



Chinmaya Pradīpikā

CMSD Quarterly Newsletter



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The Master Speaks:

A successful man is one who can lay a firm foundation with the bricks that others throw at him!

Swami Chinmayananda

In this issue of *Chinmaya Pradīpikā*

This fall we were privileged to be visited by Swami Sarveshananda from CM Dallas. He conducted the second *Bhagavad Gītā Jñāna Yajña* in the *āśrama*. He also discussed the *Ātmapūjopaniṣad* and *Māyā Pañcakam*, and spent quality time with the youngsters.

We celebrated *Navarātrī* with the usual fanfare along with a “Personality Development” workshop and *Strī Śakti* workshop. This was followed by the inauguration of *Chinmaya Kala Jyoti* on auspicious *Vijayadasami*. We also celebrated *Dīpavalī*, and *Gītā Jayanti* and *Tapovana Jayanti* at the *āśrama*.

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Swami Sarveshananda visits again

Swami Sarveshananda visited us during the week of October 21 from Chinmaya mission Dallas. He conducted a *Jñāna Yajña* on the fourteenth chapter of *Srīmad Bhagavad Gītā* and shared his knowledge on the *Ātmapūjopaniṣad* and *Māyā Pañcakam*. He also conducted a CHYK workshop at the University of California at San Diego, as a part of the university outreach program. He spent time quality engaging the junior CHYKs. The following are snippets shared by our members on their experience on attending these events.

Jñānā Yajña on *Srimad Bhagavad Gītā*

I had the good fortune of attending the *Gītā Jñāna Yajña* on the



fourteenth chapter, “*The Yoga of Guṇa-s - Learning the Ropes*” conducted by **Swami Sarveshananda** during the week of October 21st. *Swamiji's* witty style easily drew me into the subject matter. *Guṇa-s* help us understand the seeming paradox created by the variety of personalities we see around us, which is in contrast with the *vedantic* vision that we are all the same *Īśvara*. I learnt that *Guṇa* also means rope and the three *Guṇa-s*, namely *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, in various proportions bundle us into myriad different configurations of the same *Īśvara*. If I were to resign myself to my existing configuration and make no attempt to better understand my bindings I am squandering an opportunity to be free of these bindings. *Swamiji* gave a memorable explanation of one of the expressions of *tāmasic* behavior called *pramāda* which he described as, “repeating the same action with renewed enthusiasm and expecting a different result”. This thought really hit close to home! Our ideas tend to be *sāttvic*, our thoughts tend to be *rājasic* and our actions tend to be *tāmasic*. *Swamiji* noted that instead of raising our thoughts and actions to be *Sāttvic*, we numb our ideas and bring them along with our actions down to the *tāmasic* level. He challenged us to challenge ourselves to be watchful of the input and output of our body, mind and intellect. *Rajas* and *tamas* cannot to be avoided but need to be consciously managed. A certain amount of *tamas* is required else we will be insomniacs. A certain amount of *rajas* is required else we cannot get out of bed. We have to keep working to maximize *sattva* by engaging in proper action with proper attitude. Such an approach with *Īśvara's* blessing gives us a shot at transcending these bindings and understanding ourselves. For if we do not, *Swamiji* quipped, - Better luck next life!



- Vivek Shankar

Ātmapūjopaniṣad

Ātmapūjopaniṣad builds a bridge between *bhakti* (devotion) and *jñāna* (knowledge). These teachings chart the evolutionary path of a seeker from *sākāra* to *nirākāra bhakti*. **Swami Sarveshananda** explained the profound message of the *upaniṣad* on the true meaning of *ṣoḍaśopacāra pūjā* in attaining Oneness.

Meditation (*dhyānam*) is the constant contemplation of THAT. The invocation (*āvāhanam*) is ending of the cause of all actions or *vāsana-s*. The posture (*āsana*) is non-wavering knowing or being established firmly in knowledge. *Pādyam* is upward flow of mind towards THAT. The offering (*arghyam*) is mind constantly arrowed towards THAT. The preparatory bath for worship (*ācamanīyam/ snānam*) is to be centered constantly in the inner illumination. The feeling of THAT everywhere is the only fragrance (*gandham*). The unbroken rice used for worship (*akṣatā*) is to be established in one's own witnessing nature. The flowers that are offered to the Lord in worship (*puṣpam*) are to be filled with consciousness. The incense (*dhūpa*) is to create the fire of awareness in oneself. The lamp (*dīpah*) is to be established in the Sun of awareness with the constantly lit inspiration. The food offering (*naivedya*) is accumulation of nectar of inner full moon that will become *prasāda*. *Pradakṣiṇa* is inner stillness, the



movement around THAT for worship. The salutation (*namaskārah*) is the complete offering, feeling and expression of “I am THAT”. Prayer (*stuti*) is the ability to be absorbed in silence, the silence that brings *praśānti*. Total and constant contentment is the dispersion of worship ritual (*visarjana*) where all apprehensions and worries are given up.

Thus the *upanīṣad* teaches the true sense of worship in every living moment. The understanding of life as *upāsanā* wakes one to be an enlightened being. Realization to that Oneness is the attainment of Liberation.

-Raja Reddy Kalva

Māyā Pañcakam

This short, yet fascinating composition by *Bhagavān Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* on *Māyā* - the unfathomable, incomprehensible power of the Creator- was beautifully explained by Swamiji in five days in the forenoon hour. Every verse concludes with the phrase “*aghaṭita ghaṭanā paṭīyasī māyā*” - *Māyā* is that power of the Lord that makes the impossible, appear possible.

“Take a Hike” with Swamiji

“Swamiji took us junior CHYKs on a hike up *Tapovana Giri*. He was different. He didn’t start by preaching to us, conversing with us, or trying to relate to us. I met him, and then we just started walking. On the way to the hill he learnt our names and our grades, after that there was silence. At first, I wanted to turn back. I was under the misconception that this “Take a Hike” activity was going to be a lecture, and so I wore my nice attire and brought with me no stamina. Five minutes into the hike with **Swami Sarveshananda** it seemed like that this would be a silent hike with no pearls of knowledge, he did not even speak with us. But I was wrong. Swamiji taught us without speaking. We finally reached the top of the hill, and situated ourselves on one of the rocks. I remember Swamiji standing on the top of a rock, one misstep away from falling down the entire hill. He encouraged us to stand with him, hearts fluttering and endorphins pounding through our veins, I felt a mixture of fear and elation standing on that rock. We looked down at the amazing view of San Diego, and I felt small and humbled. Swamiji told us that he had run down that entire mountain in a little over a minute, that steep, rocky mountain that had taken us an hour or so to scale. I learnt from this hike to be fearlessness, humble and to never turn back.”

- Mallika Prasad
Grade 11



“We walked up the side of mountain, and once we got to the top, we all expected a lecture. The assumption came naturally: wouldn't a swami seize every opportunity to share his wisdom? However, we were all a little surprised when, instead of preaching to us, the Swami simply made small talk. His words were kind, his remarks were sharp and intuitive, and I soon realized that through ordinary conversation alone, this amazing man was not only delivering wisdom, but doing so in such a way which

didn't bore us. In the end, this experience was as humbling as it was insightful. If a Swami, with so many years to attest his knowledge could speak to children without any evidence of ego, I could surely treat all others in my life as equals as well. I am sure he saw within all of us the force which makes us human.”

-Avinash Gupta
Grade 11

CHYK Workshop at UCSD

A workshop titled “**What's the Point? A Discussion on the Relevance of Spirituality**”, was conducted by **Swami Sarveshananda** on October 26 at the University of California at San Diego (UCSD). During the discussion, all the UCSD CHYKs and other interested students had a group discussion on the purpose of spirituality. Personally, it was a great opportunity for me to reflect and reevaluate the purpose of my own spirituality.

Swami Sarveshananda started off our discussion by asking all of us how and when we have felt complete happiness, or bliss. Some claimed to have experienced it in the thrill of adventure sports, and some in the loving connection with their pets. The common feature was not the circumstance during which it was felt, but the experience itself - it was always a state when nothing disturbed the peace and contentment one felt at the moment. Ongoing tension, past regrets, and fears of the future did not intrude into one's being in the present moment.

Often, people repeat the circumstance during which they felt this wonderful moment of happiness. For example, they may go on additional trips to experience the same wonderful feeling they had when snowboarding or spend more time playing with their pets. But, this doesn't always work, and even when it does, the feeling of peace is bound to the circumstance and is not felt at other times.

Spirituality was finally introduced in the discussion as a peace that exists in any circumstance one may face. In Swamiji's words, it is an indestructible peace. One perception of spirituality is that it can only be experienced in the quiet, meditative atmosphere of the caves in the Himalayas. However, the beauty of spirituality lies in its ability to flow in all directions of one's life. This concept was explained with the example of someone learning how to ride a bicycle. Fully learning how to ride a bike involves not only the ability to ride in one's backyard, but also along the roads during traffic, surrounded by much larger and faster cars. The obstacles and cars in the traffic represent the noise and problems in our everyday life, and the protected backyard represents what we perceive to be the quiet Himalayas. Spirituality allows us to experience peace in both the peaceful and noisy circumstances just as the knowledge of how to ride a bike allows us to ride in both the backyard and traffic.

I can definitely find an immense value in always experiencing peace. Thus, I think it's definitely productive of me to invest my time in achieving this spirituality. Briefly, Swamiji stated that one path to get there, that has been previously tested, is known as *Sanātana Dharma*. Specifically, we can achieve spirituality through *Karma Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga*, and *Jñāna Yoga*.

-Mili Navani
CHYK

Navarātrī Celebrations

Every year the **fifth grade Bala Vihar students** perform a skit on the legend of *Mahiṣāsura-mardinī* to celebrate *Navarātrī*. This year it was performed on **October 6** in the courtyard of **Samskr̥ti Nilayam**.



They enacted the story of the demon *Mahiṣā* who after performing *tapas*, was given a boon by **Lord Brahmā** that he would not be killed by any God or man. He then set out to conquer the three worlds. **Goddess Durgā** was sent to earth to destroy his armies, kill him and rid the world of this evil. This was followed by the singing of the *Mahiṣāsura-mardinī Stotram* in praise of Mother *Durgā*.

The message in the play was reinforced by a recitation by the tenth graders on the following weekend—reminding us to kick ourselves out of *tamas* and renew the effort to move towards Self Realization during these nine days. .



Sarasvati Puja at Samskrti Nilayam- October 13



As part of the *Navarātrī* celebrations, two workshops were held at the *āśrama* – “**Personality Development**” workshop for middle school and high school girls on **October 5** and “**Strī Shakti**” for both men and women on **October 12**.

Some of our members recount their experiences attending these events:

“**Personality Development**” workshop for girls

“This workshop was held to empower teenage girls, increase awareness about themselves, improve their self-esteem and provide concrete understanding about our spiritual culture. The workshop setting was more question and answers, with students slowly revealing their thoughts, misgivings and their aspirations. Questions such as, what defines personality? Who am I? Who is their role model? What qualities they look up in others? What qualities people like in them? What changes they would like to see in themselves? It was a free spirited discussion along with dancing. As Gurudev says, “Children are not vessels to be filled, but lamps to be lit.” The aim of this class was to rekindle the light in them, so that any one of the teenage girls can be inspiring leaders or all of them.” – **Padma Bhat**, CMSD BV *Sevika*

“Personality is one word that can be used in multiple ways to help navigate the turbulence of being a teenage girl. At the personality development workshop, **Lakshmi Aunty** explained the meaning of the word PERSONALITY. She emphasized its most important part, the ITY at the end or “I tell you” ...The importance of creating a strong first impression was highly emphasized as all the girls had to partner up with someone new and note down the other person’s good and bad impressions. In addition, the negative presence of fear in our lives was also highlighted and how to try to minimize our self-consciousness to become more confident young adults. Overall, the workshop served as a guide to living in a more confident manner with strong Hindu values.

-**Gopika Mavalankar**
Grade 12

Others shared what they took away from the workshop.

Smriti Panchal shares, "Don't be afraid to make mistakes is something I can apply”.

"I like how Lakshmi Aunty broke up the word personality and explained what it meant" says **Divya Bhatia**.

“I learned to be more confident” shares **Nitya**.

"I realized that I can accept my mistakes and can learn from them" says **Radhika Katbamna**.

"First impression has taught me to be aware of my posture" shares **Neha**.

“**Strī Śakti**” Workshop for Men and Women

“This year’s workshop was broadened to include men. One might think it peculiar for men to attend a workshop dedicated to understanding the nature and role of **Mother Durgā**, **Mother Lakṣmī** and **Mother Sarasvatī**. However this workshop was helpful to anyone on the spiritual path, especially during *Navarātrī*.

The workshop cast the worship of Mother *Durgā*, Mother *Lakṣmī* and Mother *Sarasvatī* over the nine days of *Navarātrī* but more importantly as metaphor for the stages of one's spiritual journey towards liberation. We learned that each *devī puja* represents a stage on this journey.



The first three days of *Navarātrī* are dedicated to the worship of Mother *Durgā* or *Kālī*. These three days represent the first stage on our path to liberation. Mother *Durgā* is referred to as the “Mother Terrible”, the one who is trying to wake us up from the sleep of ignorance, but out of compassion as only a Mother would. Her “dreadful from” is taken to put an end to all “*rākṣasa-s*”,

that torment the spiritual seeker. We as spiritual seekers look to Mother *Durgā* for the strength and power to overcome our inner demons and vices as we work towards freedom.

The following three days are dedicated to the worship of Mother *Lakṣmī*. During this second stage, the spiritual seeker seeks to fill the vacuum left by removal of the negative and low tendencies in the first stage. Through worship of Mother *Lakṣmī*, the Goddess of “Divine Wealth”, we embrace more positive tendencies such as Love, Charity, Kindness, Devotion, Peace, Honesty, Courage, Faith, and the Desire for Liberation.

The last three days are dedicated to the worship of Mother *Sarasvatī*. The final stage on the path to liberation begins after the spiritual seeker has purified him-self through the worship of Mother *Lakṣmī*. He is then fit for the last and most subtle part of his journey. During these last three days of *Navarātrī*, Mother *Sarasvatī* is worshipped in pursuit of the Supreme Reality or *sat-cit-ānanda*, the absolute knowledge, existence and bliss.

The tenth day or *Dassera* is exemplified by the burning of the statute of *Rāvana*. The fire represents the ultimate conclusion of the spiritual journey through the destruction or burning of the ego and becoming one with the Supreme Mother. The workshop helped me understand the true meaning of *Navarātrī* and how it serves as a guide in the worship of Mother *Durgā*, Mother *Lakṣmī* and Mother *Sarasvatī*.”

-Sandeep Pandya

..... *Strī Śakti* is used by everyone in their daily lives. This *śakti* is more predominant in women, who have a greater capacity to bear pain, recognize a child's needs and have more compassion than most men. This ability of every human being to invoke this *śakti* depends on his or her life-style. One with lesser *vāsana-s* or thinner sheaths can invoke this power easier than one with more *vāsana-s* or thicker sheaths.

- Jayanti Patel

The *Strī Śakti* workshop was an enlightening experience where we learned how everything in this world works on a balancing combination of *Puruṣa* (the wielder of power, masculine) and *Prakṛti* (the power, feminine). Harmony in life, as in nature, can be achieved by developing a balance of both masculine and feminine qualities represented by ‘*Ardhanārīśvara*’. At the end of the presentation, discussion, question & answer session were interesting and insightful.

-Ravi Halker

Chinmaya Kala Jyoti inaugurated on Vijayadasami for Vidyārambha

“On the auspicious occasion of *Vijayadasami*, **Chinmaya Kala Jyoti**- the art wing of *Chinmaya Jyoti*- was inaugurated with 9able and art classes for beginners, taught by CMSD **Sevak Amarnath Puttur** and **Sevika Swaroopa Kalva** respectively. The *vidyārambha* or ceremonious beginning was held on October 14, 2013, in *Sanskriti Nilayam*. *Chinmaya Dhvani* was also launched officially for this year with two groups, the children’s choir and the adult choir. Many new students, who had previously enrolled for art, *tabla* and *Chinmaya Dhvani* attended the ceremony. After performing *ārati* to **Śrī Jyoti Vināyaka**, **Goddess Sarasvatī** and **Pujya Gurudev** invoking their blessings for the congregation, the logistical details were provided. The children were very excited to be initiated at the *āśrama* and receive their introductory lessons.”

-Amarnath Puttur



“I am inspired by this program to bring out artistic talents of children. This gives me another opportunity to work with children in an art class setting. It is a joy for me, as always, to work with children, especially on something that I am passionate about. The purpose of the art class is to bring out innate drawing and painting abilities of students and nurture them. These art classes for beginners involve introduction to drawing and painting with multimedia. This class will also enhance the drawing skills and working with colors. Children are given small projects, instructed on techniques and guided. One project is completed in each class.

Several students started lessons in drawing and painting on *Vijayadasami day*, October 14th. I am looking forward to working with more children, and hope this class will nurture and grow their skills and interests of drawing and painting.”

-Swaroopa Kalva

2013 *Dīpavālī* Celebrations- November 3

“*Dīpavālī*, in my opinion, has always ushered a new era. When **Lord Rāma** returned to Ayodhya an era known as *Rāma Rājyam* began and is remembered fondly even today. When **Lord Kṛṣṇa** along with his consort *Satyabhāmā* declared victory over *Narakāsura*, again, an era of peace and prosperity prevailed. *Dīpavālī* of 2013 also began such an era, the era of *Chinmaya Jyoti* set to enlighten and empower with knowledge several generations of the Greater San Diego communities.





“The day began with parents and children, richly dressed for the occasion, assembling in the *prāṅgaṇa* in front of *Praṇava Nilayam* around a beautifully decorated *pūjā mandapam*. Beloved **Lakshmi** led and conducted *ṣoḍaśopacāra pūjā* of Goddess *Lakṣmī* and *Dikpālaka Kubera*, which was heavily punctuated by explanations of each *upacāra*, in the simplest of terms, for the benefit of Bala Vihar students. Melodious tunes from the *Chinmaya Dhvani* and orchestra, *rāsa* dance, portrayal of *aṣṭalakṣmī--s* and enactments of *Rāmalīlā* and *Kṛṣṇalīlā* were simply great, and left an indelible mark of the occasion in everyone’s mind. *Mahāprasādam* was nothing but a feast of at least a dozen courses. *Sarve janāḥ Sukhino bhavantu*”

-Hemadri Tunuguntla

Gītā Jayanti and Tapovana Jayanti

CMSD celebrated the Birth Anniversary of **Pujya Swami Tapovana Maharaj** and **Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā** on Friday, December 13.

The Garcia family has been members of CMSD since the inauguration, and Bhuvana and the three daughters regularly participate in *Gītā* chanting and competition.



“Before joining the mission, I had never heard of anyone chanting the whole *Bhagavad Gītā*. The prospect seemed daunting as well as intriguing. Initially, I would struggle through it, get restless and keep looking at how many more pages were left. I had to beg, threaten and bribe my kids to come along.

Fast forward twelve years and now I look forward to chanting the *Gītā* with my mission family. This year was special, since it was the first time in our very own

āśrama, in front of **Śrī Jyoti Vināyaka**. After offering our respects and prayers to **Pujya Swami Tapovana Maharaj**, We started the *Bhagavad Gītā* with the *dhyāna śloka-s*. It was a perfect way to spend the night of Friday the 13th! Even when the heater stopped working, we did not stop. We moved to the class room, and

kept up the rhythm and pace. It was still an exhilarating experience. The chapters flew by. Listening to *Gītā* lectures in our weekly sessions, I vaguely knew what each chapter was about. With some familiar phrases recurring throughout the *Gita* and certain



chapters bringing flood of memories, time flew by and it wasn't until after chapter 15 that I got a little restless. At the end of it all I was on a natural high from the chanting. My kids did not complain. My older one participated in the whole chanting and my younger chanted the chapters she knew. They also noticed that Lakshmi Aunty has most of the *Gītā* memorized. What a joy it was to chant the *Gītā*! I look forward to doing it again!"

-Bhuvana Garcia

CMSD On-Going Events

Monthly Sundarakāṇḍa Pārāyaṇa

Host families for the monthly *Sundarakāṇḍa pārāyaṇa* in this quarter were:

October 2013 – Rohinee and Rajesh A garwal

November 2013 – CMSD Devi-s

December 2013 – CMSD family



This November, the 68th *sundarakāṇḍa pārāyaṇa* coincided with Thanksgiving Day as well as **Lakshmi Aunty's** 60th birthday. **Sujata Kulkarni** and **Puja Navani** share their experiences on the same.

“Celebrating this on Thanksgiving Day at *Praṇava Nilayam* felt like a perfect way to express gratitude towards *Hanumānjī*. As I entered the *Praṇava Nilayam* I felt very peaceful when I saw *Śrī Jyoti Vināyaka* nicely decorated with flower garlands and a special *mālā* for **Hanumāna-jī** made by the *devi-s*. With *Hanumānjī's* blessings and Lakshmi Aunty's love and inspiration, we successfully completed the chanting on that day. At the end of the *Sundarakāṇḍa Pārāyaṇa* we sang *Janmadinamidam* for Lakshmi Aunty. Everybody seemed to sing it with special energy! I felt that the vibrations of this *Sundarakāṇḍa Pārāyaṇa* and **Gurudev's** grace had given additional energy to Lakshmi aunty to love and take care of us even more.”

- Sujata Kulkarni

“I have been attending this event for a few years now and feel truly blessed. It feels like I am meditating, since the *Sundarakāṇḍa* recitation, especially in a group, requires maintaining concentration on the verses of the book. Unknowingly, I seem to become oblivious to my surroundings. With the sound of *mantra-s*, surrounded by strong positive vibrations I feel very peaceful. It is not necessary to know the recitation; you can just listen, chant “*Sri Ram, Jai Ram, Jai Jai Rama*”, play cymbals and experience the bliss.”

-Puja Navani

Chinmaya Ślokāñjali

-by Nita Halker

“*Chinmaya Ślokāñjali* started in 2011 as an offering to **Pujya Gurudev** in honor of the centenary celebration. The goal is to complete five levels by May 8, 2016 at the culmination of the centenary celebrations. Being one of the judges, it touches my heart to be able to listen to our Bala Vihar students chanting all the different *śloka-s*, with love and devotion in their sweet voices. With every testing, we see the confidence growing

stronger and this is only because of regular practice at home. While the support of the parents and their help with chanting is important, children are encouraged to listen to the audio while simultaneously following the *śloka-s* in the Chinmaya Book of Hymns. This practice helps them learn the right pronunciation of *śloka-s* and *mantra-s*, especially with kids who are proficient in reading the transliteration. It is joyful to watch these kids improve their pronunciations and reduce their mistakes. A child's ability to learn, memorize and practice is amazing. I have often heard parents saying that while trying to help their children, they have rediscovered the joy of chanting. I hope to see more of our Bala Vihar kids come forward and participate in Chinmaya *Ślokāñjali* in the future.”

CMSD in the Community

Workshop on “Hinduism & Hindu Culture”

Every year in the fall, a Workshop on “**Hinduism & Hindu Culture**” is conducted for the benefit of the members of the mission as well as the community.



Faith Prasad, a Bala Vihar *Sevika* of CMSD, shares her experience in attending the workshop this year:

“When our friends or coworkers ask us to explain Hinduism, few of us can find simple words to answer with, but during the workshop, **Lakshmi** used simple and clear brushstrokes to give us a full picture of all that Hinduism encompasses. In a very logical order she covered topics on the history of Hinduism, the culture, the scriptures, the meaning of religion, and the symbolism in Hinduism. Though the subjects were very broad, **Lakshmi Aunty** provided an easy to understand foundation for all who attended. How fortunate are we to have such an ancient and rich tradition that it has such depth and breadth, yet allows for individual freedom to express itself.

A large amount of information was given, but one of the things I really enjoyed was how Lakshmi Aunty beautifully explained the significance of Om with an interactive example. Showing us how the silent consciousness within us is united with the all-pervasive consciousness outside of us. I will never forget that example.

The lecture was followed with a wholesome and delicious lunch and a question/answer session. I personally found the lecture to be very, very helpful for my understanding of Hinduism. Even though this was my second time attending I learnt something new and valuable. I would encourage all mission members to attend future lectures and benefit from the wealth of information Lakshmi Auntie has to give.”

“The seminar started with how Hinduism came into existence. Lakshmi Aunty gave us a 360 degree view on Hinduism by talking about various topics on Hinduism like scriptures, *Veda-s*, Stages of Life, Caste system, God Symbolism, Reincarnation, Vegetarianism, Festivals and *Dharma*. The sequence of topics was very well organized. The best part of session was at the end of session when everyone had an opportunity to discuss and ask questions on various topics on Hinduism and Hindu culture. Lakshmi aunty answered each question in detail. At the end of day it felt good to be a part of this rich culture. I would encourage everyone to attend this workshop.” - **Parag Kelkar**

Children's reflections

Our Bala Vihar children are excited to attend Bala Vihar classes at our own āśrama in their own classrooms.

I really wanted to see all of the classrooms and the big assembly room
- *Yashna Rajaratnam*

I am very grateful that everyone worked hard to create this beautiful environment
- *Sarina Keswani*

A beautiful setting surrounded by the plants and hills, a great place to pray
- *Darpa Anireddy*

I was so impressed on seeing how nice it looked. I love the new classrooms, I will do what I can to keep it very nice and clean
- *Gaurav Prasad*

I look forward to learning about our culture here
- *Kishan Shah*

I am grateful for our Ashrama – a peaceful environment to sing and praise God.
- *Anand Rajan*

This would not have happened without the donations and supporters along with the builders
- *Rajit Agarwal*

We can keep the Ashram clean on the “inside” by not saying impure things.
- *Pratik Rungta*



BV Students' corner

Grade 5 BV students studying *Srimad Bhāgavatam* have artistically expressed what they have learnt this year under the guidance of *Sevak, Amarnath Puttur* and *Sevika, Hema Pandya*.

Dharma

by Sanjana S.

AUSTERITY

BY SANJANA

AUSTERITY IS WHEN YOU LIVE A SIMPLE LIFE AND DEVOTE IT TO GOD. YOU HAVE NO LUXURY AND MODERATE. YOU WOULD HAVE FEW PLEASURES AND ALWAYS LOVE AND SERVE GOD. I PRACTICE AUSTERITY BY TRYING NOT TO HAVE MY PARENTS SPEND MONEY ON ME FOR THINGS THAT I DON'T NEED AND DON'T WANT. I ALSO TRY TO MEDITATE BEFORE I SLEEP EVERY NIGHT.

TRUTHFULNESS

BY SANJANA

TRUTHFULNESS IS WHEN YOU ARE HONEST AND SAY THE TRUTH. YOU DON'T LIE OR CHEAT. YOU ALWAYS TALK THE TRUTH AND DON'T TRY TO HIDE ANYTHING. I PRACTICE TRUTHFULNESS BY TALKING THE TRUTH AND NOT TRYING TO HIDE ANYTHING FROM ANYONE. I ALSO TRY TO BE HONEST IN MY SPEECH AND NOT TRY TO LIE OR CHEAT.

CHARITY

BY SANJANA

CHARITY IS WHEN YOU GIVE THINGS TO OTHERS FOR GOD OR IN NEED. YOU HELP ANYONE IN NEED AND ARE THERE TO GIVE CHARITY TO EVERYONE. YOU HELP YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND YOUR TEACHERS. I SHOW CHARITY EVERYWHERE BY GIVING MY MONEY TO THE POOR AND GIVING MY FOOD TO THE STREET DOGS AND ANIMALS. I ALSO TRY TO HELP ANYONE WHO IS IN NEED.

PURITY

BY SANJANA

PURITY IS WHEN YOU ARE PURE IN YOUR MIND AND YOUR HEART. YOU DON'T HAVE ANY BAD THOUGHTS OR FEELINGS. YOU ARE PURE AND CLEAN. I PRACTICE PURITY BY TRYING TO BE PURE IN MY MIND AND HEART. I ALSO TRY TO BE PURE IN MY SPEECH AND ACTIONS.

KALI

BY SANJANA

ONE DAY, KING PARIKSHIT WAS WALKING IN HIS KINGDOM. HE SAW KALI, A WICKED MAN DRESSED IN FUR COATS, BEARING LEGS OF A WHITE BULL. THREE OF THE LEGS WERE BROKEN AND HE WAS CRYING FOR THE PAIN. KING PARIKSHIT ASKED KALI WHY HE WAS CRYING. KALI SAID HE WAS CRYING FOR THE PAIN HE WAS FEELING. PARIKSHIT ASKED KALI WHY HE WAS CRYING. KALI SAID HE WAS CRYING FOR THE PAIN HE WAS FEELING. PARIKSHIT ASKED KALI WHY HE WAS CRYING. KALI SAID HE WAS CRYING FOR THE PAIN HE WAS FEELING.

Aish

Truthfulness means always telling what is right and not telling what is wrong. It also means someone you can count on and that they are always honest. For example, you tell the truth about something, you tell the truth.

Purity means having a clean mind, no egoistic thoughts, you always have good thoughts, not horrible thoughts. For example, you do not think of someone else as better than you, you think of someone else as being better.

Charity means being nice to everyone around you. It can also mean being smart and wise. For example, you see someone hurt, you see someone who is in trouble, you try to help them.

Austerity means doing something every day, another that will make you a better person. For example, you do yoga, you do prayers, you do good deeds.

Shreya, Chetsi

Parikshit banishing Kali

One of the legs of the bull has a quality of truthfulness, and this is the only leg with a quality that dharma still has. Another leg of the bull that broke represented purity. Purity means to have good thoughts and do the correct actions. In addition, the bull had a leg with a quality of austerity which means having a simple or easy condition. Finally, the bull's leg is representing charity, and that means to be willing to give to others and to help others that are in need. These are the 4 qualities for each leg of the bull.

Kali, a wicked king, harmed a bull that was dharma, and caused it so that it had three broken legs. The cow which was Mother Earth was standing near the bull with tears. Parikshit, a king, sees all of this, and the bull tells him that Kali may be punishing him because he might have done something wrong in his past. Parikshit realizes the bull is dharma, and banishes Kali to places where there are gambling people.

Truthfulness

It is to have truthfulness when you always stick with the truth no matter what the consequences are, and only lie if your lie helps someone in great need other than yourself.

Austerity

If you have austerity, then you have perfect self control of yourself, and keep all your senses under control. You have to be calm.

Where Kali was banished

King Parikshit allowed Kali to only stay in the places where there was gambling, cruelty to women, drinking, and thievery. We must try to avoid these places.

Purity

If you have purity, then your mind is also pure. If you have purity, then you have innocence, and you don't have a single evil thought.

Charity

Charity means that you care for others, and not just for yourself. You are willing to sacrifice precious stuff if it can help someone other than yourself.

Grade 4 BV students studying *Rāmāyaṇa*-part II have creatively expressed what they have learnt this year in amazing Diorama-s under the guidance of *Sevak, Yogesh Babla* and *Sevika, Faith Prasad*.



Chinmaya Kala Jyoti- Art class projects

Name Design by Amoolya Chandrabatta



Light House by Darpa Anireddy



CM family visits Chinmaya Jyoti

It was a pleasure to have our CMW Secretary, Aparna Devi Jujjuvarappu visit us during the Christmas Holidays along with her parents- ardent devotees and *Sādhaka-s* from Chennai.

An accomplished Carnatic musician, Aparna sang melodious bhajans at the altar.



“Yes, God is motionless, because there isn’t any place where He is not. When a child is sitting in his mother’s lap, he can cry for a million things, but he cannot cry for his mother to come. We are all in the lap of the infinite Truth. It is nearer than your own eyelashes. There is no distance between you and It.”

Swami Tejomayananda

