



Newsletter - September 2013

Chinmaya Mission Orlando - www.chinmayaorlando.org

"More important than What is Behind you and what is Ahead of you is what is In you. Seek it. Centred in it, act and live."

– Swami Chinmayananda

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Blessed Self, Hari Om

All of us agree that Peace and happiness is what we seek in life. The goal is common to all. We all know that life is a series of continuous experiences.

Every one wants the experiences of the ultimate unbroken happiness. To learn how to achieve this goal, one has to come under the guidance of "Sat Guru" and submit oneself to the teachings. Reflect and assimilate the teachings and turn the values taught into true spiritual experiences.

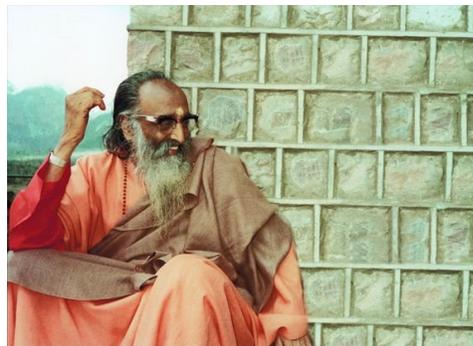
"Our children are our joy". Gurudev promoted Balavihar and study group for children and parents to enhance the spiritual growth from an early childhood to advanced ages. Let us all follow the path led by Shree Gurudev. In this new year of Balavihar session, let us enjoy the spiritual garden - Tapovanam and try to reach the ultimate-happiness.

In "His" Service

Love,
Acharya Shailaja Nadkarni

The Art of Listening by Swami Chinmayananda

We can learn a lot from every event in life. Just as the honeybee has the special instrument (proboscis) to extract the very essence in the flowers, human beings have a special faculty (power of discrimination) to maintain the quality of life by learning the art of true listening.



Listening is the channel most often used for "learning." It is a vital communication function; it improves our ability of understanding, self-awareness and self-application. Effective listening is not mere "hearing." In fact, we all know from our personal experiences that mere hearing – or poor listening – can very well result in:

- Frustration • Indifference • Misunderstandings • Misleading judgments • Embarrassment • Poor human relations and • Many other psychological blocks and maladjustments.

Yes, listening has become almost a forgotten skill. Very often we are led to believe that speaking represents action and power, while listening connotes weakness and apathy. We find that resistance to listening tends to be the cultural norm! Sometimes, we pay attention to what interests us, and block out larger areas of reality. Another block to listening occurs when we form an opinion about the level of what is being said.

Some people fake attention – just to please the speaker! Some have the habit of interrupting when others are talking. Personal problems sometimes manage to creep into our minds – diverting our attention – while someone else is talking. Fatigue is another limiting factor in listening, as listening takes concentration and effort. It is easier to daydream and let our minds become preoccupied when our energy level is low.

The angularities or the changing moods of the mind are barriers to effective listening. The barriers are caused by:
Faulty memories • Shades of ego • Tendencies and attitudes • Beliefs • Images of past experiences • Prejudices of the past • Likes and dislikes • Expectations and anxieties for the future.

Only when we become aware of our blind spots will we be able to understand and reshape our beliefs, values, and attitudes. Let us have a "listening mind" – a mind that is open, unprejudiced, objective, alert, attentive, and relaxed. Let us

President, Chinmaya Mission Orlando

have a “balanced outlook” – enjoying spiritual strength, inner stability, mental beauty, and physical perfection.

Upcoming Events

Event	Date/Time	Venue
Special celebration of Diwali with Balavihar family	Sunday, Nov 03, 2013	Chinmaya Mission Orlando
Thanksgiving Holiday	CMO Closed on Sunday Dec 01,2013	Chinmaya Mission Orlando
Winter Break	CMO closed on 22-DEC-2013 and 29-DEC-2013	Chinmaya Mission Orlando
Bhagavad Geeta Chanting All Chapters	Jan 01 2014.	Chinmaya Mission Orlando

Construction Update

Hari OM!

With God’s grace, Gurudev’s blessings, and Guruji’s guidance, the construction has finally started. We faced a few challenges with the permitting process but fortunately those hurdles are behind us. Site work is progressing rapidly and the entire landscape of the property has changed. The two large retention areas have been created but not completed. We hope to minimize the disruption to parking by working on the new parking lot first, then move to the building pad while completing the retention ponds and other site work. There will be a lot of activity over the next few months and we hope to complete the bulk of the construction over the next 5-6 months. We have started making draws against our construction loan, which will convert to a permanent loan when construction is completed, after which we will begin making monthly payments against our loan. We will share the construction progress with you on a frequent basis over next few months during the morning assembly and other update sessions. In addition, we will share with you other areas where your financial support is needed, such as landscaping, furniture, fixtures, etc. related to the new construction.



While we will do our best to secure the construction areas and retention ponds, it is not always possible to do so. We urge you to be careful and make sure you keep out of the construction zone and keep your children in your control at all times while outside the buildings. We thank you for your continued support of this project and for bearing with us during the disruptions to the parking, classrooms and hall that we will face during the construction. As always, we welcome your comments, suggestions, and support.

Respectfully,

Anuja Agrawal
Construction Committee

Financial Update

Financial Statement for January 1, 2013 to August 31,2013

In order to promote full transparency, in each newsletter, we will be giving you a financial update for the previous quarter. Please feel free to contact Kiran Patel or Harmohan Suri if you would like any additional details on our financials.

Beginning Bank Balance on January 1:

\$ 550,944

Pooja Donations, Library & MahaPrasad	\$ 25,672
Building Donations	\$ 40,011
Balavihar Registrations	\$ 51,425
Shivratri	\$ 21,545
Mata Ka Havan	\$ 8,303
Gyan Yagna - Swamini Gangananda ji	\$ 5,777
Our monthly maintenance(Uilities, Priest, supplies, upkeep & Food)	\$ 45,559
Building Construction – (Site Work, Permit, Architect and Loan Closing)	\$ 92,637
CMW Registration	\$ 5,000
Insurance	\$ 14,064
Net :	\$ - 4,527
Ending Bank Balance on August 31:	\$ 546,417

Means to Spiritual Perfection by Swami Tejomayananda



When we want to achieve any goal, we must have a means or method for reaching that goal. This necessity of a “means” is true in the material as well as in the spiritual world. To reach anywhere, there must be a way of getting there. Means in itself, however, does not guarantee the reaching of a desired goal. Success lies in how the person uses the means. Right use of appropriate means presupposes intelligence. In spiritual pursuits, the means themselves are inert (*jada*), and it is the aspirant who is endowed with the power of intelligence. Intelligent use of correct means for achieving a desired goal brings success. The goal is called *sadhya*; the spiritual aspirant or one who desires to reach the *sadhya* is called the *sadhaka*; and the process or means by which the *sadhya* is reached is called *sadhana*.

Two Types of Spiritual Practice

“Practice makes perfect” is a common statement. However, when we apply it to the spiritual goal, these words are not entirely true. What exactly is meant by, “Practice makes perfect?” Practice of any action at the physical level leads to a mechanical behavior. Even though precision may be achieved the behavior remains mechanical. In order to know the deeper significance of any action there must be correct understanding of its purpose. To have this kind of understanding is quite rare. In terms of material achievement, mere mechanical action may be adequate to meet a desired end. But when we examine spiritual goals, it is essential that we have correct understanding as to why we do certain things. In spiritual practice (*sadhana*), the effort must be conscious and calculated, and not mechanical. Spiritual *sadhana* are of two types: a) Those practices that are used to gain a purified inner equipment *antahkarana suddhi*, and (b) those that are used to remove ignorance or *avidya*, about the true nature of the Self.

In order to gain the Higher, we need to develop pure *sattvika* qualities. Therefore we must undertake various forms of spiritual practices that will bring about purification. The first type of *sadhana* explains the various forms of practices that will bring about purification at the mental and intellectual levels (physical purity is already taken for granted). Practices such as repeating the Lord's name (*japa yoga*), austerities (*tapas*), pilgrimages (*yatra*), worship (*puja*), and other activities such as charity (*daana*) and dedicated selfless work, are all performed to purify the mind and intellect. As we stated earlier, mere mechanical action is fruitless. It is the right use and understanding of the means that is essential if success is to be achieved. For example, when worshipping an idol, we must see the Ideal in the idol, see it only as the “Truth” it represents, and not as a piece of stone. If our mind is not centered on the Lord with devotion then no matter how beautiful the flowers, the incense, or the rituals, it will not lead to purification of the mind.

The second type of *sadhana*, which, when correctly undertaken brings about the removal of ignorance of the Self, is basically of three types: *sravana*, *manana* and *nidhidhyasana*.

Sravana is listening to the *sruti* (scripture) from a guru. This is not merely the hearing of words, but rather attentive and single-pointed listening to the true meaning of the guru's words. Real listening is putting the mind behind the ears, and not dissipating it into any other field of thought. This true *sravana* must have a degree of *antahkarana suddhi* or purity of mind as a prerequisite. The mind must be calm and non-dissipating to some extent before such attentive listening is possible. Hence we see the need for *antahkarana suddhi*.

Mananam is literally, "reflection upon what has been heard." Manana is the process of making concrete what the teacher has taught. Making the knowledge one's own is a prerequisite before the third *sadhana* of *nidhidhyasana*, can be undertaken.

Nidhidhyasana is meditation or contemplation, that is, coming to "know" for oneself through direct experience, what has been discussed in the scriptures. This process is the conversion of intellectual knowledge (the theory) to subjective experience.

Spiritual Perfection

We now come to the question of spiritual perfection. What exactly is spiritual perfection? The goal to be reached is by nature already perfect, while the means, the *sadhana* for reaching that goal, are imperfect. All actions, due to their very nature, are imperfect. There appears to be a paradox here: the goal is perfect; yet *sadhana*, the means, is imperfect!

We can resolve this confusion by examining the nature of ignorance *avidya*, and the goal, the Self. The Self is already perfect. Whatever *sadhanawe* have undertaken does not "make the Self more perfect" for the Self is already *Sat* (existence) *Cit*(awareness/knowledge) and *Ananda* (perfect/bliss). Actions are imperfect by nature. *Sadhana* helps to purify the mind and prepares it for the revelation of the Self that is already there in all its perfection. Let me give some examples: *Avidya* may be regarded as a veil of ignorance. It is like dust on a mirror. When we dust off the dirt from the mirror's surface (through *sadhana*) the essential nature of the clear mirror is revealed. The dusting itself did not endow the reflective capacity to the mirror, as the reflective capacity is the very nature of the mirror. It is like clouds covering the rays of the sun. The sun is always shining fully, but we think the sun is not there and we see only darkness.

Correct understanding and single-pointedness of effort are necessary in order to achieve any end. But essentially all that is required is devotion. True devotion brings real success. Devotion is defined as love at the supreme level for the work undertaken, love for a higher ideal. Devotion is the key to spiritual *sadhana*. In this attitude of reverent devotion, the seeker carries out his work as *karma yoga* with all fruits of actions dedicated to the Lord of his heart. As the result comes, he gladly and humbly accepts it in an attitude of *prasada-buddhi*, taking all result as *prasadam* or blessing from the Lord. Hence we see that the means to spiritual perfection is *sadhana* for (a) purification of the inner equipment and (b) removal of ignorance, as the basis. When impurity and ignorance are removed, the Self reveals itself in all its perfection and the seeker surrenders to the Lord in all devotion. This is the means to spiritual perfection.

Enchanting Tales

Parable of the Tiger that lurks behind worldly joys - by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa



GOD is like the wish-yielding tree of the celestial world (Kalpataru), which gives whatever one asks of it. So, one should be careful to give up all worldly desires when one's mind has been purified by religious exercises. Just listen to a story: A certain traveller came to a large plain in the course of his travels. As he had been walking in the sun for many hours, he was thoroughly exhausted and heavily perspiring; so he sat down in the shade of a tree to rest a little.

Presently he began to think what a comfort it would be if he could but get a soft bed there to sleep on. He was not aware that he was sitting under the celestial tree. As soon as the above thought rose in his mind, he found a nice bed by his side. Now he thought to himself, how pleasant it would be, were a young damsel to come there and gently stroke his legs. No sooner did the thought arise in his mind than he found a young damsel sitting at his feet and stroking his legs. The traveller felt supremely happy. Presently he felt hungry and thought: "I have got whatever I have

wished for; could I not then get some food?" Instantly he found various kinds of delicious food spread before him. He at once fell to eating, and having helped himself to his heart's content, stretched himself again on his bed. He now began to revolve in his mind the events of the day.

While thus occupied, he thought: "If a tiger should attack me all of a sudden!" In an instant a large tiger jumped on him and broke his neck and began to drink his blood. In this way the traveller lost his life. Such is the fate of men in general. If during your meditation you pray for men or money or worldly honours, your desires will no doubt be satisfied to some extent; but, mind you, there is the dread of the tiger behind the gifts you get. Those tigers—disease, bereavements, loss of honour and wealth etc.,—are a thousand times more terrible than the live tiger.

Why do we do what we do?

Why do we consider the lotus as special?

The lotus is the symbol of truth, auspiciousness and beauty (satyam, shivam, sundaram). The Lord is also that nature and therefore, His various aspects are compared to a lotus (i.e. lotus-eyes, lotus feet, lotus hands, the lotus of the heart etc.). The lotus blooms with the rising sun and close at night. Similarly, our minds open up and expand with the light of knowledge.



The lotus grows even in slushy areas. It remains beautiful and untainted despite its surroundings, reminding us that we too can and should strive to remain pure and beautiful within, under all circumstances. The lotus leaf never gets wet even though it is always in water. It symbolizes the man of wisdom (gyaani) who remains ever joyous, unaffected by the world of sorrow and change.

According to Bhagawad Geeta : He who does actions, offering them to Brahman (the Supreme), abandoning attachment, is not tainted by sin, just as a lotus leaf remains unaffected by the water on it. From this, we learn that what is natural to the man of wisdom becomes a discipline to be practiced by all saadhakas or spiritual seekers and devotees. Our bodies have certain energy centers described in the Yoga Shastras as chakras.

It also symbolizes Brahmloka, the abode of Lord Brahma. The auspicious sign of the swastika is said to have evolved from the lotus.

Divine Chants

Praanaaya Swaahaa, Apaanaaya Swaahaa, Vyaanaaya Swaahaa, Udaanaaya Swaahaa, Samaanaaya Swaahaa, Brahmane Swaahaa

We have three equipments: the Body, Mind, Intellect which is controlled and regulated by the Life, the Spirit. Everyone has the five elements. they are; Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana; they are controlled by the five Prana Indriyas and the five karma Indriyas.

That is why, when we take our food, we offer these reverentially to the five Prana Indriyas, viz; Prana to Samana and also to the Controller of these i.e. Brahman. So, it is lastly offered to Brahmane Swaha. The intention is that when U offer these, they are distributed to the five Karma Indriyas and our system is then well equipped.



Papad ki Sabji, a Rajasthani dish by Shikha Sharma

Ingredients and Directions

4 medium sized papad
6 tsp ghee

1 tsp cumin
 2 tsp ginger paste
 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
 1 tsp coriander powder
 1/4 tsp asafetida powder
 1 tsp red chilli powder
 1 tsp very finely chopped ginger
 1 green chilli - chopped
 2 cups of yogurt - whipped
 1 tsp chopped fresh coriander
 1 cup of water
 Salt to taste



Preparation:

- Fry the papads
- Break the papads into 1 inch squares
- In a wok, heat the ghee and saute the cumin seeds
- Add ginger paste, turmeric, coriander powder, red chilli powder and fry for a minute
- Add the chopped green chilli, ginger and asafetida powder
- Cook until the oil separates from the masala
- Pour the yogurt in the masala, stir and cook for a few minutes
- Add water and bring the gravy to a boil, let it thicken
- Add salt to taste
- Now simmer the heat, gently add the papad pieces, stir well and cook for 3-5 minutes
- Garnish with coriander
- Serve hot with chapattis or plain boiled rice

Word Search Puzzle

Find the following hidden words in the puzzle

1. Navratri
2. Dussehera
3. Vijayadashami
4. Saraswati
5. Durga
6. Lakshmi
7. Kali
8. Lalita
9. Mahishasur
10. Diwali
11. SriRama
12. Chamundeshwari

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

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