



Newsletter - January 2009

Chinmaya Mission Orlando - www.chinmayaorlando.org

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

- Swami Chinmayananda

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Blessed Self, Hari Om

With God's grace we enter the New Year 2009. What is new is every present moment. Rest is all past or future. Let us resolve to be in the present moment, focused with a total attitude of surrender to the all mighty Lord.

Let us resolve to make our minds purer each moment - full of joy, peace and love.

Let us bask in the warmth of the shining grace of Lord Shiva, offering each action as a flower at His feet.

"Sarve Bhavanthu Sukhinah

Sarve Santhu Niraamayaah

Sarve Bhadrani Pashyantu

Maa Kaschith Dukha Bhagbhaveth"

In "His" Service

Love,
Dr. Shailaja Nadkarni
President,
Chinmaya Mission Orlando

Mahashivaratri 2009

Mahashivaratri is one of the most auspicious days; Shiva means auspiciousness. The night of Shivaratri symbolizes the darkness of ignorance. Shiva is the Ocean of Knowledge who leads humankind to knowledge. The devotee, who utters the names of Lord Shiva during Shivaratri, with perfect devotion and concentration, is freed from all sins. He is liberated from the wheel of births and deaths. May Lord Shiva bless us all on the occasion of Mahashivaratri and lead us to bliss.



This year Mahashivaratri will be observed on a bigger scale and on two days - Sunday, February 22nd and Monday, February 23rd at Kaivalya, Chinmaya Mission Orlando.

Sunday is dedicated to our Balavihar children. We want all children to participate in the preparation and observance of Mahashivaratri. The auspiciousness and purity which comes to our hearts by just remembering the Lord is beyond intellectual imagination.

More details about the Mahashivaratri 2009 schedule will be made available soon.

Upcoming Events

Event	Date/Time	Venue
Mahashivaratri Observance	Sunday Feb 22nd, Monday 23rd 2009	Chinmaya Mission Orlando
Holi Celebration	Sunday March 15th 2009 (After classes)	Chinmaya Mission Orlando
Gita Chanting Competition - Chapter 13	Sunday, April 12th 2009	Chinmaya Mission Orlando
Tabla and Vocal classes by Pt. NandKishor Muley (New beginners batch). Register	Starting Feb 1st 2009 every Sunday between 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm	Chinmaya Mission Orlando

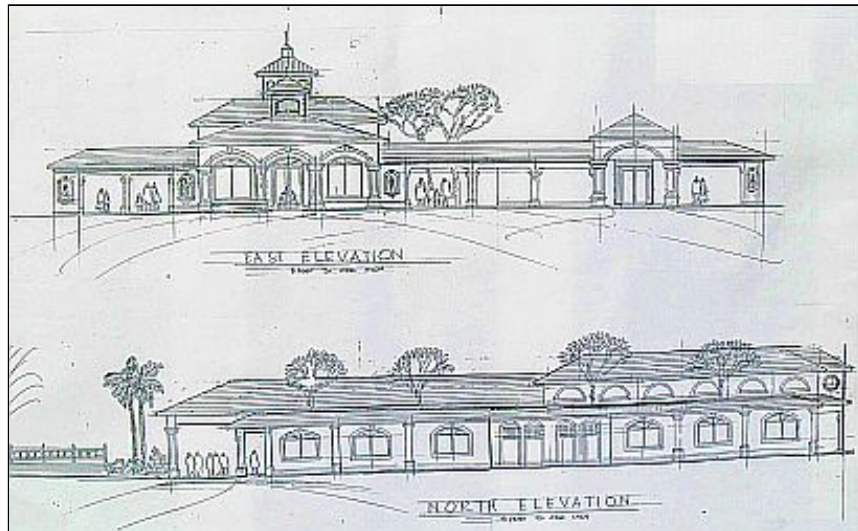
Update on new classroom expansion project

We have an update on the Balavihar classroom expansion project here at Chinmaya Mission Orlando. As economy has taken a plunge we have downsized the plans without compromising the actual project.

First phase of dinning hall is unchanged and will start in the first week of March 2009. We are informed by our engineers and architects who are working closely with the county that the hold up has been at the St Johns Water Management Department.

As for the classrooms, we are planning 12 new classrooms next to Kaivalya Hall, with our addition of larger library. Also expansion of Kaivalya Hall is planned to accomodate more people.

Blueprint of the new plan (Click on the image to enlarge)



Annual Balavihar Diwali 2008 Event - Vibhu Agrawal

Every year, the students and teachers of Chinmaya Mission Orlando Balavihar put together a program to celebrate Diwali. With a lot of apprehension about the weather, this year, a decision was made to hold the program outdoors on our newly constructed deck. Early morning clouds threatened to dampen our spirits but Surya devata smiled and we were blessed with excellent weather all day!

The hard work of all the students, teachers and parents was evident in all the performances. From the opening Ganesh



Pooja to the dha-dhin-dhin-dha and sa-re-ga-ma of Pandit Muley's students, the audience was treated to several wonderful performances.

The deck was decorated beautifully to give everyone a feel of Diwali. The first glimpse of the decorated stage set the right mood for the evening. It was easy to tell that the volunteers had worked tirelessly for many hours, preparing to make the evening a success. The program was coordinated beautifully and in true Chinmaya Mission style, the program started on time and stayed on schedule. Each performance was stunning and the beaming smiles of the performances blended with the vibrant colors of the performers' costumes, producing an evening that was enjoyed by all.

The evening was capped by a delicious meal prepared and served by the volunteers of Chinmaya Mission. Dozens of volunteers, who helped prepare the food, clearly outdid themselves and without exception, every one raved about the taste! The tiki torches, photographs from past

and present events projected in our make-shift "open-air theatre", and the aroma of delicious food set the perfect ambience for a great evening under the stars.

If you missed the event or if you just want to re-live the moments of this year's Diwali celebration, you are invited to **view the pictures on our website.**

Enchanting Tales

The parable of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa - Opressing Stench of Worldliness



Once a fisher woman was a guest in the house of a gardener who raised flowers. She came there with her empty basket, after selling fish in the market and was asked to sleep in a room where flowers were kept. Because of the fragrance of the flowers, she could not get to sleep for a long time as she was used to the smell of fish. She was restless and began to fidget about. Her hostess saw her condition and said, "Why are you tossing from side to side so restlessly?" The fisher woman said, "Perhaps the smell of the flowers has been disturbing my sleep. I will take my fish basket. It might help me to get some sleep." Saying so she fetched her fish basket, sprinkled some water over it and set it near her face so as to get the smell. Within minutes she fell asleep.

Moral: We might find the story amusing but this is our sad plight too. Our subconscious is filled with vasanas(tendencies) which are of two kinds shubha vasana (good tendencies)and ashubha vasana(impure tendencies). The good ones help us to improve ourselves and grow spiritually while the impure ones lead to our downfall. We should constantly strive to remove the impurities in us and in this endeavor Guru is the beacon light. Guru guides us according to the instructions of the scriptures, inculcating spirit of selfless service, devotion and knowledge in us. The fisher woman had an opportunity to get a better environment but she wanted to experience only the stench of fish. Sad is the plight of those, who like the fisherwoman, though get the fragrance of Guru's guidance, yet are stuck with the smell of their own impurities and prefer to remain in the quicksand of misery.

Why do we do what we do ?

Why do we light a lamp before the altar of a deity?

In every Hindu home a lamp or 'diya' is lit daily before a Hindu deity or any symbol associated with Hinduism. Many Hindus also perform an 'aarati' with the traditional oil lamp. The lamp is lit in the morning or evening or both morning and evening. In some houses the lamp is maintained continuously and is known Akhand Deep or Akhanda Diya.

The light in the lamp symbolizes knowledge. It removes darkness, which symbolizes ignorance. Thus light symbolizes



Brahman.

The wick in the traditional oil lamp symbolizes ego and the oil or ghee used symbolizes our negative tendencies. When we are lit by self knowledge, the negative tendencies (oil) melt away and finally the ego (wick) perishes. When the ego perishes, we realize that we are all part of Brahman and that life is continuity.

The lighting of 'diya' or lamp at home is considered highly auspicious as it brings prosperity and good health. The daily evening lamp lit at home also gives us an opportunity to ponder over one's omissions and commissions in a day.

Divine Chants

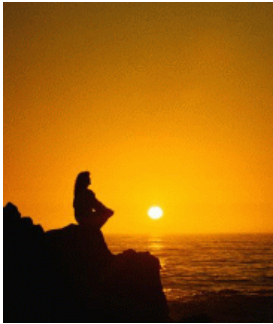
Peace Invocation prayer

Sarve Bhavanthu Sukhinah

Sarve Santhu Niraamayaah

Sarve Bhadrani Pashyantu

Maa Kaschith Dukha Bhagbhaveth



Sanskrit to English Translation

Sarve-all; bhavanthu-may be; sukhinah-happy; niraamayah-free from disease; badrani-prosperity; pashyantu- may enjoy; ma-not; kaschit- anybody; dukhabhag-one who suffers; bhaveth-may be

Translation: May all be happy. May all enjoy health and freedom from disease. May all enjoy prosperity. May none suffer.

Brief explanation

These are prayers for the prosperity and welfare of humanity. To achieve anything in life, one has to make an effort and await the results. In addition, many unknown factors and laws influence the outcome of that effort. By praying to the Lord, one acknowledges these laws as the natural order inseparable from the Lord, and one acknowledges the Lord as the giver of all results of actions.

Delicious Living - Crunchy cup cakes

Recipe for Crunchy cup cakes by Ms. Shalini Gentle

Makes about 50 small cupcakes.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups oats
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- ½ cup crushed almonds
- ½ cup crushed walnuts
- ½ cup grated sweet coconut
- 2 sticks of butter or margarine
- ½ cup maple syrup
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ¾ teaspoon soda bicarbonate
- ¾ cup brown sugar

Directions:



Using a hand blender, mix the butter and brown sugar. Using a wooden spoon, mix in the rest of the dry ingredients. Slowly stir in the maple syrup. Pour the mixture into non-stick muffin cups and bake on 300° F for 30 minutes or until brown.

Poem in Hindi by Ms. Geeta Pandit

देख सूर्य मानु गुरु मुख मडल की आभा
चमक दमक दामिनि मस्तिष्क की शाखा
तृप्त हुई आंखों की आकांक्षा
भूल गये जीवन के दुख दुभाषा

जैसे गंगा की धारा बहा ले गयी
घरती की गंदगी सारी
तूम्हारी ज्ञान की पूंजी ने
घो दी हमारे मन की मैल सारी

निर्मम उज्वल तुम्हारी प्रकृति की
छत्र छाया में पाया हमारे विचलित
मन ने माँ की गोद सा आश्रय

उस गुरु चरणों को समर्पित
हमारे जीवन की पुष्पाजलि

Brain Teasers



1) What can you serve, but never eat?

2) A boy fell off a 100 foot ladder. But he did not get hurt. Why not?

3) What do you call a man who doesn't have all his fingers on one hand?

4) You are participating in a race. You overtake the second person. What position do you finish?

5) What word becomes a palindrome when viewed upside down and backwards?

6) What word, when written in capital letters, is the same forwards, backwards and upside down?

Scroll down for answers

Word Search Puzzle on Swami Chinmayananda

Find the following hidden words in the puzzle

1) Swami 2) Chinmayananda 3) Tejomayananda 4) Balakrishna 5) Menon 6) Parukutti 7) Ernakulam 8) Kerala 9) Balan 10) Malyalam 11) Shankara 12) Picture 13) Sivananda 14) Vivekananda 15) Saraswati

Brain Teaser Answers

Answers for the brain teasers

1) A tennis ball

2) He fell off the bottom step

3) Normal - You have fingers on both hands!

4) Second. You arrive second if you overtake second person

5) SWIMS

6) NOON

v a l a r e k r y a a i
a d n a n a y a m o j e t
r n a h l n n a v a b m t
s a r a s w a t i n a a u
a n a d w i b n r l l m k
a a k e a b r k u n a a u
t y n u m n b k v l n a r
r a a s i v a n a n d a a
a m h s n n h y n l k s p
r n s a r c l o y p a a b
v i v e k a n a n d a b a
o h n v m e r u t c i p r
a c s w m s h l a t a h s

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