

Chinmaya Vani

Chinmaya Mission Orlando
Newsletter



Newsletter - November 2009

Chinmaya Mission Orlando - www.chinmayaorlando.org

"A bud abandons itself to become a flower; a flower gives up its soft petals and enhancing fragrance to reach the higher status of a fruit. Every abandonment of action should similarly lift us up into a nobler status in evolution. Our duties are never to be abandoned, but our clinging attachments to actions and their fruits must be relinquished."

- Swami Chinmayananda

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Blessed Self, Hari Om

In yogic movement- the spirit of co-operation is very important. The entire world is based on interdependence. Co-operation with parents, family, friends and co-workers are the day to day work life formula to be successful and peaceful.

Essence of virtue lies in doing good to others – as said in Mahabharata. The qualities required for co-operation are understanding, which is at its best when one is detached and tolerance to endure others weakness is important. Spirit of co-operation allows one to unfold one's personality to its highest bloom towards serving God in all, with harmony and love.

May Lord Gurudev bless us with the spirit of co-operation.

In "His" Service

Love,
Dr. Shailaja Nadkarni
President,

Dussehra

[Excerpts from "Art of God Symbolism" by Swami Chinmayananda]

In the nine days preceding Dussehra, we have in the first three days, invocation of Shri Kali (Durga), the second set of three days we invoke Sri Lakshmi, and then the concluding three days we worship Goddess Saraswati. Kali is the mighty power of destruction invoked so that the seeker can destroy all his negative tendencies in himself. Thereafter, Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth, is invoked to cultivate the nobler emotions and sentiments in him – the inner wealth of his heart. One who has thus accomplished the cleansing of one's inner personality alone can with sure success worship Shri Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning.



The study of the Upanishads is futile and cannot bring about any spiritual awakening in the one who has not made his heart pure. One must weed out the false values of desire, lust and passion and must cultivate love, charity, self-control and other virtues. When one has thus invoked Kali and has adored Lakshmi, one is fit to enter the Temple of Shri Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning.

When such a mature student, properly prepared, comes to listen to the Songs of Mother Saraswati, he not only understands Her (scripture) Divine Music, but also he comes to comprehend and experience that the Self in him is the Self everywhere. To experience this Eternal Oneness is the acme of peace and perfection- the State of Godhood, the Realm of Pure Consciousness. Reaching this State Divine, the Upanishads declare that "there is no return", there is no chance to fall back into the earlier misconceptions arising from the body-mind-intellect identifications.

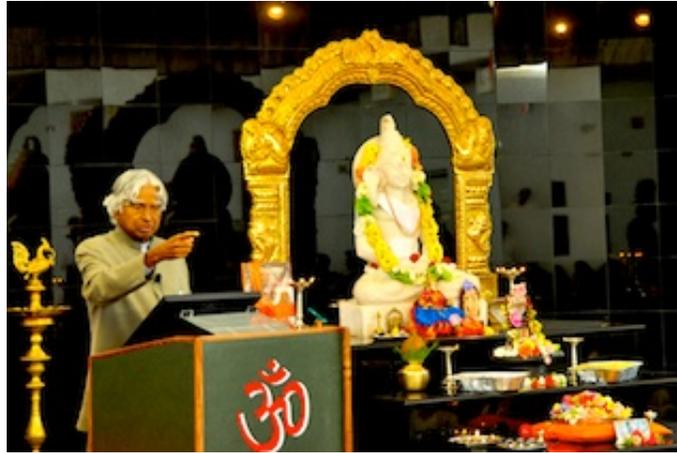
The Kind Lady of Wisdom is Mother Sruti, Shri Saraswati. She leads us to the end of our slavery to the devil in us, the passions and lusts. This is symbolized in the burning of the effigy of the lower-nature, on the tenth day of Durga Puja, called Dussehra. This day is also called the Day-Of-Enlightenment-Vidyarambha.

Upcoming Events

Event	Date/Time	Venue
Chanting, Meditation and Teachings on Kundalini Maha Yoga by Shri Anandi Ma	November 13th, 14th 2009 at 6:30pm-9:00pm	Chinmaya Mission Orlando
Thanksgiving day - Balavihar Closed	November 29th 2009	Chinmaya Mission Orlando
Annual Diwali Celebrations	December 2009	Chinmaya Mission Orlando

His Excellency Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, 11th President of India visits Chinmaya Mission Orlando

A Memorable interaction with His Excellency, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam - Vibhu Agrawal October 25th 2009



On an unusually warm October morning, the excitement in the air was evident as the students, teachers and other volunteers scurried about preparing for the arrival of India's 11th president, His Excellency, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam at Chinmaya Mission Orlando.

As the meditation hall began to fill up, the organizers were certain that the word of Dr. Kalam's visit had spread beyond the immediate Chinmaya Mission members. Fortunately, arrangements had been made for a closed circuit audio and video feed of the event in another hall next door. The meditation hall was packed with over 250 students and the adjoining hall was just as full with adults vying for the best spot. The kids were barely able to contain themselves, and if it wasn't for the peaceful ambience of the meditation hall, graced by Lord Shiva's calming presence, it would have been difficult to keep the audience settled.

Dr. Kalam arrived accompanied by Chinmaya Mission's senior Acharya, Swami Shantananda. The honored guests were welcomed in the traditional manner. Young children greeted them with Aarti and a beautiful garland of Indian tri-color flowers. The soothing sounds of Vande Mataram were soon drowned by a thunderous applause welcoming Dr. Kalam and Swami ji.

The program started with an invocation by Chinmaya Mission's Acharya, Dr. Shailaja Nadkarni. The prayer "Gurur Brahma, Gurur Vishnu..." was an appropriate start to the event, as it reminded everyone of the importance of teachers. The invocation was followed by the Chinmaya Mission Pledge. The pledge acts as a guide to all Chinmaya Mission members as it conveys the essence of the scriptures and in simple words tells us the goal of life and how to live it. Following the pledge, a small group of children, some as young as 3 years old, chanted the first five verses of the Chapter 15 of the Bhagavad Geeta. The flawless pronunciation of complex Sanskrit words from kids born and brought up in the US, left no doubt that the vision of Swami Chinmayananda is being fulfilled in Chinmaya Mission centers all over the world.

Swami Shantananda introduced Dr. Abdul Kalam to the audience and reminded everyone of the achievements of the President of a billion people, the “Missile Man of India”. The introduction made it evident that behind Dr Kalam’s small physical stature were his huge accomplishments as a teacher, scientist, author, philosopher and leader.

It was finally time for the main event. It was no easy task to give a speech to an audience of kids ranging from innocent 3 year olds, to eager teenagers, ready to embark on a journey towards adulthood. The topic of Dr. Kalam’s speech was – “Righteousness in the heart leads to beauty in the character.” The educator in Dr. Kalam, read the audience wonderfully, and instead of giving a speech, he gave the children an interactive lesson which they will remember for a long time. Dr. Kalam made the kids repeat the Knowledge equation, “Knowledge = Creativity + Righteousness + Courage.” He explained how a combination of these characteristics can generate enlightened citizens. He concluded with an inspirational challenge: to have a mission in life and to work for that mission by navigating the time towards the mission.

Although the time was running short, Dr. Kalam answered many questions from the children ranging from simple ones like “What was your favorite subject in school” to complex ones like “What can kids of Indian Heritage living in the US do for India.” Dr. Kalam’s visit concluded with a tree planting ceremony where he and Swami Shantananda assisted in planting a Mango tree in the compound. We hope that the wisdom of Dr. Kalam’s words and his blessings will take firm root in the hearts and minds of all the students of Chinmaya Mission Orlando.

Chinmaya Mission Orlando - Construction Update, October 2009

After much anticipation, and a fair amount of delay in getting the necessary permits from the county and the Water Management District, the work on phase I of our expansion project is well underway. The first phase includes construction of a kitchen and dining pavilion as well as some small changes to the Tapovan building. Both the new structures are already taking shape and even in its unfinished state, there seems to be a calming presence in the new hall! Based on current estimates, the builder expects to complete construction of phase I by late November, 2009. Meanwhile, planning for phase II has begun. This phase will include extension of the Kaivalya hall and construction of class rooms. Rough drawings for this phase are ready and final drawings are being prepared for submission to the authorities for the necessary approvals.

Here are some of financial details of the Kitchen and Dining hall construction as well as the Classrooms, Library and Kaivalya Hall extension projects.

<u>Project</u>	<u>Funds Required</u>	<u>Funds Pledged</u>	<u>Funds Collected</u>
Kitchen and Dining Hall	\$380,000	\$350,000	\$350,000
Class Rooms	\$2.2 million	\$800,000	\$100,000

We sincerely thank the devotees who have started contributing towards their pledges for the building fund. As a reminder, we can now process your donation as a recurring charge to your credit card. If you would like to take advantage of this method, please contact Vibhu Agrawal at 407-963-6301. With your support, Chinmaya Mission will continue to be the source of spiritual advancement based on the teachings of Vedanta for our children and others in the community.

Shwetaketu within us all by Avni Solanki and Nikita Kathuria

6:15 lectures for 6 days straight. Let’s just say it’s no stroll in the park for a college student. Regardless of the amount of sleep I lost those few days, if asked to do it again, I would in a heartbeat. Studying Chandogya Upanishad allowed my eyes to open to the reality of life through vivid examples and descriptions like never presented before. Shwetaketu, the student or disciple in the Upanishad, has striking resemblance to a college student or any young professional today. Characteristics like: laziness, “know it all” attitude, and lack of ample respect for their parents.



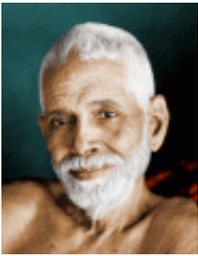
After attending gurukul for 2 years and upon returning home, Shwetaketu spoke to his father as if he had all the knowledge in the world, insinuating he knew much more than his father. Little did he know, how little he knew. In the same way, college students, like myself, we return home from university and we act the same way to the people around us, but truthfully, we know nothing, we are ignorant to the reality of our true nature. We may have copious book knowledge, but we forget that we have very little knowledge of the truth. Thus, we have striking resemblance to Shwetaketu in this way. In essence, we are Shwetaketu and we have the capacity to reach what he attained—full understanding of the knowledge his father bestowed upon him.

The way Prabodhji beautifully explained every story and teaching portrayed in the 3rd Canto was extraordinary. From stories about Jaya and Vijaya, to examples indicating how all effects are ultimately derived from that one cause, Prabodhji provided such simple and easily understandable points for everyone to take home and reflect upon. He reminded us again and again to seek that Truth and to remember that this ignorance is the cause of all suffering. He concluded by reminding us to see God first in one form, then in many forms, then in all forms, and finally, as formless. This should be done by listening to scriptures and their teachings, reflecting on this knowledge, and then owning what we know.

We are so thankful to Prabodhji for gracing us with his presence and guiding us tirelessly to understand our true nature.

Enchanting Tales - Lord is One and All Pervading

Once several thieves entered the ashram of Ramana Maharshi during night. Many people used to visit the Maharshi daily and so the thieves were expecting the ashram to be possessing a lot of money. Unfortunately, they could not find anything. The Maharshi was in meditation at this hour and they asked him for money. Not getting any answer from him, they struck



him with a stick. Some disciples rushed to the spot on hearing the commotion. In the meantime, the thieves ran away. Seeing their beloved Maharshi injured, the disciples swore to bring the thieves to task and grabbing sticks they were ready to get them. `Sri Ramana Maharshi pacified them saying "Do not go after them. Stop and think. If your teeth bite your tongue, do you knock them off? The disciples learnt their lesson. Both the teeth and tongue are part of one existence...You.

Anger should not be controlled instead it should be managed. There are three places for anger to express : through body mind and speech. The root cause of anger is desire. Anger destroys the equanimity and sensitivity of mind and also clouds the intellect leading to fall in spiritual saadhana.

Window to the Infinite by Sivaprasad Tallapragada

Some years ago, during a chat, my daughter Gayatri asked me from USA (at that time I was working in India) as to how she should start a narration of the story of Hanuman to a class of tiny tots of the Balavihar at Chinmaya Mission Orlando. The children belonged to the age group between 4 and 6 years she said. I suggested to her that in order to ensure ready participation, she should start the narration with a poser to the class like "who is the strongest man they can name?". Being ignorant myself of the quality of children in the Balavihar, I thought that the replies to this question would be something like 'superman', 'spiderman', 'He Man' and so on. My daughter, I suggested, should then tell the children that there is a 'Man' more powerful than all the earlier named and that is 'Hanuman'. My daughter somehow agreed to my naive suggestion and started the said class with the suggested question. When she had put the question to the class, then to her utter surprise and delight the class replied in chorus 'HANUMAN!' When she told this to me during my next chat I was very glad.

Some decades ago, I had the great privilege of listening to Gurudev 'live' on two occasions. I was amazed at his learning, scholarship and his energy levels. One of the batons passed on by 'Him' is being faithfully carried on by the wise elders in Orlando-I thought.

On another occasion my daughter narrated another amusing anecdote about a child in her class who one day came up to her and told thus. 'Ms. Gayatri, I am now able to understand Sanskrit'. My daughter then enquires as to what is the latest that she has understood. The child replies that 'Bhagawan uvacha' means 'Bhagawan is watching us'. Meanings apart, it was an interesting view point of a child who is initiated in to right thinking!

I started becoming inquisitive! I started attending the Balavihar classes of my daughter through distant learning mode! in

my late 50's!!



I was getting eager to meet the great persons behind the mission work at Orlando and also my tiny little co-alumni!!

In 2008, a chance came my way to visit USA on business. While on this trip, I took a short leave from my work and rushed to Orlando to meet my co-students at the Orlando mission. Balavihar I realized is being run in conformity with Gurudev's view that 'children are not vessels to be filled but lamps to be lit'. This visit was a great eye opener for me. Meeting with a person like Shailaji taught me humility.

A visit to the mission boosted my energy levels. All the persons that I met in the mission are 'achievers', 'successful in their respective fields of activity' and 'normal'. The ambience in the mission reminded me of the words of Stendhal "the normal most regularly approaches the sublime". Living such soulful life in the midst of modern pressures requires one to walk in the footsteps of a 'Master'. Blessed are all those at the mission who get this chance in abundance.

My first visit to the mission was brief. I had to get back to business in Chile. However the urge to get back to the mission became strong.

How lucky I am!

This time I am on a longer visit to Orlando along with my wife! We have already attended a few study group sessions at the mission. These gatherings of well accomplished and well educated men and women sitting together trying to understand the ultimate truth are greatly inspirational. Each may be looking through his or her window of experience but the view they seem to be getting is the same-the INFINITE.

Our latest visit to the mission was on the saptami day of Navaratri. After the day's puja, while taking the prasadam from Shailamma, I murmured to myself "Jnana Vairagya siddhyardham Bhiksham dehicha Paarvati"- an involuntary act!

Why do we do what we do ?

Why do we regard trees and plants as sacred?



Lord.

The Lord, the life in us, pervades all living beings, be they plants or animals. Hence, they are all regarded as sacred. Human life on earth depends on plants and trees. They give us the vital factors that make life possible on earth: food, oxygen, clothing, shelter, medicines etc.

Hence, we are taught to regard trees and plants as sacred. Our scriptures tell us to plant ten trees if, for any reason, we have to cut one. We are advised to use parts of trees and plants only as much as is needed for food, fuel, shelter etc. We are also urged to apologize to a plant or tree before cutting it to avoid incurring a specific sin named soona. Certain trees and plants like tulasi, peepal etc., which have tremendous beneficial qualities, are worshipped till today. It is believed that divine beings manifest as trees and plants, and many people worship them to fulfill their desires or to please the

Divine Chants

**Samudra Vasane Devi !
Parvatstanamandale !
Vishnupatnim Namastubhyam.
Padsparsa Kshmaswame.**



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

Samudra Vasane Devi is one of the daily Hindu prayers addressed to the Bhumi Devi. Hindus consider Earth (Bhumi Devi or Bhudevi) as a Goddess. Bhumi Devi or Bhudevi is the consort of Lord Varaha, one of the 10 Avatars of Lord Maha Vishnu. Hence Hindus consider Bhumi Devi (Earth) as our mother and we need to ask her to pardon before setting our foot on her.

Delicious Living - Gatte ki Sabji by Shikha Sharma



Gatte ki sabji is a famous Rajasthani dish. Its main ingredient is besan (chana dal flour). Chana dal is a low GI dal and very good for people with diabetes. Gatte ki sabji is a delicious dish and very easy to make.

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

Ingredients

- 1) Besan, 200g
- 2) Yogurt, 1 cup
- 3) Fresh coriander leaves (Cilantro), chopped, 1 Tbsp
- 4) Canola oil or olive oil, 2 tsps
- 5) Spices
- 5) Red chilli powder, 1.5 tsp
- 6) Turmeric Powder, Haldi powder, 1/2 tsp
- 7) Garam masala, 1 tsp
- 8) Coriander powder, dhania powder, 1 tsp
- 9) Cumin seeds, 1/2 tsp
- 10) Hing, Asafetida, a small grain
- 11) Salt to taste

Preparation

- Mix besan, salt, 1/2 tsp chilli powder, 1/2 tsp haldi, 1/2 tsp coriander powder, 1/2 tsp garam masala and 1 tsp oil. Add lukewarm water to make a dough.
- Make small pieces of dough and roll each piece to about 1 cm diameter in width and 5 inches long.
- Put the rolls in water in a skillet and boil them for 5-7 minutes over medium heat. When the rolls develop small points on their surfaces (the surface becomes rough), remove from heat.
- Take out the rolls and keep the water aside.
- Cut the rolls into small pieces of size about 1 cm long. These pieces are known as gattas.
- Next, add 1 tsp chilli powder, 1/2 tsp haldi, 1/2 tsp coriander powder and 1/2 tsp garam masala in the yogurt and mix well.
- Take 3-4 gattas and crush them with your fingers into fine pieces.
- Put 1 tsp oil in a skillet and heat it on medium heat. Add cumin seeds and hing. When the seeds splutter, then add the yogurt-spice mixture and stir well. Cook for 5-7 minutes.
- Add the water of step 4 and mix well. When the mixture is boiling, add the gattas from step 5 and the crushed gattas from step 7, mix and remove from heat. Cover the skillet.
- After 5 minutes garnish with coriander leaves.

The addition of crushed gattas will thicken the gravy. You can adjust the amount of water to get a desired thickness. The traditional recipe uses ghee. Using oil instead of ghee does not affect the taste or flavor, but reduces unhealthy saturated fats.

Word Search Puzzle

BURNING

DANDIA

DURGA

DUSSHERA

GARBA

HANUMAN

NAVARATRI

RAMA

RAMAYAN

RAVAN

VIJAYADASHAMI

N A V A R A T R I S H W B I N
A D U G M D P T O L G H M B A
T S U J N L S G F Q P A N U V
Z V W S H E D H E G H T L R A
F Z K A S E K M Z S X P A N R
G L Y F N H R P A V H H U I D
J E T R B Q E D C A U H O N W
F N A Y A M A R N E I O A G L
G A R B A Y O U A F S D S D Q
J E S G A I M I J Z F Q N W L
A W R J R A K K V P V L Y A V
U U I C N A X S G Q U R O I D
D V Z P R T M T I L M N O O X
A S I N C F V A B I C Q L E T
E L K W A W L R U C M R U N J

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