



## *Touched by the Master*

### **On Meditation**



Sit down and become the Himalayas. You be an actionless mass, spreading all over and completely motionless. Let Life and its activities emanate from you, on your surface, and get reabsorbed into you - as the forests of Himavan. If you can stay thus for ten minutes, you become the Himalayas! And in your core is the Sanctum of the Self.

From the heart of the Himalayas flows the eternal Ganges, gushing perpetually in its sacred waters. Realize the center and let activities for the welfare of all others flow out of you into the world around you.

**- Swami Chinmayananda**

## **Groundbreaking ceremony at CMSJ's Clayton Facility – July 22, 2011**



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## Groundbreaking ceremony at CMSJ's Clayton Facility

The day had finally arrived. By God's grace, and with the blessings of Pujya Gurudev and Guruji, the groundbreaking festivities for our new Chinmaya Mission San Jose facility began in the august presence of Chinmaya Mission Acharyas. Pujya Guruji Himself presided over the occasion and Swami Shantanandaji, Swamini Amrutananda (New Zealand), Acharya Br. Prabodhji, Acharya Umaji, and Br. Ericji, were also present to bless the effort. CMSJ devotees present and past from all over the nation had assembled to participate in the occasion. In typical CMSJ style, in keeping with Vedic tradition, Panditji (Shri Ravichandran) started the day with a Ganapathi Homa to invoke all auspiciousness and unobstructed success upon the proposed undertaking. This was followed by Vaastu Puja – a unique experience for CMSJ, to consecrate the land on which new construction is imminent. After the puja the gathered assembly went outside and Pujya Guruji, CM Acharyas and senior devotees laid ceremonial bricks amidst the chanting of Vedic mantras in a freshly excavated portion of ground to symbolize the start of construction of the new facility.



After the ceremony was concluded, Pujya Guruji addressed the assembly with inspiring words highlighting Gurudev's mission, Gurudev's commitment to spreading the message of Vedanta and the spread of His glory. To everyone's delight, Guruji pointed out that he had fulfilled his contribution to CMSJ's continued growth by giving us Br. Prabodhji and that it was now our turn to complete the project and commit to its continued sustenance! Prabodhji also used the occasion to promote the Mananam series book, "He Did It", an inspiring biographical compilation of incidents from Gurudev's life, and experiences of devotees with Gurudev. As a fitting finale to the groundbreaking celebrations, Swami Shantanandaji conducted a Yajna on the Shiva Mahimna Stotram. Punctuating the discourses with his characteristic good humor, Swamiji expounded on this devotional text, to the great delight of the assembled devotees. His unique style of rendering even complex ideas in simple and easily understandable ways ensured that everyone, including youngsters enjoyed the text and the sublime message it conveyed.

May God's grace and the blessings of Pujya Gurudev and Pujya Guruji, and the prayers and good wishes of all of our Acharyas be with us as we work towards building our new facility and use it to propagate the Chinmaya Mission legacy.



## ASHTAVAKRA GITA - Jnana Yagna Report

Before beginning with lessons of the Ashtavakra Gita, it must be known that there are 6 steps to Self Improvement; working for one's Self, disowning the results of one's actions, dedicating one's Karmas to the Lord, seeing the Lord in a particular form, focusing on building connections with the Lord as the all pervading, and lastly, meditating.

In Chapter 6, Ashtavakra, the Guru, asks his student Janaka how it is possible for one to reach dissolution. "No dissolution is possible," Janaka says. Janaka explains that he is like space, with no end or beginning, while the finite world is like a pot. It is his duty to eliminate his ignorance and to understand that in order for there to be a separation or union, there must be two entities; thus, he must make himself one with the Brahman. Ashtavakra then gives the example of the ocean. He explains that one must understand "I am the ocean. Waves arise and dissolve in me. I am undisturbed, regardless of the commotion around me." In addition, he says, "I am the ocean, in which the boats have the movement; not me." Furthermore, the knower of the Self goes beyond sorrow; he understands that he is in all beings and all beings are in him. He comes to the realization that "This body will fall; but Existence will prevail."

In Chapter 7, we learn from Ashtavakra that an individual doesn't create the cosmic world but rather a false world of his own, in the world already created. But how was this world created? The source is ONE, however, the diversity is endless. "My Swarupa is Ati Shanta."—my true nature remains undisturbed. We understand that at the mind level, disturbance will always be there. Next it is taught that variety and objects have no atma—the "I". These inanimate objects borrow their existence from the real I. This world is similar to a magician's show, meaning that experience is not always true; it gives illusions. Therefore, the body is just an appearance for the real "me".

"When there is mind, there is bondage," says Ashtavakra. In Chapter 8, he explains that every mood, whether anger, sorrow, or elation, will create bondage, for each has an opposite. For example, joy will always be followed by sorrow. That's why you must have Jivan Mukti: a relaxed mind; for mental problems cannot be diagnosed. In addition, "I mustn't give any reality to this mind," for upon doing so, I create bondage as well. Only when there is no mind, am I liberated. If there is insistence with any object, idea, or feeling in one's self, there is bondage. My Guru Prabodh-ji, provides the following example: Compare life to a game of chess, just with many more players; there are many people, each with different moves and intentions, that I cannot control. Hence, I must keep myself flexible to constant change. Lastly, instilling good habits, behaviors, and ways of life, before picking up and solidifying bad ones, is also very important in one's role in life; you must train the mind to become controlled and robust.

Chapter 9 explains the Facts of Life. First there is Dvandvani: pairs of opposites. These are constant in life, whether one is six or ninety years old. It gives the explanation that every experience in life is endless. That's why Ashtavakra says you must become the one who starts dropping things mentally. Implement dispassion upon yourself!

"What should and shouldn't be done, exists when you don't have faith in the real I." Our Guru Prabodh-ji, provides another example here to illustrate this point: For instance, a father must send his son to a college party, trusting that the son will not drink alcohol. This means that the father needed to have raised his son correctly in the first place so that he'll have confidence that his son won't drink. Hence, upon sending his son to the party, he must have faith in the real I, and trust that his son will not drink any alcohol.

*Report on Jnana Yagna by Krti Tallam, age 14. This report was on a series of discourses given by Br. Prabodh Chaitanya on Ahtavakra Gita, chapters 6-10, from September 3-5, 2011. Acharyaji had covered chapters 1-5 of Ashtavakra Gita during earlier retreats.*



## ASHTAVAKRA GITA (Continued)

Another example Prabodh-ji provided is, the fear of old age. Most think that one obtains disease when becoming old; but it is the old age that is the disease itself! That's why we must keep ourselves in good condition. Upon knowing this, we come to our conclusion on this topic: a) Firstly, do not abuse your God-given body. b) Secondly, thank the Lord for the body you've been given. c) Lastly, use it to the best of your abilities!

Ashtavakra teaches us that desires can also give us discontent. That's why we must have no desires, only dispassion, to reach Perfection. In relation to Perfection, it's important to know that the effect and the cause are one thing. Everything is Brahman.

Chapter 10 continues by Ashtavakra explaining the knowledge around our desires. We shouldn't give up a desire because it makes us miserable; it should be because we want to reach Perfection. Let go of your life; do not hang on to anything, because all desires give an individual dependency. One must also remember that ignorance is the cause of pain. This means that one must continue with his or her daily duties with dispassion, but not with ignorance to the happenings around them.

Ashtavakra teaches us that "I am the infinite consciousness." When there is confusion, this means there is an absence of this knowledge in my mind. Thus, I should work towards this knowledge. Next, we must understand that we shouldn't be so attached to our earthly lives. We must live the years we've been given, and then move on; do not continue to hold on to that which is meant to be gone. In addition, remember: it's the body that goes away, not you; you'll live on in another body. You are the Brahman; it's all already in you. Ashtavakra now tells us to be dispassionate even about dharma, karma, and so on; rise above it all—to Karma Sanyasa! The nature of karma is to exhaust a person; thus we must not let that happen, and let go of everything. We must strive to reach Perfect souls and become one with the Lord.

## Vinayaka Chaturthi at Sandeepany

We celebrated Vinayaka Chaturthi on Sept 1<sup>st</sup> this year. The Swaranjali group rendered a melodious start to the puja with bhajans in several languages. Pandit Ravichandran invoked the Lord, the remover of obstacles, in the clay image made for the occasion. The sight of the benevolent elephant headed Lord, seated under a colorful umbrella, and decorated with colorful garlands and flowers, with his favo-rite mooshika beside him delighted everyone. The Lord was worshipped with grass and leaves and offered his favorite food – modakas. His grace was invoked to ensure the smooth progress of all events planned for the year. After the puja, devotees moved downstairs for sumptuous prasad and dinner. The Lord was given the ritual send-off the following weekend with a vasarjan in the Stevens Creek which was full of water due to plentiful rains we had earlier in the year.



## 15th Residential 2-year Vedanta Course at Sandeepany Mumbai

Commences on Sept 1, 2011 on the auspicious occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi. For more information please visit:

<http://sandeepany.chinmayamission.com/> .

Please contact **Brahmachari Prabodh Chaitanya** ([prabodh@chinmayamission.org](mailto:prabodh@chinmayamission.org)) if you have any questions regarding this course.

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15<sup>th</sup> vedanta course  
A SYSTEMATIC WAY OF LEARNING VEDANTA

THE COURSE COMMENCES ON SEPTEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup> 2011  
AT SANDEEPANY SADHANALAYA, MUMBAI

ELIGIBILITY: UNIVERSITY GRADUATES - MEN OR WOMEN  
-UNMARRIED- WITH A SINCERE INTEREST IN THE STUDY  
OF VEDANTA.  
AGE: 18 - 30  
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## Lalitha Sahasranama Archana Puja

On the auspicious occasion of Navarathri, we performed the Lalitha Sahasranama Archana puja at our Clayton ashram on Friday, September 30th. A beautiful picture of Goddess Durga, flanked on either side by Goddess Lakshmi and Goddess Saraswathi, adorned the stage. The floor below the stage was set up for families to perform the Sahasranama archana puja under the guidance of Pandit Ravichandran.

The program began with bhajans rendered by the Swaranjali choir from all three bay area centers – Danville, Fremont and San Jose. The families then gathered around the pictures of the goddess that had been set up, and followed along with Panditji as he guided them through the different steps of the puja, starting with Ganesha Puja, Kalasha puja and invocation of the goddess. The Lalitha Shasranama archana was performed as part of the Shodasha Upachara puja. At the end Panditji performed arathi and the arathi plates were passed down the rows to all the families. The devotees then received tirtha prasad from Panditji before partaking of dinner prasad which was sponsored by the San Ramon center members.



## Upcoming Festivals/Programs

**Shiva Puja:** Every month 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday, in Sandeepany. Next 3 are on Nov 14<sup>th</sup> 2011, Dec 12<sup>th</sup> 2011 and Jan 9<sup>th</sup> 2012.

**Diwali Puja:** Oct 26<sup>th</sup> 2011 in Sandeepany. Swaranjali at 6:45 pm, Puja at 7:30, Prasad, Icecream and Fireworks

**Diwali Samashti Puja:** Sat Oct 29<sup>th</sup> in Centerville Junior High, Fremont at 7 pm. Register for Puja Donate and sponsor food at CMSJ website.

Skanda Shashti: Mon Oct 31<sup>st</sup> Sandeepany @ 7:30 pm

**Samashti Vishnu Sahasranama & New Years:** Dec 31/Jan 1<sup>st</sup> in Clayton location

## Our Acharya's upcoming Yajnas

**Thanksgiving Camp** Nov 23-27, 2011 in Krishnalaya, Piercy. Text: Amritabindu Upanishad. For Registration, see CMSJ website

**San Ramon Camp:** Dec 20-23, 2011 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm in California High School, San Ramon. Text: Ramana Maharshi's Upadesha Saara

**Christmas Camp:** Dec 25-30, 2011 10 am – 11:30 am in our Clayton facility. Text: Taittiriya Upanishad, Ch. 3.

For Swamiji's regular sessions every week, please visit <http://www.chinmaya-sanjose.org/new/adultclasses.shtml>

In the following verses Lord Krishna shows us how to conduct oneself in this materialistic world objects in order to attain liberation while performance of action.

**Verse 11**

In this verse Lord Krishna addressing Arjuna as Partha says in whatever way men worship Me, the same way I fulfill their desires.

**Verse 12**

Bhagawan makes clear that there are some individuals who make sacrifices to the gods in order to obtain immediate satisfaction from actions. In the world of objects success can quickly be obtained from actions.

**Verse 13**

In this verse Lord Krishna talks about the 4 distinct types of castes. The Lord says that depending on the quality and temperaments of desires the individuals fall into 4 distinct types or castes. The Lord asserts that the fourfold-caste has been created by Me on the basis of different Gunas and Karma. He declares that though I am the author thereof; know Me to be the Non-doer and Changeless.

**Verse 14**

In this verse Krishna affirms that actions do not taint Him, nor He has any anxiety for the fruits of actions. An individual who experiences the same is not chained by his actions.

**Verse 15**

The Lord acknowledges that having known this truth the ancient seekers of spiritual enlightenment performed actions. Therefore, the Lord asks Arjuna to perform actions as the spiritual seekers did in the past.

**Verse 16**

Krishna makes clear that even the sages are confused as to what constitutes an action-karma and what constitutes inaction.

**Verse 16 (continued)**

The compassionate Lord begins to explain what action is. The Lord assures Arjuna that by understanding this you will be freed from evils.

**Verse 17**

In this verse Lord Krishna points out what is “right action” karma. What is “forbidden action” Vikarma and what is “actionlessness”. The Lord totally rejects inactivity -A-karma. (The right karma constitutes daily duties-Nitya karma, obligatory duties-Naimittika karma and desire prompted duties-kamya karma).

**Verse 18**

The Lord says he who sees’s actionlessness in action and action in actionlessness he is the intelligent among men; he is a fully integrated person and he is the true doer in all actions everywhere.

**Verse 19**

The Lord says he whose undertakings are all without desires and mental agitations and whose actions are burnt up in the fire of knowledge, such an individual in perfect in action and the sages call him wise.

**Verse 20**

Renouncing all attachments to the fruits of actions undertaken, ever satisfied, depending on nothing else other than the Lord, such an individual is not bound to the action though engaged in action.

**Verse 21**

He who functions without hope, his body and mind well controlled and having give up all sense of possession, such an individual by doing mere bodily action does not incur sin.

**Verse 22**

Lord Krishna adds, satisfied to what comes to him, unaffected by the pairs of opposites, free from envy, even minded in both failure and success, through out performance of action he is not bound.