also has an independent existence i.e. does not depend on another object for its

own existence. Analyzed thus, one can begin to intellectually understand the concept of the Self.

Lord Krishna, being the Jagatguru, masterfully introduces this verse in this chapter, as He begins the Bhagwat Gita from the highest spiritual level. Having explained in previous verses the necessity for a spiritual seeker to develop forbearance, the Lord here is explaining the art of developing that forbearance. If a spiritual seeker were to be advised to be equanimous in the face of opposite experiences, it is logical for the seeker to question the teaching. By explaining that the Self alone is Real and that all other experiences in this world are Unreal, Lord Krishna is seeking to impress upon Arjuna that developing this understanding and looking at the world with that transformed perspective will help the seeker to develop true forbearance. In the absence of this knowledge, even the most determined seeker is bound to stray from the spiritual path when subjected to temptations and fluctuating fortunes.

K.A. Lakshmanan

Chapter 2, Verse 13

Shri Bhagavan uvaacha:

dehino'smin yatha dehe kaumaaram yauvanam jara
tatha dehantara prapti dhiras tatra na muhyati

Lord Shri Krishna (Bhagavan) says:

Just as the aatma (soul) transitions goes through the bodily changes of childhood, youth and old age, similarly migrates from one body to another at the time of death. The wise are not upset by this transition.

The second chapter of Bhagavadgita is considered the beginning of Lord Krishna's preaching to an emotionally weak and fallen Arjuna (and us in that state of mind). This is a very powerful Shloka directly referring to the Hindu or Sanathana Dharma concept of rebirth. In fact this chapter and particularly this verse is chanted at Hindu death ceremonies to console the grieving family members and friends missing the physical bodily death of a human being.

Bhagavan assures Arjuna (his disciple) that our human body goes through three phases of transformation which is childhood (koumaram), youth (yauvanam) and jaraa (old age). This change is accepted by all of us part of life and normal. Similarly, at death the aatma (soul) leaves the physical body and transitions from one physical body to another body or another destination. Most importantly brave people (who are wise and balanced) do not get

shaken up (or faint) by the loss of the physical form as the attachment with a person was with their soul and consciousness and not their physical body. Parents love their children no matter how they look, 3 feet tall and thin or 6 feet heavy built, all they see is the good soul that they have brought to this world and have responsibility to teach and bring them up as good citizens.

Once we understand this concept through this verse meaning, it becomes easier to handle difficult situations and material loss in life.

Manasi Darbha

Chapter 2, Verse 18

Shri Bhagavan uvaacha:

antavanta ime deha nityasyokta shareeri nah

Annashino-aprameyasya tasmaad yudhyasva bhaarata

Bhagavan Shri Krishna (Vishnu) says:

Thus the Consciousness residing in the human body is endless (infinite), eternal and imperishable. Only the material body is perishable. Therefore, O Arjuna, fight!

Bhagavadgita is fascinating to read and understand as initially what seems like an episode in Mahabharata starts to make sense to our day to day life. Growing up we face many situations such as happy incidents and sad incidents. The sad incidents are mainly due to loss of a material object or people we miss. Saankhya yoga is the beginning of a long discourse by Lord Krishna to Arjuna and disciples like us. Bhagavan preaches us the eternal concept of Aatma (soul) and consciousness.

Specifically in this verse, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna to take up his Arms and fight the Kurukshetra yuddha. Each one of our lives is a Yuddha (struggle) and we are expected to do our Karma and Dharma (duty). Through this verse we also learn that even though physical body perishes after death, the consciousness prevails.

I can compare this concept in two different ways. One our own Swamiji (Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda) who I have never met in physical form and yet I feel his consciousness through his teachings. This is eternal and imperishable.

The other example is that of a tree that goes through stages in its lifetime as sapling to big tree. At the end of the tree's life, we use it in many ways, one of them as lumber in building our house. The tree that has take another form continues to exist and benefit us even beyond its life.

Hence I would interpret this verse as physical form getting “recycled” infinitely and consciousness remains the same.

Mihir Darbha

Chapter 2, Verse 18

In Chapter 2, verses 4 through 8 describes the emotions Arjuna is going through with the thought of fighting his guru Dronacharya and grandsire Bhishma. Overwhelmed by the situation, Arjuna focuses on the fact that they are Mahanubhava, men who were the ideals of their age, symbolizing the best in our culture and hence contemplating that he should not fight. He does not think them as part of Kauravas, who were fighting on the policy of Adharma. Arjuna, with all his intelligence and wisdom is unable to maintain equipoise and seeks Lord Krishna's help to deal with the situation.

In the past year, which raised fundamental questions about race and social equity, I have often found myself in conversation with neighbors, colleagues, and friends where at certain times they take a position that does not align with Dharma, the righteous way of living. However, instead of speaking against that position, I have often held back so as to not be disrespectful. By being silent, I have not done my duty to act according to Dharma. Chapter 2 reminds us to surrender our ego and seek guidance when faced with such challenges instead of taking the easy way out.

Prakash Sesha

Chapter 2 - Verse 7

My heart is pounding by the taint of pity; my mind is confused as to duty. I ask Thee. Tell me decisively what is good for me. I am Thy disciple. Instruct me, who has taken refuge in Thee.

This verse highlights the condition of Arjuna- the pity he felt towards the Kauravas, the confusion of his duty in what to do next and surrendering to Krishna for Guidance.

This condition of Arjuna is very much felt by many of us and many times in our lives. We have misplaced pity. We get confused about what is right and wrong.

We live in the vicious cycle of desires and experiences not knowing our Manava Dharma.

What I particularly like in this verse is how Arjuna surrendered to Krishna for Guidance. Surrendering to the higher is beautiful but difficult to do - giving up the

doership and enjoyership is hard. Building the faith in the scriptures and living by their guidance helps us in surrendering to the higher. Pranams to all the Gurus at Chinmaya Mission who are helping me to grow the faith so that one day I hope to be able to surrender.

Radha Kowtha

Verse 12

It is not that at any time (in the past), indeed I was not, nor were you, not these rulers of men. Nor verily, shall we all ever cease to be hereafter.

In the previous verse, Bhagwan Krishna tells Arjun that the wise do not grieve for anybody, gives out the secret of Vedanta in this verse.

There has not been any time in the past that I was not present (since Arjun had accepted that his friend was very knowledgeable and had surrendered to him), also says there has not been any time in the past when you too were not present and it applies to all these greats standing in front of you as your opponents whom you are here to fight and kill and also to those who are standing with you to fight on your side. He goes further and says even after getting killed in the war they will still be there.

Bhagwan is explaining the theory of reincarnation in this verse, Pujya Gurudev has given in the commentary has given many examples from different religions which say in different words but all mean “whatever we are in the present is the product of our past lives (karmas). The soul is eternal.”

Bhagwan is showing Arjun “the Changeless Self in the everchanging world around him”. Swami Sarvapriyananda quotes “We are not humans trying have spiritual experience, but we are spiritual beings having human experience”.

We are bodies enlivened by Atman the self, the body which is born must die. We are bound by our attachment to the body that we consider the Body as the Self and think all body experiences are My experiences and when we die all ends. However what dies is only the gross and subtle bodies not the causal body.

All our experiences on the body are retained in our mind as impressions as Vasanas, these Vasanas stay in our Antah-karana (mind and intellect or the causal body) and move to another body to exhaust them.

This verse brings out the eternal nature of Atman the Self, the process of birth and death continues but Atman the

self remains. The Atman is Anant (it is beginning less and endless), it is where the concept of time does not exist.

Raja Kirkire

Chapter 2, Verse 2

“The Supreme Lord said : My dear Arjun, how has this delusion overcome you in this hour of peril? It is not benefitting an honorable person. It leads to not the higher abodes, but to disgrace.”

This verse tells Arjun to be brave and fight against his teachers and brothers because they were on opposite sides. Krishna tells him to not get too attached to things when making decisions on what is right and what is wrong. For example, if I was eating ice cream, which I really like, and someone got hurt, I would stop eating and help him out.

Rishi Lodugu

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ १४ ॥
*mātrāsparśās tu kaunteya śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkhadāḥ,
āgamāpāyino 'nityāḥ tāmstitikṣasva bhārata 14.*

The contact of the senses with objects, O son of Kunti, which cause heat and cold, pleasure and pain, have a beginning and an end; they are impermanent; endure them bravely, O descendant of Bharata. – 14

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥ १५ ॥
*yaṁ hi na vyathayantye te puruṣaṁ puruṣarṣabha,
samaduḥkhasukhaṁ dhīraṁ so 'mṛtatvāya kalpate 15.*

That firm man to whom, surely these afflict not, O chief among men, to whom pleasure and pain are the same, is fit for realizing the Immortality of the Self – 15

Key points from these two verses are as noted below:

- Bhagavan Sri Krishna address Arjuna as “Son of Kunti”. Kunti is a unique character in Mahabharata. She is the only one, who, silently endured all the sufferings better than anyone else. She is one who showed least amount of reaction and agitations throughout. In fact, she was thankful for such situations, because, it led her to remember Bhagavan more frequently.

Instead of reacting or worrying too much, she surrendered and directed her mind to remember Bhagavan.

- Now, Bhagavan is instructing about “endurance” to Arjuna by addressing him as “Son of Kunti”. While instructing, referencing Kunti, a living example of these qualities is just perfect.
- Every experience has a beginning and an end, whether they are conducive or non- conducive.
- Experience happens only when contact between 1) senses and 2) objects happen.
- Every experience lasts, as long as, we entertain or maintain this contact.
- We have a choice to 1) to withdraw the contact or 2) React to it impulsively or 3)

Bravely face it without getting dragged away.

- Some key hints or logic for our **Sadhana** or practice to be considered are:

o Bravely endure, heat and cold (gross body level experiences), pleasure and pain (subtle body level experiences), because they are impermanent. Reactions to them will create deeper **Vasanas** (impressions) and thus add more impurity to mind.

o Be careful to not get carried away with pleasure too, because this too is impermanent.

o We cannot maintain contact with pleasant experiences only and withdraw from unpleasant. Mind that is habituated to rest on objects, is bound to get both pain and pleasures, because objects do not contain permanent happiness.

o If the mind is repeatedly trained to rest on Real Self, then this habit will have a natural skill to withdraw from objects (both pain and pleasure).

o Only such a firm and determined mind, which rests on our Real Self (and not on impermanent objects) can remain unafflicted due to both pain and pleasure.

o When mind rests on our Real Self only, naturally it is unavailable to entertain the impermanent experiences.

- Result of acquiring these qualities:
o Bhagavan gives an assurance that **“one who has these qualities of remaining unafflicted due to heat and cold, pain and pleasure, is fit for realizing the Immortal Self”**.
o In short ,acquire these qualifications and gain Moksha, Here and Now.

|| Om Hari Om || || ॐ हररः ॐ ||

Sang Kona

Preamble – INDIA is hailed as the “land of seekers”. All desires to “seek” or “know” begins with an admission of what we “do not know” and asking questions to seek or know. The essence of all our noble scriptures including the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, the Itihasas, and the many Puranas is the same (i.e.) to ask questions about the true meaning of “life” and to understand who truly we are, and our existence is. **“Spirituality”** is an act of transcending the physiological and psychological boundaries to know the true nature of our existence. It is to seek, know, and understand our existential reality in our “present” life. And this seeking shall start at a very early stage of our life when we begin to ponder the following three profound questions that motivate our seeking – “Where did I come from?”, “Who Am I?”, and “Where do I go after this life?”.

Glory of Gita – Bhagavad Gita is called *Brahmavidhya*, the “Supreme Science” because other sciences study the material world but Gita focus on the knowledge of underlying reality which is the core for all other studies and our existence. Science aims to enhance the comforts of human life, but Gita teaches us how to be comfortable with what we have.

Significance of Chapter 2 – Sri Krishna touches on almost all the main themes and concepts of the Gita in Chapter 2. Mahatma Gandhi referencing verses 55-72 (Sthita Prajna) said, “If the rest of the scriptures were lost, this passage alone would be enough to teach a complete way of life”. Chapter 2 sets the tone for the other 16 chapters.

Essence of Verses 1-18 – These verses narrate the following:

- ♣ The despondent condition of Arjuna.
- ♣ Arjuna’s rationale about the battle being unjust and unfair.
- ♣ Arjuna’s surrender to Bhagavan Krishna seeking refuge as a disciple.
- ♣ Krishna’s sermon on the following profound topics –
 - o What is real vs. unreal.
 - o The eternal, changeless, and indestructible nature of the Self.
 - o Transient nature of the bodies that have a beginning and an end.
 - o Death is certain for the born and birth is for the dead and the wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.
 - o “Beings” constantly pass through the repeated stages of unmanifest, manifest, and

again unmanifest, so why grieve over the inevitable.
 o Strong message to Arjuna on the right thing for him to do.

♣ **My favorite verses** –

- o Verse 2 – First ever verse spoken by Lord Krishna in the entire Gita that he delivers with a tremendous force to Arjuna.
- o Verse 7 – Arjuna seeking refuge in Krishna and accepting him as his Guru.
- o Verse 8 – Just after surrendering to Krishna, Arjuna insisting and justifying his grief one last time before Krishna spoke. Shows how grief-stricken Arjuna’s mind was.
- o Verse 10 – Mention of “pra-ha-san-ni-va” that translates to “As if Smiling”. This signifies how Lord Krishna understood everything Arjuna is going through and his care for and understanding of Arjuna’s suffering.

Sankar

 The translation given by Gurudev for this verse is - That firm man to whom, surely these afflict not, O Chief among men, to whom pleasure and pain are the same, is fit for realizing the Immortality of the Self.

To me this verse is inspiring as it provides a clear goal that we can all strive to attain. Calm endurance, both in pleasure and pain, is a condition necessary for the right knowledge of the true Self, is the technique of Self-realization explained in the Upanishads. Lord Krishna explains that a person who is not disturbed by circumstances of pain and pleasure is alone fit for attaining immortality. Listening to Swamiji’s teachings, I am now more aware of how affected I am mentality by both joy and sorrow in my daily life. At work, I have started associating myself with every decision made on a critical project that I am currently working on. Every day is either a source of joy because things worked out or a source of anger because a decision made derailed an outcome. At home, as my children are now older and at the age where they don’t really want to listen to us, I increasingly find that I am swaying with the ups and downs of their lives. Joy when they achieve what they have worked for and sorrow when they choose to do something I don’t approve of. The end result is that I am constantly in a state of mental turmoil.

The explanation for this verse says, no experience gained through the body, the mind, or the intellect is permanent. Each experience is born to live with us for a short period and then die within us. This explanation resonates so much with what I am experiencing and gives me some guidelines to follow. Applying it to my life, this means, at

work, take a step back to realize the overall goal of the project, work hard to provide my contribution towards achieving goals, but at the same time, not get mentally disturbed with the highs and lows that are inevitable. Translating it to the home front will be a little more challenging as there is tighter bond with children. Again, Gurudev's explanation states, so long as we live "in the body, as the body" we are not able to ignore or calmly endure the sorrows of the body. Disassociating and allowing children to lead their own lives and face their own challenges without immersing myself in them is something I will continue to work on.

Sashi Ramaswamy on Verse 15

The verse has Arjuna lamenting to Lord Krishna that it is preferable to live the life of a beggar than to live off the gains from killing venerable teachers in battle. Any pleasures from such gains will be bloodstained too.

The cost-benefit analysis by Arjuna has relevance not just in acts of war, or even any violent action. We encounter such situations in the ordinary course of life, where we risk being paralyzed by the analysis, and consequently, to fail in performing our duties with the appropriate level of detachment.

Reflecting on the verse takes me back to my days as a graduate student, struggling through my doctoral work. Between challenging coursework, unrealistic deadlines, disinterested professors, and trying to make ends meet from the monthly stipend, I distinctly recall one decisive night when I found myself in the same situation as Arjuna – while he had Lord Krishna to open up to, I was staring at the mirror questioning why I should not quit grad school and just head back home and find a job. Would the gains from finishing a PhD ever be worth the price I was paying? A similar cost-benefit analysis.

I found myself digging deep into all the guidance I had received from my parents. I have always been a big believer in Maata – Pithaa – Guru – Daivam. I went back to my mother's comment that I was like Lord Hanuman in that I tend to lose awareness of my potential, and have to be reminded about it. That helped me realize that I had the strength to deal with the pressures of grad school. I went back to my father's advice to just do my work and leave the results in the hands of the Lord. I did go back to one of my Gurus, Mr. George, who taught us mathematics in ninth grade admonishing us if we showed any tendency to quit, especially out of self-pity – a state of mind I was in that night in that bathroom in front of that mirror.

As I scan my life experiences across the decades, it is instructive that the essence of the Gita has been taught to me by my Maata, Pithaa and Guru. Verse 5 in Chapter 2 reminds me that what I was going through that day in the bathroom in Austin, TX was akin to Arjuna's tormented state of mind in the battlefield in Kurukshetra. The path towards resolution of the spiritual conflict is the same.

I remain thankful that with Gurudev's blessings and Swamiji's guidance, I am able to continue my life-long journey of contemplation.

Sayee Srinivasan on Verse 5

I chose verse 11 in Chapter 2 of the Bhagavad Gita to reflect on. In this verse, Krishna was expressing that grieving for a loved one is not wise. The reason that I choose this verse is because I can connect to it on a personal level. I still feel sad for losing a close family member even though it has been many years. My whole life, the mindset that I adapted was that people and experiences will be lifelong. But we all know that anything that starts will have an end. Understanding that the soul has no beginning, it must have no end. I know that the body has a beginning and an end, so it is not the soul. If you associate with the body, which goes through the ups and down of life, you are looking at life upside down. The mind and intellect are finite and undergo changes. Therefore, we are and never will be the body. Those who acknowledge "life" and death" are tossed by sorrow. By grieving the loss of my loved one, I am grieving the loss of a body that was destined to have an end. Instead, I am learning not to grieve the finite body, and cherish the infinite memories that I will never forget. This verse helped me to realize that. By taking control of the present through keeping the Body, Mind and Intellect in line, I am able to serve the Lord who is pervaded through life.

Shalini Shastry

Swami Dheerananda, during his annual December Geeta Jnana Yajna, covered verses 1-18 of Srimad Bhagavad Gītā Chapter 2. One of the highlights of his discourse as he touched on verses 13 and 15, was the focus on the word dhīra. The literal translation that is given is 'firm'. But the word comes from the root dhī, which means intellect, understanding. So, the word dhīra represents firmness or conviction rooted in knowledge. So, a dhīrāḥ is one who wisely applies knowledge and thus is firm in his or her conviction. Such a person will not be swayed by the dualities of heat and cold, pain and pleasure, joy and

sorrow, and honor and dishonor. Knowing that these experiences of the body, mind, and intellect, respectively, are only changing in the presence of the one changeless, the wise one is unperturbed and remains firm.

Arjuna is being advised by Sri Krishna to have the fortitude, titikṣā, to remain firm and clearly laid out in the teaching, starting with verse 11, what changes in and around us, and what does not change. Thus Arjuna, by embracing the nature of dhīrāḥ, can overcome his confusion, and regain his composure and strength to face the battles that lie ahead.

The significance of the word dhīra is not lost upon us. When we contemplate upon Sri Gurudev, Swami Chinmayananda, through his glorious 108 names, two names come to mind in this context: om dhīrāya namaḥ and om dhairya-pradāya namaḥ. Also, every time we invoke our beloved Gītā teacher's name, we are reminded of the value of firmness that derives from true knowledge and conviction. Thank you, Swami Dhīrānanda.

Hari Om!

Sitaram Kowtha

Our world, composed of 195 countries and 7 billion people, is bombarded with diversity. Although it is flooded with a variety of religions, Hinduism remains one of the most prominent. Approximately, 1.2 billion Hindus immerse themselves in the vast knowledge of this religion. Hinduism's most intriguing aspect is its massive collection of literature. Consisting of works ranging from the Vedas to the Bhagavad Gita, its literature guides its devotees towards a virtuous path. The Bhagavad Gita is a 700-verse philosophical poem that is part of an epic: the Mahabharata. It narrates a conversation between the Pandava prince, Arjuna, and Lord Krishna. Arjuna, conflicted about the Kurukshetra War, seeks advice from Lord Krishna who showers him with wisdom. Upon reading the Bhagavad Gita, I gained perspective as well as insight about the world and how to combat life's obstacles.

Today, society's modernization forces individuals to live in a world of constant uncertainty; however, chapter 2: verse 3 enabled me to understand that one must never cower. In verse 3, Lord Krishna exclaims, "O son of Prtha, do not yield to this degrading impotence. It does not become you. Give up such petty weakness of heart and arise, O chastiser of the enemy." He explains how one must stand up for the righteous and fight against the wicked, but to do so one must ignore the coward-like thoughts. Lord Krishna emphasizes that hesitations only

harm one's ability to advocate for justice. Verse 3 highlights the importance of disregarding negativity, distractions, and laziness in our life to achieve our goals. Moreover, it illustrates that when one's mind is clouded with confusion, lamentation occurs; thus, only with an optimistic mind, free of attachment and ignorance, can one succeed.

Sivapriya Marimuthu

As the sustained soul moves through the body from childhood to adulthood to old age, the person is not affected by such change. Likewise, when the soul passes one body to go to another, the person is not stunned by the transformation. Through the perspective of time. The physical body goes through many changes, the spiritual being and soul do not get affected by these transitions. For example, the same soul stays in the body of a 2-year-old, and as the body grows old the soul just gathers knowledge but does not change due to the aging of the physical being.

Srimahi Ghorakav on Verse 13

The Long View

Sri Gurudev mentions that it is 2.11 where Sri Sankara starts his philosophical commentary of Geeta.

Thanks to our annual Geeta event which blesses us with somewhat sharpened (than our usual, every day) eyes, intellect, care, opportunity, and time to peruse the finer details (svadhyaya). Upon availing of such blessed resources and reflecting upon these verses, it may catapult us into this scenery where Arjuna is experiencing a certain feeling for the first time. The magnitude of facing such a situation - though fortunately having Sri Krsna himself as his spiritual friend, philosopher, and guide - facing those elders, teachers, friends, relatives, and family and having to surpass them to accomplish one's own destiny. The way Arjuna formulates and indeed seems to be valid from our perspective as well before we follow Sri Krsna's lead - seems to be an impasse. The only way out, it seemed to Arjuna, was to lay down the arms. The other peaceful means had been exhausted. This is the world viewed by Arjuna, and indeed by many of us, the world of body, mind, intellect through perceiver, feeler, thinker (BMI and PFT). This is the dimension in which we try to solve our problems, and though there is the inadequacy of the approach felt everywhere - we overlook it. Till we reach such an impasse. The maze seems to have no way out. Then Sri Krsna offers a helicopter ride. A totally out

of the BMI box solution. Elevated thinking. A long view. An eternal view. A grand view. It is as if we are stepping out of being absorbed in the movie and getting backstage to view how the movie is made. Since we are not exactly faced with having to kill as ancient warriors found themselves often faced with - how do we apply this in our context? We still have to face our own mortality and that of the near and dear from time to time. This view can aid to conquer that primordial anxiety. In fact, we have the opportunity to test drive this long view much before we may actually face this situation. The horizons of the external vision expand to include a certain inner vision - of the mechanics of the interactions of the BMI and the source, the eternal Self. And this vision is panoramic, cinemascope, 70mm, Imax, 360 degrees - hence vast. It is like jumping from a swimming pool into an ocean. Of course, we need a different skill set to swim here - the swimming pool swimming helps but needs to be augmented. The rest of the Geeta expounds such skills through the Teacher-Student dialogue and thus helping us with skillful means to swim in this Samsara Sagara.

Srinivasan Adhinarayanan

I feel that Sankhya yoga is the essence of Bhagavad Gita - combining Gnana yoga, karma yoga and giving a clear distinction of perishable body and imperishable soul.

Krishna patiently listens to Arjuna's dejected and sad feelings all through first chapter and finally starts speaking to him in second chapter - Sankhya yoga. He asks Arjuna not to become a slave to his weakness and the get ready to fight - because a wise person neither grieves the dead or for those who are going to be dead. Krishna explains that when childhood dies, it's the birth of youth and when youth dies, it's the birth of old age. These changes do not make us unhappy or sad -similarly after the inevitable death, rebirth is a change of body for the soul.

A wise person understands that the senses interact with objects creates experiences of heat and cold, joy and sorrow which are temporary and have to be dealt bravely and also remains inert to these changes.

Upon further questioning from Arjuna about what is real, Krishna explains that the Self/Spirit is eternal and indestructible. But the body through which the Self is expressed is perishable. When the body perishes, the spirit is unperishable and eternal, so there's no death for the Self.

Suma Nadella on Chapter 2

I am choosing verse 13 in Chapter 2 of the Bhagavad Gita to write about. I chose this verse because I felt that I can understand it the best and because it is extremely relevant to our daily lives. I think that what the verse conveys is that like the body going through many changes in just one lifetime, the soul must pass through many bodies in multiple lifetimes.

A truth that I have learned throughout many years of Chinmaya Mission is that the true Atman is unchangeable. It does not experience pain or sorrow, defeat or success, and dejection or happiness. It does not change and is not affected by external influences. Therefore, our body (no matter the form) cannot be the true Atman. It changes constantly: day to day, year to year, therefore lifetime to lifetime. We know that we are not in the same body as we were in our last lifetime, change evident. The soul that passes through the changing bodies, however, is the true self.

The soul and the various bodies we take form in are distinct entities that many of us mix up. We say, "I am the body" but really, you are the soul. If the soul that we truly are stays constant throughout old age and death, then why should we dwell upon the bodies in which we take form in? We are none of the bodies, so we should not be distressed about leaving them.

The firm man (as referenced in the meaning) is not deluded by the idea of death and realizes that death is not the end. Death is the beginning of a new life, through reincarnation. The body, as we established is not the true Self, so why should we become attached to it? Without the attachment to the physical body, death is the mere act of discarding a body that no longer functions the True self in being one with Atman.

Knowing that the body is not my true self can help me to let go of physical wants and desires. If I realize that desires and attachments only make me farther from escaping the path of reincarnation, it will push me to let go of them.

Sumedha Shastry

Verse 13 Chapter 2:

dehino 'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṃ yauvanaṃ jarā
tathā dehāntara-prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati

Meaning: Just as the embodied soul continuously passes from childhood to youth to old age, similarly, at the time of death, the soul passes into another body. The wise are not deluded by this.

Reflection: In this verse, Shri Krishna is informing Arjuna of the soul's lack of attachment towards the worldly body it is a part of. Once the body dies, the soul passes onto a new body. In this way, the body is merely a vesicle for the soul; the soul is not the vesicle for the body. The body is constantly changing from its arrival on earth: from youth to adolescent, to an elderly being. The process in which the soul migrates to a new life form is known as reincarnation.

When entering the world, humans do not possess any material items. Coming into the world only with a soul; similarly, when encountered with death the human dissipates the earth leaving behind material prowess. It may be difficult to come to terms with the attachment to the body, as we live with it for so long. Yet Krishna urges Arjuna to let go of the connection between the soul and the body. The souls of Arjuna's gurus, aunts, and uncles still remain even after their bodies leave this world. Only coming to terms with the inevitable end of everyone and everything are the great souls about to achieve much out of their existence. Losing someone dear to you exemplifies the attachment Krishna shares with Arjuna. The act of dwelling upon the past and actions that cannot be changed is pointless. But the ones who have achieved true contentment without attachment to objects are people who understand the end for everything. Of course, even those people will feel the grief of losing the loved one, but they will not lose themselves over it. These are the wise who are not deluded by the losses of temporary bodies and objects.

Supriya Shastry

I am choosing to reflect on verse 4 in Chapter 2. In this verse, Arjuna presents his confusion because he states that Bhishma and Dronacharya are worthy of his respect and adoration. He addresses them as Madhusudana (killer of Madhu) and Arisudana (destroyer of enemies). Arjuna knew he would have to fight Bhishma and Drona, but he couldn't think of fighting his family and noble teachers. This verse allowed me to have a greater awareness that we (human beings) are preconditioned to put our relationships with family and friends over our moral duty. I chose this verse because it effectively portrays how emotions affect our judgment when we have a clear moral duty to perform. For example, true love between people only comes into perspective with the acceptance of moral duty. Furthermore, Arjuna is only able to face the challenge and win the battle if he strengthens his intellect and empowers himself with

powerful positive values. When his intellect is clear, his emotion will not delude his judgment.

Surabhi Shastry

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय mā-trā-spar-sās-tu kaun-te-ya
 शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः । śi-toṣ-na-su-kha-duḥ-kha-dāḥ ।
 आगमापायिनोऽनित्याः ā-ga-mā-pā-yi-no'-nit-yāḥ
 तस्मिन्निश्चयं भारत ॥ १४ ॥ tās-mi-ni-ti-kṣas-va bhā-ra-ta ॥ 14 ॥

Meaning:

The contacts of senses with objects, O son of Kunti, which cause heat and cold, pleasure and pain, have a beginning and an end; they are impermanent; endure them bravely, O descendant of Bharata.

Chapter 2 of the Bhagavad Gita's focal point is Sankhya Yoga. In verse 14, Lord Shri Krishna focuses on the concept of developing titiksha, or brave endurance against joy and sorrow. In the first part of the verse, Shri Krishna explains that we, as humans, associate everything we contact with our five senses to two polar opposite emotions. These emotions such as heat and cold or pleasure and pain connect to the overall notion that we attach everything we see, smell, taste, hear, and touch with either "joy" or "sorrow." When we succeed at an action such as passing a test, we feel "joy," but when we don't do well on that same test, we feel "sorrow." However, Lord Krishna questions why we don't label the concept of "joy" and "sorrow" differently with a more neutral emotion. We can take the bad things we have in life such as criticism or failure and use it as motivation to do better next time rather than feeling unhappy and disappointed about it. We can take direct insults that are rather harmful than helpful and consider them as irrelevant, so we are not impacted by them. And even if we feel "joy," we should reflect and see how we can continue to improve it. In the second part of the verse, Lord Shri Krishna explains that all sensory contact with materials is temporary (anitya) and therefore every beginning will at some point result in an end. Since everything will come to an end, we should neither grieve nor be bothered by it. In order to obtain this mindset, you need to balance and quieten your mind. It will take a lot of effort, but the outcome will result in many benefits. This verse has taught me that I should take every negative thing in my life and have a more positive yet neutral outlook towards it. In my personal life, I will go through many changes. However, I shouldn't grieve about the changes going on in my life but rather take the lessons I learn from the past and implement them in the present for a better future.

Tanirika Choudhry

Verse 11

*śhrī bhagavān uvācha
aśhochyān-anvaśhochas-tvaṁ prajñā-vādānśh cha
bhāṣhase
gatāsūn-apatāsūnśh-cha nānuśhochanti paṇḍitāḥ*

Verse 13

*dehino 'smin yathā dehe kaumāraṁ yauvanāṁ jarā
tathā dehāntara-prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati*

Verse 14

*mātrā-sparśhās tu kaunteya śhītośhṇa-sukha-duḥkha-
dāḥ
āgamāpāyino 'nityās tans-titikṣhasva bhārata*

Everyday challenges and the lack of control over circumstances in life remind us the much valuable Geeta teachings and help us to find our balance. It is one thing to know and another thing to be able to apply it successfully from time to time. One may not be able to understand why certain things happen. Laced with confusion between raga dvesha versus prarabdha or karma. Like the changing weather, our efforts to be strong and equanimous may be at its best, worse, or in between. Sometimes although one attempts to progress in their own spiritual journey, they are put to test when they are held back in the bondage or other's opinion on them and how only their past mistakes may be the highlight (even if done unintentionally or while being immature even a long time ago). If we are not consumed by ego or hurt and remember that we are answerable primarily to our own conscience, we shall stay away from being drawn to others judgement. They have their own spiritual journey. This is where verse 14, I believe comes handy to open the horizon of truth that all that we perceive and feel are impermanent, and we shall bear with patience like Lord Shri Krishna has enlightened Arjuna to be. Shed the past for we are born every day (verse 13).

Past year, I failed in rescuing a turtle from an oncoming traffic despite my efforts to divert the traffic. It got injured right in front of me. I tried to get help to the best of my knowledge and ability (directing cars away, looking up online, several phone calls, asking passersby etc.) but in vain. Unfortunately, being dark and the animal hospital being quite far away, and the lack of any help made it extremely difficult to be able to do anything to alleviate the pain of the injured turtle. I lacked the knowledge (of rescuing an injured animal) and the courage to touch the injured one (out of fear of hurting it even more). Could not bring it to safety to roadside. I also needed to get back

to my family duties. There was extreme pain and discomfort for many hours after I left it to go back home. Next day early morning, upon visiting the same place, the roads were painted fresh. I grieved a lot at the whole thing and not knowing what happened to it. All I could do was only to grieve when it lay in pain? (Turtles heal v. slow and are in lot of pain when the shell breaks). Not sure about what karmic account it is related to, but Verses 11-14 and up were the thoughts in my mind. The turtle is either healing or reborn.

Vanaja

Reflections on Narayaneeyam – Dasaka 6 -The Cosmos as the Form of the Lord

Kodanate Lakshmanan

Editor's Note: *With the grace and blessings of Swami Dheeranandaji, this is a series of reflections on Narayaneeyam, a devotional composition by Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiripad, containing the essence of Srimad Bhagawatham. This series borrows from the spiritual significance and connotation explained by Sri S.N. Sastry in his commentary on Narayaneeyam.*

Narayaneeyam



Om Ganeshaya Namaha. Om Saraswatyai Namaha. Om Shri Gurubhyo Namaha.

This Dashaka is chanted in the Vasantatilaka metre. Interested readers may reference the website <https://www.prapatti.com/categories/naaraayaniyam.php> where the audio version of the various Dashakas are available online. Please note that there are various popular methods of reciting these beautiful Shlokas and there may be slight variations in the metre used.

Continuing the description of the Lord who was described as unmanifest in the fifth Dasaka, the sixth Dasaka describes how the 14 worlds are encompassed in the Lord's Form and how all living beings are fully incorporated in the Lord. This is a description of the Cosmic Form similar to the description of the Purusha in the famous Purusha Sooktam hymn.

In Hindu philosophical thought, the entire universe is described as composed of the celestial world, earth and nether world in summary but there also exists a description of the universe further sub divided into 14 worlds. In the first three verses of this Dashaka, the poet exquisitely describes the various limbs of the Lord as the location for the various worlds. The next six verses then describe the various living beings and natural formations and the various senses as being parts of the Supreme Lord. The Dashaka concludes with a plea to the Lord to focus the mind of the devotees on the Virat form while they are in meditation.

एवं चतुर्दशजगन्मयतां गतस्य
पातालमीश तव पादतलं वदन्ति।
पादोर्ध्वदेशमपि देव रसातलं ते
गुल्फद्वयं खलु महातलमद्भुतात्मन् ॥ 6.1 ॥

*ēvaṃ caturdaśajaganmayatāṃ gatasya
pātālamīśa tava pādatalaṃ vadanti |
pādōrdhavadēśamapi dēva rasātalaṃ tē
gulphadvayaṃ khalu mahātalamadbhutātman ॥ 6.1 ॥*

In the first verse, the poet describes the Patala as the lower surface of the Lord's feet. The upper surface of the Lord's feet is Rasatala. The two ankles of the Lord represent Mahatala. In this way, three of the worlds representing the lowest three among the nether worlds are described as part of the Lord's feet. The Srimad Bhagwatam has a detailed description of the various worlds and their inhabitants and lifestyles in the fifth canto. Previously, in the third canto, there is a brief description of the various worlds in the discussion between Sage Maitreya and the great scholar Vidura in which the learned sage explains the mysteries of creation to Vidura in response to his enquiries.

Addressing the Lord as the wielder of the discus, the second verse contains a description of the higher worlds upto Svarga, the abode of Indra. The Lord's shanks are Talatala and His knees are Sutala. The Lord's two thighs represent Vitala and Atala. These are the seven worlds below the Earth. The Earth is referred to as Bhooloka (literally world inhabited by human beings) or Shonitala which is represented by the Lord's hip. The Lord's navel represents the sky and His chest represents Svarga, the abode of Indra.

जङ्घे तलातलमथो सुतलं च जानू
किञ्चोरुभागयुगलं वितलातले द्वे।
क्षोणीतलं जघनमम्बरमङ्ग नाभि -
र्वक्षश्च शक्रनिलयस्तव चक्रपाणे ॥ 6.2 ॥

jaṅghē talātamathō sutalaṃ ca jānū
kiñcōrubhāgayugalaṃ vitalātālē dvē।
kṣōṇītaṃ jaghanamambaramaṅga nābhi -
rvakṣaśca śakranilayastava cakrapāṇē ॥ 6.2 ॥

ग्रीवा महस्तव मुखं च जनस्तपस्तु
फालं शिरस्तव समस्तमयस्य सत्यम्।
एवं जगन्मयतनो जगदाश्रितैर -
प्यन्यैर्निबद्धवपुषे भगवन् नमस्ते ॥ 6.3 ॥

grīvā mahastava mukhaṃ ca janastapastu
phālaṃ śirastava samastamayasya satyam।
ēvaṃ jaganmayatanō jagadāśritairā -
pyanyairnibaddhavapuṣē bhagavan namastē ॥ 6.3 ॥

The third verse begins describing the worlds considered to be above the earth and Svarga. The Lord's neck represents Maharloka and His face represents Janaloka. The Lord's forehead represents Tapoloka. The Lord's head represents Satyaloka – the Lord thus encompasses all the worlds in the universe. The third verse also offers salutations to the Lord whose body is thus conceived to not only contain the various worlds but is also considered to be made up of all the things found in the universe. The next six verses will further describe how the things in the universe make up the Lord's body.

Reiterating the point made in the previous Dasaka about how the Lord is the cause of the universe, the Vedas are said to be the Brahamarandhra of the Lord. For human beings, the Brahamarandhra is the aperture in the head through which the soul departs from the body at the time of the death of the body. Addressing the Lord as Kesava,

a name that literally means (one meaning among multiple meanings) one who has beautiful locks of hair, the poet uses a metaphor here when he compares the hair of the Lord to the clouds. Furthermore, the two splendid eyebrows of the Lord Brahma. The eyelashes of the Lord represent night and day and the eyes themselves represent the Sun.

त्वद्ब्रह्मरन्ध्रपदमीश्वर विश्वकन्द
छन्दांसि केशव घनास्तव केशपाशाः।
उल्लासि चिल्लियुगलं द्रुहिणस्य गेहं
पक्ष्माणि रात्रिदिवसौ सविता च नेत्रे ॥ 6.4 ॥

tvadbrahmarandhrapadamīśvara viśvakanda
chandāṃsi kēśava ghanāstava kēśapāśāḥ।
ullāsi cilliyugalaṃ druhiṇasya gēhaṃ
pakṣmāṇi rātridivasau savitā ca nētrē ॥ 6.4 ॥

निःशेषविश्वरचना च कटाक्षमोक्षः
कर्णौ दिशोऽश्वियुगलं तव नासिके द्वे।

लोभत्रपे च भगवन्नधरोत्तरोष्ठौ
तारागणाश्च दशनाः शमनश्च दंष्ट्रा ॥ 6.5 ॥

niśśēṣaviśvaracanā ca kaṭākṣamōkṣaḥ
karṇau diśō'śviyugalaṃ tava nāsikē dvē।
lōbhatrapē ca bhagavannadharōttarōṣṭhau
tārāgaṇāśca daśanāḥ śamanaśca daṃṣṭrā ॥ 6.5 ॥

The fifth verse begins with the description of how the Lord's merciful glance is the cause of the creation of the whole universe. The Lord's ears represent the directions while His nostrils represent the two Aswinidevas. The poet further describes the lower lip of the Lord as greed and the upper lip of the Lord as modesty. His teeth represent the stars while the Lord's molars represent Yama.

माया विलासहसितं श्वसितं समीरो
जिह्वा जलं वचनमीश शकुन्तपङ्क्तिः।
सिद्धादयस्स्वरगणा मुखरन्ध्रमग्नि -
र्देवा भुजाः स्तनयुगं तव धर्मदेवः ॥ 6.6 ॥

māyā vilāśahasitaṃ śvasitaṃ samīrō
jihvā jalaṃ vacanamīśa śakuntapaṅktiḥ।
siddhādayasśvaragaṇā mukharandhramagni -
rdēvā bhujāḥ stanayugaṃ tava dharmadēvaḥ ॥ 6.6 ॥

पृष्ठं त्वधर्म इह देव मनस्सुधांशु -
रव्यक्तमेव हृदयाम्बुजमम्बुजाक्ष।
कुक्षिस्समुद्रनिवहा वसनं तु सन्ध्ये
शोफः प्रजापतिरसौ वृषणौ च मित्रः ॥ 6.7 ॥

*prṣṭhaṃ tvadharmā iha dēva manassudhāṃśu -
ravyaktamēva hṛdayāmbujamambujākṣa |
kuṣṣissamudranivahā vasaṇaṃ tu sandhyē
śēphaḥ prajāpatirasau vṛṣaṇau ca mitraḥ ॥ 6.7 ॥*

The sixth verse describes the Lord's charming smile (often referred to as bewitching in its beauty) as representing His power of illusion, Maya. The Lord's breath represents wind, His tongue represents water. In the seventh chapter of the Gita, the Lord tells Arjuna that he represents sapidity in water. Indeed, it is due to the wetness in the tongue that one can sense any taste. Many of us would have experienced that when the body is sick, the mouth feels dry and one loses the sense of taste. The Lord's speech is compared to the birds and His tunes are represented by the Siddhas. The Lord's mouth is represented by Agni or the fire. It is fascinating to see how this comparison is often seen in the modern day reference to a fiery speech (or a fiery orator).

The poet, in the seventh verse, addresses the Lord as one who has eyes which are as beautiful as the petals of a lotus. His heart-lotus represents the unmanifest. The Lord's back represents Adharma while His mind represents the moon. This association of the Lord's mind to the moon is found in other spiritual references as well and it is an interesting fact that the human mind's ebbs and flows are related to the waxing and waning of the moon. The Lord's abdomen represent the oceans, His garment represents the two twilight (dawn and dusk) periods. His generative organs represent Prajapati and His testicles are represented by Mitra (another name for the Sun God).

श्रोणीस्थलं मृगगणाः पदयोर्नखास्ते
हस्त्युष्ट्रसैन्धवमुखा गमनं तु कालः।
विप्रादिवर्णभवनं वदनाब्जबाहु -
चारूरुयुग्मचरणं करुणाम्बुधे ते ॥ 6.8 ॥

*śrōṇīsthalaṃ mṛgagaṇāḥ padayōrnakhāstē
hastyaṣṭrasaindhavamukhā gamanaṃ tu kālah |
viprādivarṇabhavanaṃ vadanābhābāhu -
cārūruyugmacaraṇaṃ karuṇāmbudhē tē ॥ 6.8 ॥*

Addressing the Lord as an ocean of mercy, the poet, in the eighth verse, continues the description of the Lord's body in terms of various objects of creation. Moving on from the subtle elements (such as quality of thoughts) to the grosser forms of creation, the Lord's waist represents the animal world with the Lord's feet nails representing elephants, camels, horses etc. The Lord's movement represents Time. The four classes of people based on their inherent Vasanas are also said to be born out of the Lord. Traditionally, the Brahmins or the thought leaders are born out of the Lord's face; the Kshatriyas or the warriors are born out of His arms; the Vaishyas or the trading community is born out of His thighs; the people who earn their living through service are born out of His feet. There is a reference to this in the Purusha Sooktam as well. This reference needs to be understood properly as referring to the predominant Vasanas or traits among different sections of society since a casual reading is likely to cause unnecessary confusion. The reference here does not indicate any hierarchy among these four classes of people.

संसारचक्रमयि चक्रधर क्रियास्ते
वीर्यं महासुरगणोऽस्थिकुलानि शैलाः।
नाड्यस्सरित्समुदयस्तरवश्च रोम
जीयादिदं वपुरनिर्वचनीयमीश ॥ 6.9 ॥

*samsāracakramayi cakradhara kriyāstē
vīryaṃ mahāsuraṅgaṇo'sthikulāni śailāḥ |
nāḍyassaritsamudayastaravaśca rōma
jīyādidaṃ vapuranirvacanīyamīśa ॥ 6.9 ॥*

ईदृजगन्मयवपुस्तव कर्मभाजां
कर्मावसानसमये स्मरणीयमाहुः।
तस्यान्तरात्मवपुषे विमलात्मने ते
वातालायाधिप नमोऽस्तु निरुन्धि रोगान् ॥ 6.10 ॥

*īdṛgaganmayavapustava karmabhājāṃ
karmāvasānasamayē smaraṇīyamāhuḥ |
tasyāntarātmavapuṣē vimalātmanē tē
vātālayādhīpa namo'stu nirundhi rōgān ॥ 6.10 ॥*

In the ninth verse, the poet continues the description of the Supreme Form of the Lord and says that the Lord's activity represents the wheel of Samsara. His prowess is represented by the host of great Asuras. The Lord's bones represent the mountains while His blood vessels represent rivers, and His hair represents the trees. The poet ends the ninth verse with an invocation to the Lord

that His Virat form which is truly indescribable should ever shine.

In the tenth verse, the poet exhorts all devotees to meditate on this Virat form of the Lord. Doing this constantly will enable human beings to remain focused on the Virat form at the end of all Vedic Karmas and especially at the time of departure from the physical body. Hailing the Lord of Guruvayoor as the indweller of the Virat form and representing Pure Sattva, the poet ends this Dashaka with an exhortation to the Lord to eradicate the poet's ailments.

To Be Continued

Swami Tapovanam Poetry: Hymn of Ganga - 4(Excerpts)

Sitaram Kowtha

Editor's Note: We are pleased to introduce this series of articles by Sitaramji, excerpts of poetry by Swami Tapovanam.

Source: Sri Ganga Stotram (Hymn to Ganga) by Swami Tapovanam

Commentary by Swami Chinmayananda

Source: Pujya Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda, discourse on this work. Discourse available on ChinmayaClix



Param Pujya Gurudev, Swami Tapovanam, nurtured his disciple, Swami Chinmayananda on the banks of River Ganga at Uttar Kashi and Gangotri. Tapovanji himself 'wandered' across Himalayan peaks, traversing the glaciers, streams, rivers and mountain peaks to include such places of lore as Mount Kailas, Char Dham (Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath), Sri Sarada temple, Amarnath and Vaishnavi Devi temples in Kashmir, and so on. His journey prior to becoming a sannyasi took him to Kolkota, Kashi, Haridwar and Rishikesh. In other words, he traveled to the source of Ganga in Goumukh glacier as well to various locations where the river journey down the mountains to the plains, onwards to Bengal. In this composition, he invokes mother Ganga as a divine mother and the supreme Self, and expresses the manifestation of the divine beauty and divinity indicated in the Upanishads. In this work he exalts Ganga and Gangotri, and it also serves as his teaching of Upanishads to us.

Altogether there are 125 verses in 5 sections of 25 verses each. In the following series, we will excerpt 5-10 verses, with meanings and highlights from Sri Gurudev's commentary, and further elaboration in discourse by Guruji, Swami Tejomayananda (Note: Guruji discourse video is available on Chinmaya Clix).

Section 4 of 25; Verses 16-20

प्राग्जन्मपुण्यनिचयेन तवान्घ्रिपद्मे
श्रद्धा भवेत् स्थिरतराऽथ च भक्तिभावः।
भक्त्या च भावुकनिधे पुरुषार्थसिद्धिः
श्रद्धोज्जिथः स्वयम्पुच्छपशुर्धरण्याम्॥१६॥

prāgjanmapuṇyanicayena tavāṅghripadme
śraddhā bhavet sthīratarā'th ca bhaktibhāvaḥ |
bhaktyā ca bhāvukanidhe puruṣārthasiddhiḥ
śraddhojjīthah svayampucchapaśurdharanyām ||16||

It is only for the good done in our past lives that we discover in the beginning a firm faith in thee, and later a firm devotion in thee.

O Mass of auspiciousness (O Bhavuka nidhe!), through devotion, the "final aim of life (purshartha)" is attained. But, those who have no "faith" are indeed tail-less animals trotting upon earth's surface.

Each of us the product of our entire past. If in any of us there is an inborn sense of faith in anything, it is essentially a continuation from the past. With a little effort this faith grows to be an all-consuming devotion. Devotion is love-supreme for the Lord. Where our love is, all our thoughts rush readily. When thus in devotion, the thoughts cling to the divine Mother, the devotee comes to identify himself with the altar of his devotion. Thus the Supreme State is realized by the seeker, and in this is gained the final aim of life – Purshartham. (The four aims of life are Dharma, Artha (wealth), Kama (desire fulfilment) and moksha (liberation). Moksha is final aim of life.

The fulfilment of one's life begins with faith, followed by devotion. The poet describes faith-less ones as 'tail-less animals' roaming about upon earth, seeking things to eat and chances to breed.

प्रफुल्लनीलोत्पलकान्तिचौरैः
कटाक्षपातैस्तव पावितो यः।
निरन्तशान्तिः समुदेति पुंस-
स्तस्यैव भागीरथि ! भाग्यभाज ॥१७॥

praphullanīlotpalakānticoraiḥ
kaṭākṣapātaistava pāvito yaḥ |
nirantaśāntiḥ samudeti puṁsa-
stasyaiva bhāgīrathi ! bhāgyabhāja ||17||

O Bhageerathi! He who is purified by a mere look from the corner of thine eyes, which have looted the charm of opened blue lotus – indeed, he comes to live in boundless peace.

When sensuous vasanas are eliminated, the mind calms, and such a serene mind of peaceful thoughts is called a 'pure' mind. When even a distant whiff of understanding (a mere glance) of Thy (O Bhageerathi) glory reaches a man's intellect, his erstwhile uncontrollable and insatiable surges of impetuous inclinations for a life of sense-gratifications, will quieten all by themselves.

Through the study of the scriptures, through devotion to the Lord and through reverence to the Mother Divine, when the mind calms, the devotee must experience boundless peace – Niranta-Shanti.

किं वा मुण्डनतः किमस्ति जतय
वैवर्ण्यवस्त्रेण किं
किं वा वस्त्रविसर्जनेन भसिता-
लेपेन जापेन किम्।
भिक्षान्नाशनतश्च किं व्रजशतै-
स्तिथेर्षु चाटाट्यया
विश्वाधीश्वरि ! युष्मदंघ्रियुगले
भक्तिर्न चेन्निश्चला ॥१८॥

kiṁ vā muṇḍanataḥ kimasti jataya
vaivarnyavastreṇa kiṁ
kiṁ vā vastravisarjanena bhasitā-
lepena jāpena kiṁ |
bhikṣānnāśanataśca kiṁ vrajaśatai-
stithersu cātāṭyayā
viśvādhiśvari ! yuṣmadāṅghriyugale
bhaktirna cenniścalā ||18||

What can a shaven head do? Of what use is the matted hair? What benefit can an ochre robe give? What can nudity add? How can smearing of ashes help, and in what way japa? Eats, but begged food- so what? Performs vows – so? Roams about and visits all sacred places – then what?

O Queen of the universe! O Vishva-Adheeshwari! In case there is no steady devotion to thy feet.... All these are surely in vain indeed.

It is easy for anyone to act the part of a great spiritual seeker. If there is no sincere and ardent devotion to the Supreme Mother of the universe, one cannot gain spiritual unfoldment or experience.

Man uses intelligence to make compromises. Many having left everything of the world, reach the banks of Ganga, only to act the part of the seekers in dress and behavior. Only deep-rooted devotion to the Truth will add to their unfoldment.

गुहाछिद्रे वाद्रेः शिखरभुवि वा घोरगहने
श्मशाने वैकाकी वसतु वसतौ वा निजजनैः ।
महाभागे ! भागीरथि ! तवपदांभोजभजन-
प्रमत्तं चित्तं वेत् स तु परमयोगी स तु सुखी ॥१९॥

guhāchidre vādreh śikharabhuvī vā ghoragahane
śmaśāne vaikākī vasatu vasatau vā nijajanaiḥ |
mahābhāge ! bhāgīrathi ! tavapadāmbhojabhajana-
pramattam cittam vet sa tu paramayogī sa tu sukhi ||19||

In a cave, or on the peak of a mountain, or in a thick forest, or in a burial ground, let one remain alone;

Or let him stay with relations in his own house.

He alone is the highest yogi, supremely blissful who sits lost in devoted 'service' to thy feet.

Bhajana – Bhaj Sevana – means service. He, whose heart is immersed in devoted service (bhajana) of thy feet alone is a true yogi. One who recognizes the presence of the Lord everywhere, in all living creatures and things in the universe, and serves HIM through selfless, all-out service of those around, is a real yogi.

Such a person may live among people or live alone.

यद्वा योगी जाह्नवि । कर्मी तव भक्तो
यद्वा ज्ञानी त्वद्रतिरन्तर्यदि नो चेत् ।
अव्यावृत्ता तदह्यपि योगादि महार्हं
मन्ये मोघं मोघशेषं खलु तेषाम् ॥२०॥

yadvā yogī jāhnavi ! karmī tava bhakto
yadvā jñānī tvadratirantaryadi no cet |
avyāvṛttā tarhyapi yogādi mahārham
manye mogham moghaśeṣam khalu teṣām ||20||

O Daughter of Jahnu Rishi – O Jahnavi!

*Let one be a yogi, or a karmi, or a devotee, or even a jnani
– whatever be the path pursued – those who have no
continuous remembrance of Thee, with heartfelt deep
devotion –*

*I consider all their great yoga-practices are all totally
barren of results, mere abortion of efforts.*

It is immaterial which spiritual path a seeker pursues and how much ever practice they put in – all these will be proven to be barren if not coupled with deep devotion to the Lord. The seekers may pursue hatha yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga or jnana yoga ardently; their endeavors need to be coupled with deep devotion to the Supreme. Devotion alone is the secret of driving the entire mind towards the Supreme. A devotee of the Self comes to gain his dedication, surrender, and ultimate identification with the Self – Divine Mother Ganga.

To Be Continued

Shraddhanjali

Samadhi of Swamini Geetananda

ॐ

Swamins, Brahmacharins and Members of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide

Dear All,
Hari Om!

Swamini Geetananda of Chinmaya Mission Nagpur took final refuge at the feet of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda on 10 April 2021 at around 9.30 AM IST, at Bilaspur.

She was an academican with a doctorate in Mathematics, a subject she taught at university before her deep interest in Vedanta and admiration for Pujya Gurudev brought her to the portals of Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Mumbai. After completing the Vedanta course, she was given Brahmachari Deeksha and came to be known as Brahmacharini Samta Chaitanya. She was later initiated into Sannyasa by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda.

She was trained in classical music, and she composed numerous bhajans that were published in a book called 'Chinmaya Swara Malika' by CCMT, which Chinmaya Mission members use to this day.

She will be remembered for her devotion to Pujya Gurudev, love for music and childlike enthusiasm.

Our respectful homage to Swamini Geetananda.

At His Feet,

Swami Swaroopananda



Swamini Geetananda

Shraddhanjali

Samadhi of Swami Gokulananda

ॐ

Swamins, Brahmacharins and Members of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide

Dear All,
Hari Om!

Swami Gokulananda of Chinmaya Mission Kanpur took final refuge at the feet of Pujya Gurudev today, 27 April 2021, at the age of 40.

He attended the 8th Batch of the Vedanta Course in Hindi at Sandeepany HIM, Sidhbari, from 2002 to 2004, where he studied under Swami Madhavananda. In August 2004, he received Brahmachari Deeksha and was given the name Brahmachari Jaidev Chaitanya. He was posted to Kanpur, where he has served since. In February 2020, he received Sannyasa Deeksha.

Swami Gokulananda worked with dedication on the activities and projects of Chinmaya Mission Kanpur. He was the editor-in-charge of the Hindi monthly magazine, "Chinmaya Chandrika".

He will be remembered for his great devotion for Bhagavan Shri Krishna, his smile, and the seva he offered to the Mission.

Our respectful homage to Swami Gokulananda.

At His Feet,

Swami Swaroopananda



Swami Gokulananda

Shraddhanjali

Samadhi of Swami Ramapriyananda



Swamins, Brahmacharins and Members of Chinmaya Mission Worldwide

Dear All,
Hari Om!

Swami Ramapriyananda of Chinmaya Mission Bolangir in Odisha, took final refuge at the feet of Pujya Gurudev today, 14 May 2021, at the age of 48. He had tested positive for Covid-19 a few days ago, after which he was hospitalised and he succumbed to the virus.

He attended the 12th Batch of the Vedanta Course at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Mumbai, in the years 2002-2004, where he studied under the guidance of Swami Ishwarananda. After the Course, he received Brahmachari Deeksha and was given the name Brahmachari Janardan Chaitanya. He was posted to Bhubaneswar for two years, after which he was posted to Bolangir, where he has served since. He received Sannyasa Deeksha on Mahashivaratri day of 2019.

Swami Ramapriyananda worked with great dedication and dynamism for the activities and programmes of Chinmaya Mission Bolangir.

He will be remembered for his positive attitude, ever-smiling nature and the seva he offered to the Mission.

Our respectful homage to Swami Ramapriyananda.

At His Feet,

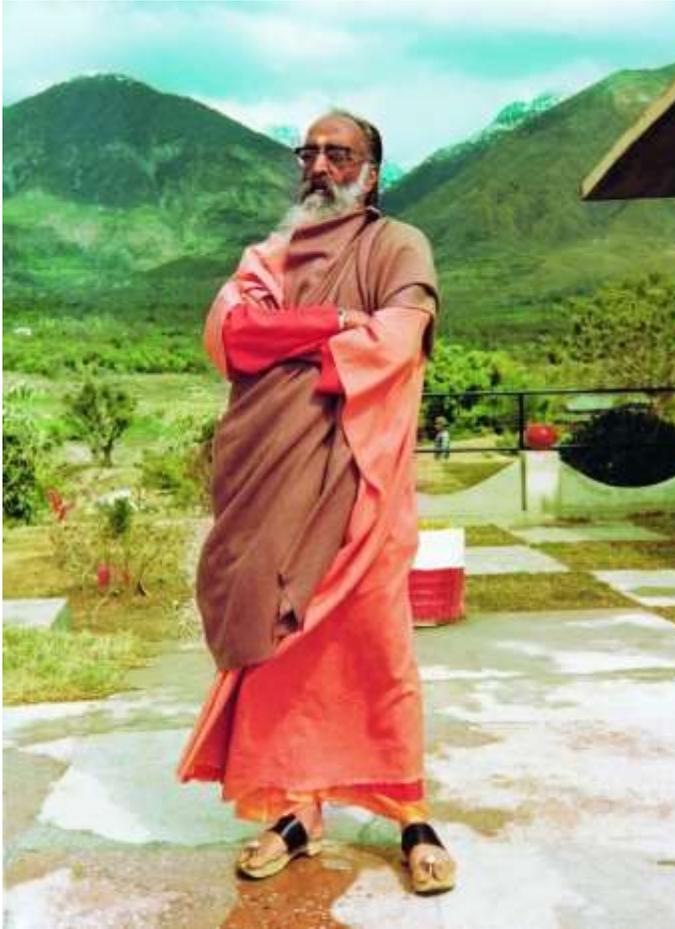
Swami Swaroopananda



Swami Ramapriyananda

Gurudev Uvacha

Inspiring Quotes from Pujya Gurudev Chinmayananda



[Editor's Note: Continuing the series of inspiring quotes from Gurudev sourced from the weekly Chinmayam announcements].

At all times, send our thoughts of love to all; kindness to all; blessings to all. Soon you will find all including your enemies, showering you with love.

Live morality before you talk about it. Practice meditation before you preach it. Taste goodness before you recommend it. Gain bliss before you offer it to others.

In the darkness of ignorance, we attach ourselves to the unreal and the fleeting. In the light of knowledge, we identify ourselves with the real and the permanent.

Even Swami Chinmayananda is 44 years old! Of these, 36 years I had been doing my puja of people as best as I know, day and night, with no Sunday off or casual leave or summer vacations! Life is to be measured not by years but by the quantum of seva done, with honest and sincere devotion. That way if you consider a 36 years' work to be equivalent to 70 years of life, I do not protest, I just smile!

Intuitive illumination occurs the very instant when ignorance is dispelled.

As the thoughts, so the actions. Immoral thoughts cannot lead to moral actions. Actively non-cooperate with the lower instincts by immediately remembering the Lord.

Thoughts in an individual expressed in the outer world of objects become his actions.

God is not an object to be found outside. Stop searching! Discover Him within.

Friends are made by many acts and friends are lost often by a single thoughtless act. You must grow up to deserve a friend. To have friends, you must have friendliness in you - be selfless and loving, with deep concern for others.