



# CHINMAYA PRADĪPIKĀ

CMSD QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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## IN THIS ISSUE OF CHINMAYA PRADĪPIKĀ

The highlight of this quarter was the special anniversary program that was honored by the pristine presence of Swamini Shivapriyananda who also conducted a Jñāna Yajña on Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam. Tyāgaraja Ārādhana and Śivarātrī were celebrated in a grand manner. There were workshops on Graceful Aging, Time Management and What is my Dharma? -Prioritizing wisely.



## THE MASTER SPEAKS

*The future is not in the Sun, Moon and the stars; it is not in the planets. The future is the past modified in the present.*





## CMSD celebrates 18 magnificent years!

On **January 27, 2019**, CMSD presented a special anniversary program in the pristine presence of **Swamini Shivapriyananda**, epitomizing our Pujya Gurudev's blessings ever flowing at the *āśrama*. The celebrations started with a beautiful invocation by our Chinmaya Swaranjali team, tuning the ambience with divine presence. While remembering *Bharat māṭā* for the Republic Day, the audience was taken on a memorable journey through a video presentation of a march during the MSC on "Bharat Mā ke lāl hum" This was followed by an eloquent video message by Pujya Swami Swaroopananda on - Think Big Think Chinmaya! to inspire us going forward.

## *Pañca ṛṇa* : Gratitude - Pay It Forward!

### - Presented by Bala Vihar Children

The story behind how a seed thought of a potential Chinmaya Mission center at San Diego, as discussed by Lakshmi Aunty with Swami Shantanandaji in 1999, took its roots and grew into this beautiful *āśrama* by 2013 certainly had the audience in awe! This year the Bala Vihar children worked together to present yet another powerful message on *pañca ṛṇa*: **Gratitude - Pay It Forward!** Having truly acknowledged all that we have received in life, the clear mind full of conviction thus when merges into the pure heart, from there springs forth spontaneous yet powerful feelings of immense love and gratitude. From such a heart then emerge concrete actions to express this debt of Gratitude. All of us as human beings thus have the bounden duty towards the Lord through five *yajña*-s to be performed daily also known as the *pañca ṛṇa*.

Grades PreK and Kindergarten together charmed the audience through their innocent yet powerful message of acknowledging *deva ṛṇa* by portraying the strength of God behind every day wonders. *nṛ ṛṇa* was introduced by a symbolic message of *Namaste* by the first and second graders, and a captivating song thanking all the important people in the community including doctors, teachers and firefighters.



Third and fourth graders expressed their duties towards *bhūta ṛṇa* through the learnings from Lord *Rāma* and *Hanumān*, by interspersing the stories of *Rāmāyaṇa*. They pledged to do their part by cultivating spiritual relation with Mother Nature by conserving and serving it. The true spirit of gratitude is to live by the values and teachings of our Guru. How this can be weaved into everyday living was beautifully portrayed by fifth and sixth grades for *ṛṣi ṛṇa*. *pitṛ ṛṇa* was dramatically portrayed through the stories of *Rāmāyaṇa* a by seventh and eighth graders. When the *pitṛ* are satisfied and rejoicing – there is indeed peace and harmony around! This was highlighted during the presentation and the children promised to learn and live by the traditions and values of our *Sanātana Dharma* inside us.







A heartwarming gratitude to Pujya Gurudev was addressed by our CHYK **Akshatha Silas** through a beautiful poem that described HIS ever-glowing light guiding the heart through the daily endeavors by taking innumerable forms and spreading joy and bliss. The performance concluded with the high schoolers taking on the stage with foot tapping beats of Grateful: A Love Song to the World. A pledge to keep CMSD glowing was beautifully expressed by **Radhachandran** and **Nikhil Varaiya** and the audience got a glimpse of Guruji through another powerful message as expressed during the *āśrama* inauguration. Swamini Amma's concluding words were a perfect end to the grand celebrations. She was delighted to see the childrens' acknowledgment of abundance and the *Sanḥkalpa* of performing the duties in a *Yajña bhāva* as effortlessly flowing throughout the program. Her amiable demeanor touched all the hearts alike in the audience. After Chinmaya *ārati* and pledge, the members were treated to a home cooked sumptuous meal.

- Manasi Popat









## Reflections on the Program

"Today's CMSD 18th Anniversary Program was a great success. As someone who watched it from a viewer perspective rather than another performer, the true scale of joy and love shown in the class was made visible through these presentations. The students showed great understanding of their respective topics and students from Kindergarten turned into gurus for adults.

**Aashish Krishnan, Grade 9**

"It was an amazing experience to participate and see my friends and family perform at the anniversary program in front of Swamini Amma. I liked the gratitude song by the high schoolers.

**Saatvic Mahesh, Grade 3**

What I took from this program is although we will never be able to show our full gratitude to these things, we can do little things, like chanting the Daily Prayers and watering the plants in our garden, to help us eventually fulfill these debts. This program was both entertaining and interesting and I thoroughly enjoyed being a part of it! I look forward for the Annual Program in June.

**Ananya Bharathwaj, Grade 8**

"The Anniversary program was truly mesmerizing as we all journeyed through the five stages of Gratitude under the divine blessings of Gurudev and Swamini Amma. From this program, I can gladly say everyone learned something new but everyone was also inspired by the words that drive our Balavihar spirit; We CAN, We MUST, and We WILL!

**Hemadarshani Rajendran, Grade 7**

"Delighted to be a part of the CMSD family. We really cherished all the events from yesterday's celebration. Particularly, the outstanding performances by kids from all age groups. My hearty congratulations to Bala Vihar teachers for their relentless and selfless services. Thanks to Lakshmi aunty and Sukumar uncle for their dedicated efforts in developing CMSD as a center for excellence in San Diego.

**Dr. Venkatramana Pegadaraju**

It was heartwarming to see the kids' performance on gratitude: and inculcating great values and examples to the other kids who were not able to participate!!! NOT to forget the tasty food prepared and served with pure heart by the CMSD family. It was so beautiful to see little kids serving water, napkins, taking plates from us and more. It makes me feel proud to be here. Special Congratulations to Lakshmi Aunty and Sukumar Uncle for all their effort and time to create a place like this!

**Mona Pandya**





## Jñāna Yajña - Divinizing the Mind'

"Members of CMSD, San Diego were privileged to bask in the August presence of Swamini Shivapriyananda Amma in January 2019. True to her name, this dear devotee of Śiva, expounded on *Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam* 'for 'Divinizing the Mind' during the five day *Jñāna Yajña*. During the *Bhagavad Gītā* and other discourses, we have heard that the very essence of human beings is pure divine nature. But the individual limited mindset keeps one farther away from experiencing this divine nature.

The *Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam* ' composed of six *mantras* is a tool to reprogram the mind from its limited belief system. 'Śiva ' here means Auspiciousness, *Saṅkalpa* ' means intention, and *Sūktam* ' literally means well-said. Very beautifully each verse of this *Sūktam* dives deeper into discovering the nature and unique qualities of the mind. Thoughts guide our actions and we are, after all, what we think. Most of the time during our busy days our mind is on an auto-pilot running in myriad directions. However through these discourses Amma brought out a new understanding of the workings of the mind and gave methods to reprogram our thoughts.

Many of us have seen and heard Swamini Shivapriyananda at the 2018 MahaSamadhi camp, but that was just a glimpse of her personality. So many more facets of her personality came alive during this five day *Jñāna Yajña* – she was a loving grandmother when she narrated all her wonderful experiences of times with Gurudev, a wise ancient Sage when she conveyed a point with the moral stories, a neuroscientist (which she was) as she connected brain research to the mind, and a pure-hearted soul with her playful demeanor. Eighth grader **Shreya Sakpal** exclaimed that "the lectures beautifully connected powerful mantras to my brain functioning throughout my daily life. Amma's relatable examples made it easy to understand how I can train my mind to always think auspiciously." With her lucid style, Swamini Amma simplified this ancient hymn and made it palatable for all.

Her talks were interspersed with what she called two-minute 'intercises' (versus exercises) that helped to observe and calm down the mind. During those moments of intercises, a blanket of peace and calm would envelope Pranava Nilayam as individual minds dove deeper into silence. So much so that one could probably hear a pin drop. Needless to say these intercises were extremely refreshing.

Every day we chanted the last repeating line of each verse of the *Sūktam*, that goes - *Tanme Manaḥ Śiva Saṅkalpam astu* which means, 'May my mind be filled with Auspiciousness.' Are you game?

-Sujata Sovani





## Tyāgaraja Ārādhana

CMSD's fifth annual *Tyāgaraja Ārādhana* was held on Friday Jan 25, 2019 at CMSD. The event was a huge success with standing room only in the Pranava Nilayam. There were many participants from the San Diego music community. Swamini Shivapriyananda Amma presided over the event which began with the Tyāgaraja aṣṭōttara pūjā in honor of Saint *Tyāgaraja*. Nagesh Nookula was the narrator and gave the meaning and descriptions of the *kṛti-s*. The main event was the *Pañcaratna kṛti-s* performed by Srilekha Krishnamurthy, Vrishank Chandrasekher, Radhakrishnan Ramachandran, Dilip Gopalakrishna and Tejas Srinivasan. Following this various artists from the San Diego community at large presented their music both in instrumental, (flute and violin) and vocal forms. What was impressive was the performers, for the most part, were youth or young adults. These American youth of Indian origin have talent and passion for this classical art form.

Grade 9 Bala Vihar student, **Sarika Pasumarthy**, said "Being able to attend and participate in the *Tyāgaraja Ārādhana* festivities was an incredible experience, and I feel very blessed to be able to attend. I enjoyed listening to all the different voices reaching one common goal of celebrating the great Saint's Ārādhana, and showing our gratitude of *ṛṣi ṛṇa*."

Swamini Amma addressed the audience and said that the best way to honor these Masters is to carry on their art. It is reassuring to know that this is being done here in San Diego by our youth.

-Bhuvana Garcia











Let us tune up the noble instrument of mind given to us through a careful policing of our motives and thoughts. Let us, with such a prepared instrument, search out the Wealth of Light-Power-Wisdom that is lying in ourselves.

”



## Mahā Śivarātrī Celebrations

Swamini Shivapriyananda's discourse on *Śiva Saṅkalpa Sūktam*, conducted at our CMSD āśrama in January 2019, was a powerful experience for all CMSD members. The verses of the *Sūktam* and Swamini Amma's teachings on divinizing the mind were still fresh in the thoughts of all members when assembling to celebrate **Mahā Śivarātrī on March 4, 2019**. The meditative evening began at 7:30 PM with the *ṣoḍaśopacāra pūjā* for Lord *Uma Maheśvara*. CMSD sevak **Ramesh Sairam** received the honor of performing the *pūjā* under the guidance of Lakshmi Aunty, joined by many Bala Vihar students and CMSD families. Pranava Nilayam resonated with the beautifully meditative chants of *Rudram*, *Camakam*, , *Śrī Śivapañcākṣarastōtram*, *Līṅgāṣṭakam* and several other *stotrams* as all members followed along from the Chinmaya Book of Hymns. Members took turns to step out and accept *praśada*, while the chanting of *Om Namaḥ Śivaya* continued inside Pranava Nilayam, getting more and more meditative as midnight approached. A few minutes before midnight, Lakshmi Aunty guided the CMSD members to meditate on Lord *Śiva* focusing on the divine *Jyoti* within. *Ārati* was then performed to culminate a memorable, joyous and truly meditative evening.



During the Bala Vihar session on **March 3, 2019**, students of Grades 2 and 9 gave a special presentation on the special legends and significance behind *Śivarātrī* celebrations. CMSD member **Priya Venkitaraman** reflected on the evening's celebrations – "It was a truly divine evening as I felt amazing vibrations and joy within Pranava Nilayam. It was a privilege to be a part of the *Mahā Śivarātrī pūjā*."

Similar thoughts were shared by another member who participated in the *pūjā* – The serene atmosphere within the āśrama added to the gravitas of the *Śivarātrī* celebrations. It was a blessed experience.

**Ashwin Mohan**











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## Graceful Aging Workshop

The talk on 'Graceful Aging' by Lakshmi Aunty on March 24, 2019 based on the book by Swami Tejomayanandaji, loaded with anecdotes and discussions, explained very beautifully what 'Graceful Aging' is and how it begins in childhood. This may seem counterintuitive but the term 'Graceful Aging' can be made clear by understanding what it is not. For example, think about 'Disgraceful' aging and 'Graceless' aging - the former based on living a thoughtless life on whims and impulses while the latter - a vision-less, aimless life, pushing days just awaiting death. Graceful living, therefore, means living thoughtfully, with a purpose and with mindful awareness of the ticking time. The purpose being service to others, to attain mental purity, and thereby spiritual attainment. Graceful aging can begin early in life by practicing discipline and self-control as a student, slowly progressing across the other *āśrama-s*: through dharmic dutiful actions as a householder, practice of *Vairagya* or dispassion as a retiree, thereby finally culminating into complete surrender and devotion to the Supreme - all guided by scriptural study. With a sincere *Saṅkalpa* and a clear intention anyone can begin to live consciously at whatever stage of life they are at. Instead of counting age by number of years, every birthday can be the perfect occasion to assess the inner transformation and widen the vision for further attainment. Meaning, purpose, and fulfillment are the invaluable gifts of Graceful Aging. As aptly said by CMSD member **Sandhya Srinivasan**, Aging Gracefully is of importance to people of all ages. The information is required early on, as the preparation begins in the previous *āśrama*, before entering the next phase. Thank you for providing this wonderful experience at CMSD.

-Sujata Sovani





## Annual MLK day workshop

### What is my Dharma?- Prioritizing wisely!

On **January 21, 2019**, CMSD held a workshop - "Prioritizing Wisely: What is my Dharma?" **Jay Parikh** shares his experience - The MLK day workshop was especially helpful for us students because we discussed what needs to be prioritized and more importantly why. In our discussions we came up with several questions and Lakshmi Aunty gave us reasons based on our scriptures why certain things have more priority than others. A great example was of Gandhiji because he placed more importance of protecting the country as a whole over his family since the whole country saw him as "Bapu". The workshop was a great way to teach us why and how to act in many different situations.

## Time Management Workshop

Sixteen children from Grades 7 to 12 participated in Time Management Workshop at CMSD, held on **March 17, 2019**. It is indeed very intriguing watching Lakshmi Aunty conduct such Youth Workshops with complete spontaneity. The workshop started with simple questions such as Who is in charge of Time? Are we able to change Time? What are we here to Manage if Time is Unchangeable? There was complete involvement from the children present, and they were led to seek the answers from within, thereby owning their own solutions with a hope of making it their own Dharma as students. Hands on activity creates a lasting impression in our minds, and one such activity was included to analyze importance of prioritization. A platform to share personal experiences enabled as a motivating factor to learn from each other, as shared by one of the students.

- **Manasi Popat**



## Sixth grade children watch "On a Quest"

As part of the BV curriculum Grade 6 children got together on **March 30, 2019** to watch the movie "On a Quest" to look at our Pujya Gurudev's Life at a deeper level, and share perspectives.





## Reflections by the Bala Vihar children

During the time management workshop, I was able to learn a great deal about how to organize all of my daily activities to fit the 24 hours in my day. The first thing I learned is to prioritize, as the biggest and most important things, the ones that I must do should be the ones I do first. This way, if I have extra time later, I still have room for the things I like to do but are not necessarily the mandatory activities. If I do the things I like to do first, then I will not have time to do the big and important jobs. Planning is essential, so everything that needs to be done is done. One other important concept I learned is about simplifying. I have to narrow down the activities I do so I can get better at those things and really excel in them. If I take too much on, it is much harder to keep track of everything and do well in all of them.

-Harini R.

Thank you for organizing the time management workshop that we had earlier today. I enjoyed it a lot and learned how to manage priorities and work more efficiently. I also found many ways in which I could apply the information that was discussed there to my life and have it benefit me.

-Arushi Bhardwaj



## Bala Vihar children make Śiva Liṅgā

On Feb 18, 2019 Bala Vihar children took part in a project to make *Śiva Liṅgā-s* for *Mahā Śivarātrī*.



Punctuality, Practice, and Perfection – the three P-s happen if you go to Bala Vihar classes regularly. Then these traits become a part of you. – Pujya Guruji

Money comes and goes, a value comes and grows.  
Give your children values, instead of valuables.

”



## New Year 2019 Celebrations

Like every year, New Year was celebrated at CMSD with Śrī Ganapati pūjā and Viṣṇusahasranāmam.

"The New Year is ever new. Time is a continuous flow. Yet, in time, each of us can renew ourselves. Thus, New Year arrives when you renew yourself."

-Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda Saraswati



## Monthly Sundara-Kāṇḍa

On **March 23, 2019** CMSD celebrated completion of 11 years of the monthly **Sundara-Kāṇḍa Pārāyaṇa** in a grand manner. The Śrī Hanumān pūjā was followed by the Sundara-Kāṇḍa recital. Members assembled in Pranava Nilayam sang the Rāma nāma in the same tune with children accompanying them on various instruments.







## SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA



*Hold yourself responsible for maintaining standards  
greater than what others expect from you.*