



Newsletter - December 2014

Chinmaya Mission Orlando - [www.chinmayaorlando.org](http://www.chinmayaorlando.org)

"What you have is all His Gift to you. What you do with what you have is your Gift to Him ..."

– Swami Chinmayananda

## Happy New Year

(Abridged from a talk by Swami Chinmayananda)

"Happy New Year!" In the coming days, we will each hear this a thousand times and say it a hundred times. In fact, there is no 'new' year. 'Year' is but a measurement in a continuous stream of time that we have created for our own convenience. Time is the same – labelled as past, present or future – it is a concept. For our convenience, we have created divisions of days, weeks, months, years, centuries and millennia. Whether in the 1st or the 2nd century, 20th or even the 21st century, 'time' is ever the same. But everything that is floating in time and reaching us is constantly changing.



In India, there has been a lot of expenditure of money and effort in cleaning and purifying the Ganges. The river is not impure, but people throw dirt and filth into the river and make her dirty! To purify the Ganges, you and I actually need to do nothing – just stop polluting it! Fresh gallons of water flowing downstream from the snowy Himalayan peaks will force out the

polluted waters and the river shall be pristine and purified once again! In the same way, Time as such is ever pure, ever new.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Blessed Self, Hari Om

A God-ward mind is the fountain source of joy and divinity. Let us turn our minds toward "Him". Always keep the God before your view.

The sweetest thing in life is worshipping God. Devotion is an integral moment of one's personality, reason and action. Lord in the form of Shri Guru guides the soul toward "Himself". Let us collect our minds and bring it at the Lotus feet of Shri Gurudev, who is none other than God himself.

On the auspicious occasion of the New Year, let us turn within and feel the sweet throbbing presence of God – the effulgent

It is not enough just to change the number of the calendar year from 1992 to 1993 – it is you and I who have to change. We have to stop poisoning the times with our base urges of lust, greed, anger, etc. We are the ones who spoil it and then we say that the times are bad. Times are never bad, times are always good. Nowadays the trend is to say, "I don't know what kind of a time this is nowadays, a very sad time. Everywhere around the world there are wars, destruction and life being taken ..." But carefully examine and question just who has committed these atrocities. Who is to blame? Is it Time? Has Time killed anybody? Time never did it! You and I, prompted by our false values of hatred, jealousy, greed, passions and lust, act on in the world outside. The quality of those very actions is our contribution to Time, making or marring it, just as the Ganges is made impure or polluted by our own act of dumping rubbish into it. So the greeting 'Happy New Year' is actually a wish that one and all may discover more happiness for themselves in the coming year, by renewing not the year, but oneself. The year cannot be changed! This is a time for renewal.

The great Rishis of yore had analyzed and concluded that change for the better can be brought about only by a change of the mood of the mind. If that is changed, then changes in one's lifestyle, attitude to things, behavior

consciousness in the form of Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna.

As Maha Shivratri is approaching, may God shower his joyous blessings on each and everyone.

Love,

Acharya Shailaja Nadkarni

President, Chinmaya Mission  
Orlando

and quality of thoughts also follow suit. This change has to be brought about at three levels – the quality of thoughts, the quantity of thoughts and the direction of thoughts. After all, the mind is but a flow of thoughts. Once the thoughts change, we can confidently say that the mind has changed. The techniques of bhakti, karma, and jnana are prescribed to address these three kinds of changes. Through bhakti, devotion to the Lord, the quality of thoughts will change. Through karma yoga, the quantity of thoughts is reduced. Thoughts of anxiety and worry about the future, about the results of one's actions etc. are minimized. Finally, the direction of thoughts – ordinarily one's thoughts are turned outward, but with knowledge (jnana), an attempt is made to steer the direction of thoughts in search of the spring of Consciousness within oneself. When these three are undertaken concurrently, then one can master the mind at three times the speed! When the mind is changed, you are changed. When you change, the year becomes new! You don't have to wait for the first of January! The day you change, it is the 'New Year' for you. You are the master of your life. A mere repetition of 'Happy New Year' or sending New Year cards does not make it happen for anybody. The underlying spirit should be a wish that the friend or relative would change their attitude to life through a process of control, regulation and purification of thoughts. Thereby the individual changes, and when the person changes, the world outside is effectively changed. New times, new thoughts have been created. It is the dawn of a New Year!

The article can be read in its entirety [here](#) .

#### Upcoming Events

Event	Date/Time	Venue
Bhagavad Geeta Chanting All Chapters	Thursday, Jan 01, 2015 from 8.00am onwards	Chinmaya Mission Orlando
<b>Maha Shivaratri Observance</b>	<b>Tuesday, Feb 17, 2015 All Day event.</b>	<b>Chinmaya Mission Orlando</b>
Holi	Sunday, Mar 08, 2015	Chinmaya Mission Orlando
Geeta Chanting Competition	March/April 2015, Date TBD	Chinmaya Mission Orlando

#### Construction Update

Hari OM!

At the time of the last newsletter, the building had just begun to take shape. Now, with God's grace, Gurudev's blessings and Guruji's guidance, the effort that began almost 3 years ago has finally come to fruition. Our complex has been transformed by the beautiful grounds, the ponds and fountain, the well-lit parking lot, the aptly named "Mandir Marg", the rose garden, and the majestic palm trees at the entrance of Kaivalya. The extended Kaivalya hall is now graced by Lord Shiva, Lord Krishna, Nandi ji, Ganesh ji and Sarawati ji. And, we had the privilege of receiving poojya Guruji's blessings as he inaugurated our new facilities and held discourses in our extended hall to a packed audience. Our bookstore, given the name "Chinmaya Vaani" by Guruji, has a lot more display space and is more accessible. The new classrooms have allowed us the space to hold each Philosophy class and most language classes in a separate classroom, and Acharya Shailaji's sessions in the Kaivalya hall. The children's favorite feature seems to be the large play area behind the Tapovan building, which provides a great opportunity for some outdoor team activities during the snack break.

While we are at enjoying the new building, there are still a few items pending. We are actively working with the builder to complete the "punch-list", including addressing the dying landscaping. Additionally, there are a few



outstanding items we are working on, which include building shoe racks, signage on the building, and asphalt in the area adjacent to Florida road. With the completion of the beautiful building and grounds, comes the responsibility for continuous maintenance and upkeep. If you would like to assist with this in any way, please let us know.

As this is the last building update, we would like to take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to Lamm and Co., the General Contractor; Shri Rao from LandSmart Consultants, the Site Engineers; and last but certainly not least, Kishor Pathare, our chief architect. A very special thanks also to Rajul Patel from Fence Outlet for his generosity and time to help considerably enhance the aesthetics and safety of our property. They all worked as true partners and we highly recommend each of them for any of your projects. And finally, we thank all of you for your continued support as we offer this humble service at God's and Gurudev's feet for our children and future generations.

Respectfully,

Anuja Agrawal  
Construction Committee

### Financial Update

#### Financial Statement for January 1, 2014 to December 15, 2014

In order to promote full transparency, in each newsletter, we will be giving you a financial update for the previous quarter. Since this is a year-end newsletter, the entire year's financials are shared here. Please feel free to contact Kiran Patel or Harmohan Suri if you would like any additional details on our financials.

<b>Beginning Bank Balance on January 1, 2014</b>	<b>\$ 601,690.00</b>
Loan from United Legacy Bank	\$ 659,416.00
Donations (Balavihar registrations, Pooja sponsorships, Building donations, Bookstore profit, Weekly sponsorships.)	\$ 420,310.00
Mortgage Payment	\$ 28,263.00
Construction Expenses (Site work, Permit, Architect, Loan closing etc.)	\$ 1,030,477.00
All Other Expenses (Utilities, Priest expenses, supplies, insurance, food etc.)	\$ 233,434.00
<b>Ending Bank Balance as of December 15, 2014.</b>	<b>\$ 389,222.00</b>

### The Vision of Love by Swami Tejomayananda (Reprinted from the Mananam Series)



Right from childhood we have been told and taught, "Love all beings." If not all beings, then at least "love thy neighbor." Actually, to love all beings is easier than loving one's neighbor. The word neighbor is not to be taken literally as the person living next door to you, but all those who are close to you. It is often seen that people are extremely impatient with their own near and dear ones while, with others, they are the embodiment of patience, kindness, and compassion.

So, if you can love your close ones, then you can love people who are far from you. Suppose I am told that someone in Timbuktu criticized me. Do I feel badly about that? I don't know where Timbuktu is, or even whether such a place exists. If a person is criticizing or praising me from there, it doesn't matter. However, if I was told that my disciple was criticizing me, what would be my reaction? Then I would be eager to know who it is and what he is saying, and afterwards, I would find it difficult to love that person. But if one

sees the oneness of all things and beings, then there is only love. And love is the most wonderful of all emotions.

### **Readiness to Serve**

Unfortunately, most people neither know what love is nor understand its meaning. Just take the example of our body. It is made up of different parts—the head, body, stomach, back, hand and legs, and so on. Even though I see the many parts of the body, I have the vision that in all these parts there is one truth—that is my self—present everywhere in all of these parts. Therefore, I have equal love for every part of my body. There is no favoritism. I don't say, "I will only look after my head when it is unwell, but if something happens to my foot, that's not my problem! I will take care of my backache, not my stomachache!" I am ever ready to serve all the parts of my body with total dedication and love.

### **Forgiveness**

A vision of oneness develops love and the readiness to serve all, and it creates an attitude of forgiveness, or kshama. How many times have your teeth bitten your tongue while eating? Have you ever punished them? Has the thought of punishing your teeth ever crossed your mind? Have you given an ultimatum to your teeth, "Teeth, listen! I will forgive you only 100 times. After that, I am going to pull you out!" If by mistake your finger goes into your eye, that very same finger says, "I'm sorry," and starts wiping the tears. There is no limit to its forgiveness. In this sort of forgiveness, you don't even feel offended. No one is different from me—the finger is me and the eye is also me; I am present here and I am present there also. If I decide to punish by cutting my finger, I will cause harm only to myself. How can I do that? Remember—when we hate someone else, we actually hate ourselves. Take it from any standpoint. All bodies are made of five elements, hence the material cause of all is the same; there is the same life that enlivens me as well as others. Where is the difference? Therefore, who is hurting whom?

### **Living in Freedom**

Just imagine the state of a person whose heart is filled with love, compassion, forgiveness, and kindness. Will he not be free? Suppose I love one person, hate another, and am jealous of a third. Then I am really bound with so many conflicting emotions; I am not free. I have to always remember: I love this person, so I must smile whenever I meet him. But I hate this one, so I must frown whenever I see him. Sometimes, by mistake, I frown at the person that I love and I smile at the other! Then suddenly I have to correct myself—so, my face is constantly changing! If your heart is filled only with love there is no problem at all; you live in freedom. There is no need of manipulation; there is no need of remaining in tension. There is a story of Mahatma Gandhi when he was in London and had to appear for a press conference the next day. Generally, a press conference is a stressful experience for even skilled politicians, as correspondents can trap you with challenging and difficult questions. However, Gandhiji was sleeping peacefully. Someone asked his secretary, "There is going to be such an important press conference involving complex political and national questions. How is he sleeping so calmly?"

The secretary said, "Because there are no conflicts in his mind. He has only to say what is in his mind." There will be worry and stress whenever one has to say the opposite of what one actually thinks. How many of us lead stressful lives? This is because of extreme attachment to one thing and so we remain constantly worried about it. When the mind is filled with all these different kinds of emotions—jealousy for one, liking for another, love for someone else—then the mind is torn apart and there is no freedom. You can do this small exercise just now as you are reading. Close your eyes and think for a few minutes of someone whom you really love and who loves you. What is the state of your mind? Instantly, it is peaceful and happy. Now go and get a drink of water, and sit and think of someone you hate (maybe you have hatred for no one) or dislike. See, how your mind becomes irritated, upset, and unhappy. Why do angry persons shout when they are standing next to each other? What is the need for raising one's voice? Shouting may be necessary when the other person is far away, but not when he or she is right there. We shout because emotionally we have thrown the person away from our heart.

Have you seen two lovers sitting together or a mother loving a child? Why do they always talk in whispers? Love removes all distance. As you come closer and closer, your voice becomes a whisper, and when you become one, there is total silence; there is no need to say anything—everything gets communicated. With that tuning, born of love, there is freedom.

In the vision of oneness, the heart is filled with love, and that love manifests as service or as work. "Work is love made visible." [Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*] In the twelfth chapter of the Gita, Lord Krishna describes the nature of

his devotees. A devotee is one who hates none, is the friend of all beings, is most compassionate and forgiving by nature. Such a person is engaged in the welfare of all beings and understands the true meaning of freedom.

## Enchanting Tales

### Parable of the Greatest Devotee of the Lord - by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa



Once upon a time conceit entered into the heart of Narada, and he thought there was no greater devotee than himself. Reading his heart, the Lord said: "Narada, go to such and such a place. A great devotee of mine is living there. Cultivate his acquaintance; for he is truly devoted to Me."

Narada went there and found an agriculturist who rose early in the morning, pronounced the name of Hari (God) only once and, taking his plough, went out and tilled the ground all day long. At night he went to bed after pronouncing the name of Hari once more. Narada said to himself: "How can this rustic be a lover of God? I see him busily engaged in worldly duties, and he has no signs of a pious man about him." Then Narada went back to the Lord and spoke what he thought of his new acquaintance. Thereupon the Lord said: "Narada, take this cup of oil and go round this city and come

back with it.

But take care that you do not spill even a single drop of it." Narada did as he was told, and on his return the Lord asked him, "Well, Narada, how many times did you remember Me in the course of your walk round the city?" "Not once, my Lord," said Narada, "and how could I, when I had to watch this cup brimming over with oil?" The Lord then said: "This one cup of oil did so divert your attention that even you did forget Me altogether. But look at that rustic, who, though carrying the heavy burden of a family, still remembers Me twice every day."

## Why do we do what we do?

### Why do we worship Tulasi?

In Sanskrit, tulanaa naasti athaiva tulasi - that which is incomparable (in its qualities) is the tulasi. For Indians it is one of the most sacred plants. In fact it is known to be the only thing used in worship, which, once used, can be washed and reused in pooja - as it is regarded so self-purifying.

As one story goes, Tulasi was the devoted wife of Shankhachuda, a celestial being. She believed that Lord Krishna tricked her into sinning. So she cursed Him to become a stone (shaaligraama). Seeing her devotion and adhered to righteousness, the Lord blessed her saying that she would become the worshipped plant, tulasi that would adorn His head. Also that all offerings would be incomplete without the tulasi leaf - hence the worship of tulasi. She also symbolises Goddess Lakshmi, the consort of Lord Vishnu.



Those who wish to be righteous and have a happy family life worship the tulasi. Tulasi is married to the Lord with all pomp and show as in any wedding. This is because according to another legend, the Lord blessed her to be His consort. Satyabhama once weighed Lord Krishna against all her legendary wealth. The scales did not balance till a single tulasi leaf was placed along with the wealth on the scale by Rukmini with devotion.

Thus the tulasi played the vital role of demonstrating to the world that even a small object offered with devotion means more to the Lord than all the wealth in the world. The tulasi leaf has great medicinal value and is used to cure various ailments, including the common cold.

I bow down to the tulasi, At whose base are all the holy places, At whose top reside all the deities and In whose middle are all the Vedas.

## Divine Chants

या कुन्देन्दु तुषार हार धवला या शुभवस्त्रावृता ।

या वीणावरदंड मंडितकरा या श्वेतपद्मासना ।

या ब्रह्माच्युतशङ्करप्रभृतिभिर्देवै सदा वंदिता ।

सा मां पातु सरस्वती भगवती निःशेषजाड्यापहा ॥

White as the lily, the moon and the garland of dew, Clad in clean and spotless garments, Hands adorned with Vina and rosary, Sitting on white lotus, Always worshipped by Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, O Goddess of Wisdom, Sarasvati, Look after me by driving away without any trace this illness of ignorance!



## Buffalo Brussels Sprouts, dish by Geeta Pandit

### Ingredients and Directions

1. 1 pound Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
2. Oil for deep-frying
3. 1 lb brussels sprouts
4. 1/4 cup flour
5. 1/2 cup bread crumbs
6. 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
7. 1/2 tsp salt
8. Freshly ground black pepper



### Preparation and Serving Instructions:

1. To prepare the brussels, bring a saucepan of salted water to a boil. Blanch the halved brussels sprouts in vigorously boiling water for 2 minutes.
2. Strain and drain well, rolling around in a clean dish towel to remove as much of the moisture as possible.
3. Fill a straight-sided sauté pan with canola oil so that it's about 2-3" deep, and bring the temperature to around 350°F.
4. Place the flour in a zipper-sealable plastic bag, combine the breadcrumbs, Parmesan cheese, salt, and pepper.
5. Lightly dredge the brussels sprouts in the flour with the breadcrumb mixture. Fry the breaded brussels sprouts in the oil until nicely browned.
6. Remove from the pan and place on a rack or paper towel-lined plate. Allow the brussels to cool slightly and serve immediately with the Hot Sauce or Cheese Dip.

## Word Search Puzzle

Find the following hidden words in the puzzle

1. Chinmaya
2. NewYear
3. Resolution

4. Annashree
5. Kaivalya
6. Shivratri
7. Gurudev
8. Krishna
9. Ganga
10. Saraswati
11. Ganesha
12. Acharya
13. Yagna

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

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