

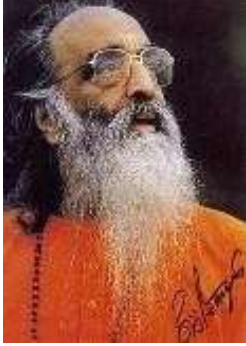


# Chinmaya Pradīpikā

CMSD Quarterly Newsletter



October 2018, No. 28



## The Master Speaks:

*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.*

- Swami Chinmayananda

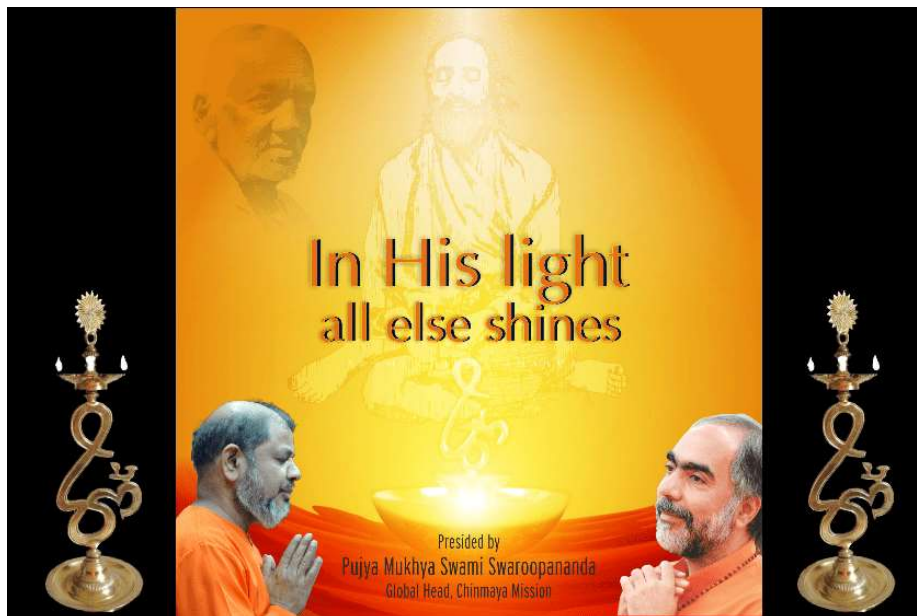
## In this issue of Chinmaya Pradīpikā

The special feature of this issue is the **25th Chinmaya Mahāsamādhi camp**. Chinmaya Mission San Diego was extremely privileged to host the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this significant event with a six-day family camp in the very land that our Pujya Gurudev left His mortal coil. Members of the Chinmaya family came together in the august presence of Pujya Swami Swaroopananda, Pujya Swami Shantananda and many other swamis, swaminis, brahmacharis and brahmacharinis.

The other events included *Guru Pūrṇimā*, Swami Mitrananda's visit, the yearly Bala Vihar *sevaks'* workshop and *Gaṇeśa Caturthī*. CMSD's 2018-2019 academic year commenced on September 9, 2018.

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## Twenty-fifth Chinmaya *Mahāsamādhi* Camp

The twenty-fifth **Chinmaya *Mahāsamādhi* Camp** in San Diego was a grand but poignant celebration of our beloved **Pujya Gurudev** Swami Chinmayananda and **Parama Pujya Gurudev** Swami Tapovanam Maharaj. The 800 or so delegates, including more than 210 youngsters under 28 years of age, came from all over the United States, Canada and India to remember and celebrate the life and teachings of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda, who attained *Mahāsamādhi* 25 years ago in the very city where the camp was held. The camp, from July 30 to Aug. 4, 2018, was held in the beautifully landscaped Town and County Resort in San Diego.

### Preparing for the Chinmaya *Mahāsamādhi* Camp

The pre-*Mahāsamādhi* camp experience was as memorable and close to heart as was the experience during the camp. The whole ashram getting alive with preparations in various areas was certainly pleasing to the eyes. All members including children, youth, adults and seniors working in the spirit of yajna bhava towards a common higher goal was as if coming straight out from the *Bhagavadgītā* teachings. As Pujya Gurudev very fondly asks – Has the *Gītā* gone through you? This saying was prevalent in all the actions that were guided by Aunty towards *karma yoga*. From the practice sessions to the costume selection and packing, from arriving in time to maintaining complete silence during the practice sessions, everything was done with the spirit of dedication and reverence. In spite of the long weekends engaged in different aspects of the planning, the seva team was always energized to take on multiple tasks. With the blessings of Pujya Gurudev and *Śrī Hanumān* ji as the captain of the CMSD *senā* – the entire pre-*Mahāsamādhi* camp period was inspiring for the CMSD sevaks.

### Guru *Pūrṇimā* Celebrations

CMSD welcomed Swami Siddhananda on *Guru Pūrṇimā* day. Swamiji and Lakshmi Aunty conducted the *Guru pādukā pūjā*. CMSD was also honored to have Dr. Subba Rao on this auspicious occasion. Having received the blessings of *Śrī Jyoti Vināyaka*, *Śrī Hanumān*-ji and Pujya Gurudev, the CMSD *senā* proceeded ceremoniously to the location of the *Mahāsamādhi* camp.







## Pujya Swami Swaroopananda visits *Chinmaya Jyoti*



Prior to the *Mahāsamādhi* camp, Pujya Swamiji visited the CMSD *āśrama*. Lakshmi Aunty and Sukumar uncle gave Swamiji a tour of the *āśrama* and the Bala Vihar classrooms.



Pujya Swamiji carried the Chinmaya *padūkā-s* to the *Mahāsamādhi* camp venue.



## MSC 2018 Inaugural Program

**CMSD band** led the procession of a bedecked cart with the live portrait of Pujya Gurudev seated under a colorful umbrella. The retinue of *swamis*, *swaminis*, *brahmacaris* and *brahmacarinis* followed with Sukumar uncle carrying the *Guru pādūkā*-s. CMSD children, youth and adult *sevaks* lined up to welcome them and joined the procession.



Pujya Swami Swaroopananda and Pujya Swami Shantananda lit the lamps at the

majestic altars of Parama Pujya Gurudev and Pujya Gurudev, thus inaugurating the camp. This was followed by a welcome address by Sukumar Uncle and Lakshmi Aunty, and an inaugural program on the theme of the camp. A grand surprise was the special camp theme song composed and sung by Pujya Guruji himself projected on the screens.

A Chinmaya Mission member from San Jose noted, "It was very grand and well organized. This is the first time we saw such a beautiful procession, I felt as though Gurudev was coming. I got goose bumps and tears in my eyes."



CMSD *senā* then took center stage with a performance that enthralled the audience and marched their way into the heart of the audience. “Highly impressed. I really enjoyed the inaugural program- especially the children did a wonderful job”, as expressed by a Chinmaya Mission member.

**Manasi Popat** from CMSD shared, “Being a part of the inaugural program was indeed a privilege for me, especially presenting the song “*Bhārata mā ke lāl ham*” in the true spirit of a *sevak* belonging to a Mission dedicated towards preserving and promoting the *Sanātana Dharma*”.

After dinner, there was camp orientation program beginning with a short clip from Pujya Gurudev’s camp orientation on July 30, 1990 at the family camp held in San Diego - 28 years ago on the same date.

The entire CMSD *senā* joined together for a special MSC pledge, which was much appreciated by all.





CMSD *senā* entralls the audience with inaugural program.





Each day began with an early morning meditation session by **Swami Prakashananda**, who runs the Trinidad Chinmaya Mission center. This was immediately followed by Vedic Chanting by **Brahmachari Yatindra Chaitanya**. The sessions set the right tone for the rest of the day's events.



**Pujya Swami Swaroopananda** channeled with ease and devotion Śrī Swami Tapovanam Maharaj's glories as he expounded **Śrī Tapovana-ṣaṭkam**.



While studying under him in Uttarkashi, Gurudev had totally absorbed the qualities of his teacher, something that was reflected in every action of his, Pujya Swamiji pointed out. Like Śrī Tapovanam, "Gurudev was such an ocean of love and the embodiment of forgiveness," Pujya Swamiji said, noting that for long, he had been yearning to discourse on **Śrī Tapovana-ṣaṭkam**. The camp finally gave him the opportunity.

**Swami Shantananda**, president of the Chinmaya Mission West, conveyed the teachings from **Chapter 15 of the Bhagavadgītā** within the intellectual grasp of the delegates, interspersing his talks with generous doses of humor and stories from the *Bhagavatam* and other scriptural texts.

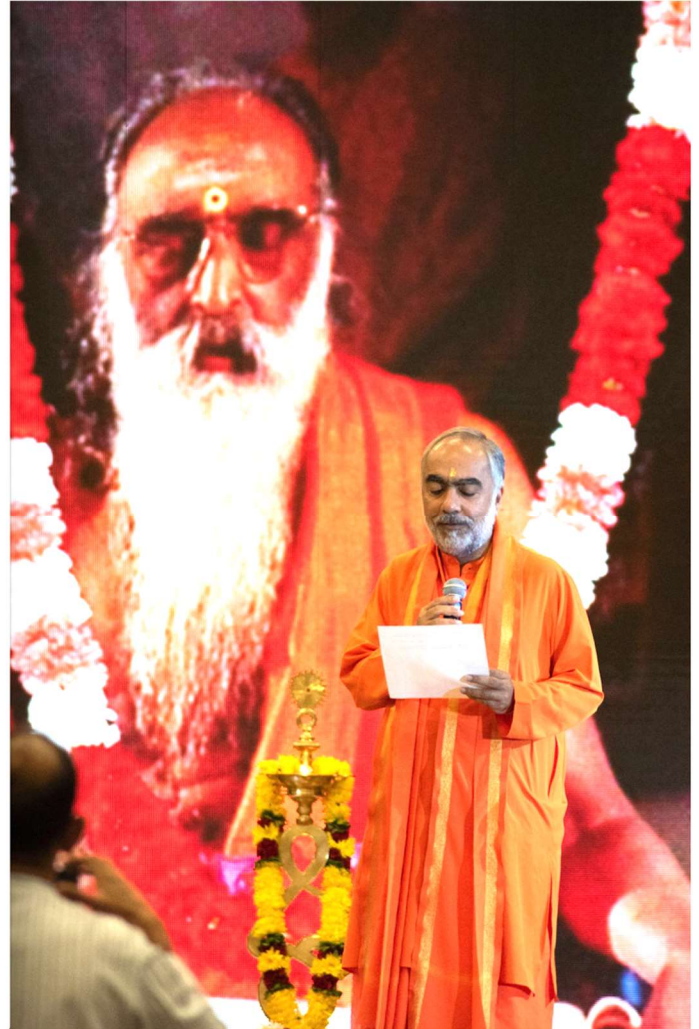
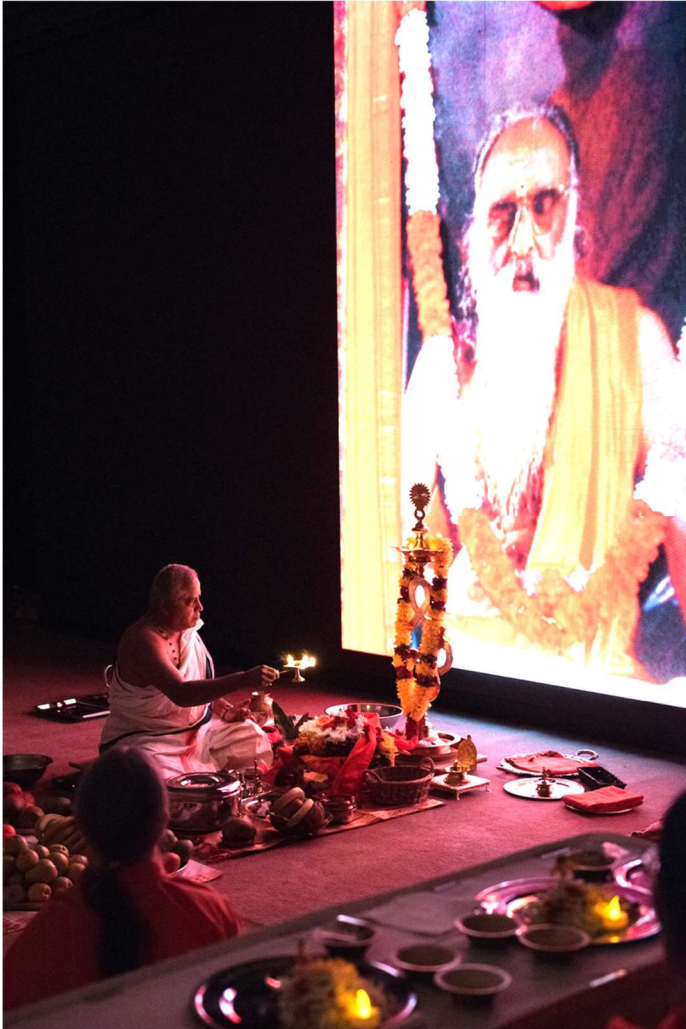




## **Chinmaya Mahāsamādhi Ārāadhanā Pujā – August 3, 2018**

**Chinmaya Jyoti** was lit ceremoniously, at the very hour in the very land that Pujya Gurudev left his mortal coil, in the presence of Pujya Swami Swaroopananda, Pujya Swami Shantananda and many Chinmaya Mission swamis and *brahmacharis* from North America and abroad, and devotees and disciples.

**Chinmaya Mahāsamādhi Ārāadhanā Pujā** was conducted by **Pandit Ravichandran** with 108 *jyoti arcanā*. During the grand *ārati*, when the house lights were lowered and the huge digital backdrop of Gurudev was brought in focus on stage, the entire atmosphere was bathed in an orange glow that emanated from Gurudev's robes. He was there! Quietude was enhanced by the beauty of the moment.

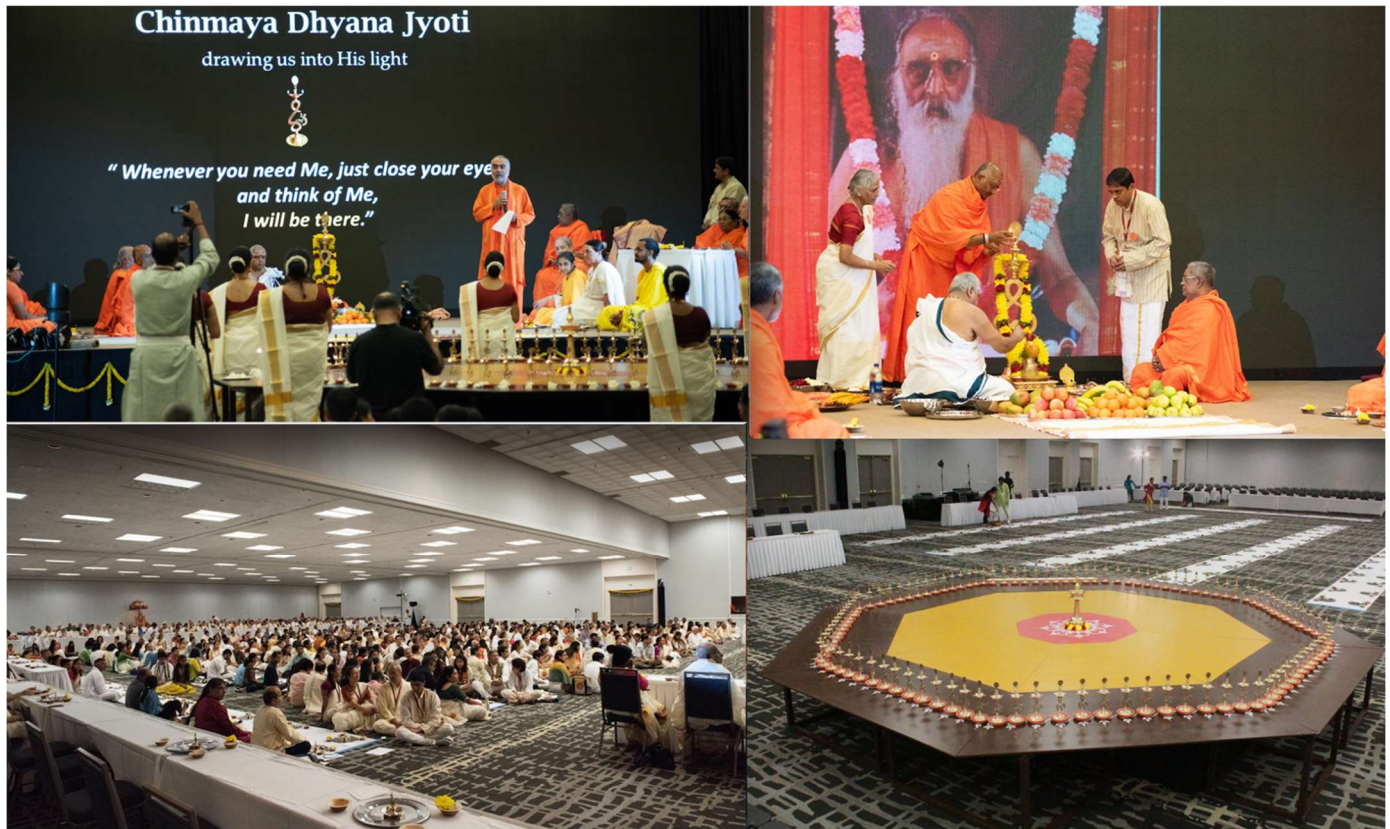








On this fifth anniversary of the *Chinmaya Jyoti*, Pujya Swamiji announced the beginning of Phase 2 -**Śankara Nilayam** that will also feature **Chinmaya Dhyana Jyoti** – a special Meditation altar - drawing us into His Light.



The *pūjā* was followed by a sumptuous Kerala dinner. The swamis and *brahmacharis* were served on a banana leaf. Extensively and beautifully blended food selection during breakfast, lunch and dinner was indeed highlight for all. The high school children and the youth serving and caring for the seniors depicted the Bala Vihar vision to Shine like the Sun and Delight like the Moon. Truly the children and youth captivated the hearts of the Mission members by their delightful nature.



## **Reflections on the *pūjā***

The lighting of lamps was very beautiful and peaceful. I felt Gurudev right here with us in this serene environment. **Chinmaya Mission, Ann Arbor**

The *Mahāsamādhi pūjā* was extremely uplifting and we could experience Gurudev's presence. **Ambika Tampi, Chinmaya Mission, Bakersfield**

The *pūjā* was sublime and divinely beautiful. The singing and orchestration and all the details are very keen and beautiful. **Chinmaya Mission Member**

Very appropriate and beautiful *pūjā*. The lamps were beautiful and we enjoyed the bhajans and chanting. **Padmini, Chinmaya Mission, Toronto**

The *pūjā* was beautiful, the best I have seen. I have been to many *Mahāsamādhi* Camps, and this was by far the best. **Gulu Advani, Chinmaya Mission, San Jose**

...Today was especially grand with the lighting of all the Jyoti-s and *Mahāsamādhi pūjā*. **Rohini Deshpande, Chinmaya Mission, San Jose**

All the electrical lights went out and the *diyā*-s shown unbelievably in my heart. Thank you for that. **Rudite Emir, Chinmaya Mission Member**



## CHYK, Setukārī Programs and Special Workshops

The youth program led by **Swami Sarveshananda**, focused on **Guru Stotram** leading to an in-depth understanding of the role of Guru in one's spiritual life.

**Swami Ishwarananda** addressed the **Setukārī-s** on topics culled out from **Kṛtajñatā** (composed by Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda as gratitude to Pujya Gurudev) and **Guru Stotram**.



In addition, several special workshops were conducted by prominent CM members. **Bala Vihar Seva and Parenting** workshop was conducted by **Lakshmi Aunty**, whereas **Swami Shantananda** held a workshop on **Graceful Aging**.

**Dr. Ashwin Rangan** from Los Angeles center led the **Spirituality at Workplace** workshop, and **Dr. Nambi Seshadri** and **Dr. Ramesh Rao** from Los Angeles center presented **Inspiration from Successful Entrepreneurs'** workshop.



There was a special “**Sadhana for Gr̥hastha-s**” panel, which was moderated by **S. Sukumar**. It consisted of senior devotees and sevaks from various centers, including **Smt. Sharada Kumar (CM Ann Arbor)**, **Geeta Raghu (CM Atlanta)**, **Shri P. Mahadev (CM Los Angeles)**, **V.G. Mahadev (CM Los Angeles)** and **Shri Sadananda (CM Washington DC)**.



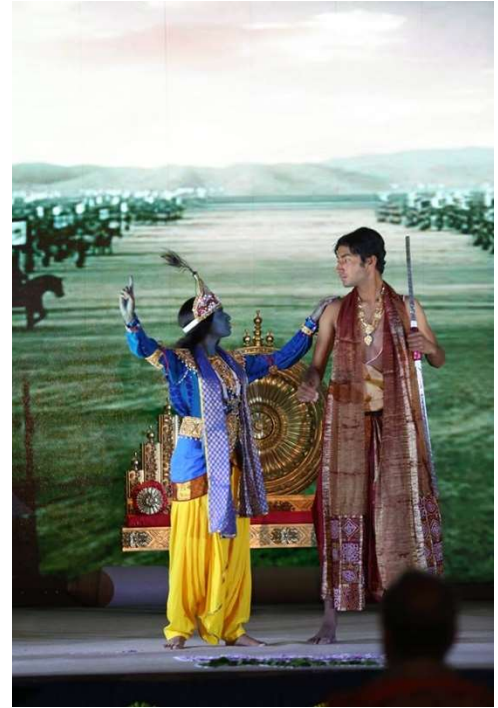


## Mahābhārata Musical

The enactment of the *Mahābhārata*, a musical put together by the CHYKS of CMSD under the guidance of Lakshmi Aunty was near professional. “I just came out from an amazing Broadway show. I am a New Yorker, and I think Broadway is amazing, and this one in particular was awesome. I could identify with a lot of the songs, Salutations to all the CHYKs and children for putting this together,” said **Brahmacharini Shubhani Chaitanya**

**Priya Narthaki** from Chinmaya Mission San Diego shared, “The program was very creative and well organized. Extremely well executed and the music was phenomenal – one of the best children’s program I have seen.”

**Ananya Subramaniam** from Chinmaya Mission San Jose commented, “Really cute and innovative way to showcase the Mahabharata...the CHYKs have put in a lot of effort, and it was beautiful.”





## Bala Vihar Program

Children's programs focused on **Chinmaya Mahimā** and included chanting ślokā-s, bhajan-s, stories, games, arts & crafts, yoga exercises. They were conducted by various swamis and brahmacharis under the guidance of **Swami Sharanananda**. The minds were soaked in the love for God and Guru. Children traveled through the Himalayas and Mother Ganga with Gurudev in his various personal experiences – all in complete awe and silence! Children enjoyed the evening breaks to mingle with other kids from countrywide centers. The days ended with evening Bhajan sessions conducted by **Swamini Radhikananda**, which was a perfect way to calm the energy levels with the songs and glories of Śrī Hanumān, and various other deities.

The **Bala Vihar Mela** was noteworthy for its creativity. A regular game like knocking down pins was accompanied by an image of *Rāvaṇa* and his 10 heads with the instruction “knock out the negativities.” Every teacher envisions to transform learning into a fun activity. To walk into a room where each stall was manned by a child eager to explain a story or a simple *Vedantic* point was a joyful experience. It was remarkable to see adults and seniors enjoying all the fun games and activities at various booths along with kids. The Mela certainly provided a platform to kindle the child within!





## Bhajan Sandhya-s

On Aug. 2, 2018, delegates danced late into the night to the energizing bhajans sung by **Swami Siddhananda**.



The CMSD Swaranjali team sang bhajans throughout the camp.



## Visit to *Chinmaya Jyoti*

A bus trip was organized for all the camp attendees to visit the CMSD āśrama in Poway.



## Chinmaya Vānī and Chinmaya Vaibhav

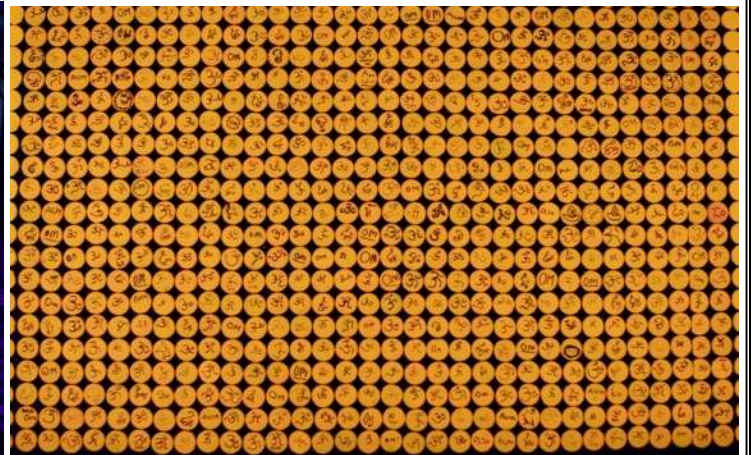
**Chinmaya Vānī (Chinmaya Publications Bookstore)** and **Chinmaya Vaibhav (Life of Chinmaya- Displays)** were visited by many. There were two book releases during the camp. Art displays, Food for thought presentations, Chinmaya Pradīpikā and an automated Chinmaya āratī were showcased outside Chinmaya Vaibhav.







The **24-foot OM Lamp** unveiled on Aug 3, 2018 was created out of 4,042 caps from one gallon milk cans over a period of three months by the CMSD members - adults and children alike. Many of the delegates including Swami Swaroopananda had the opportunity to sign OM on the caps.



## “Meet Pujya Gurudev” Panel

Organizers allocated an afternoon to give five panelists, an opportunity to share with the delegates some of their most memorable moments with Pujya Gurudev. The “Meet Pujya Gurudev” panel, poignant, but at the same time funny, went well with the delegates. All the panelists, including Renuka Prasad Relan, Bobby Mukkamala, Aruna Subramanian, Laila Emir and Sharmila Lodhia, were born in the U.S. Most of them had first met Gurudev in the 1970s when their ages were in single digit. Exposure to Gurudev’s teachings, or just through his larger-than-life presence in their homes, has stood them in good stead all through their growing up years and even now as parents themselves, they said, as with one voice.



“I met Swamiji at age 14 in 1975,” observed **Relan**, daughter of Raj Prasad, an early member of Chinmaya Mission West. “Swamiji (took) my 14-year-old brain, massaged it and put it back in. It was a transformative moment for me.” “Almost all my life I went to a Catholic school, hearing about Jesus and Moses,” said **Bobby**, who is the son of Dr. AppaRao Mukkamala, and the father of two teenage boys. “On Sundays, I heard about Rama and Krishna. It helped give me a balance.” **Sharmila**, daughter of Pranji and Lalita Lodhia, said one of the things she wondered was whether the Chinmaya Mission was “large enough to encompass new leaders” after Gurudev’s time and would it survive. That worry has long been dispelled, she said. “My own children now go to Bala Vihars” and they have a “beautiful connection with their parents through this learning.”



**Laila**, daughter of former board member and CMW founder Rudite Emir, said that as much as CMW gave the Indian diaspora a “home coming” of sorts, Gurudev created a family and a sense of community within the mission for even non-Indians like herself. One of the things she got from him as a teenager was “the tools that shed light on modern teenage problems.” **Aruna**, daughter of Sharada Kumar of CM Michigan, said that thanks to the Bala Vihar she attended, she knew how to field questions from her classmates in school who would ask her such questions as why Hindus have so many gods. “There was so much Hinduism in our home,” she said.

## Fireside Chat

On the penultimate day of the camp, there was a second fireside chat with longtime U.S. devotees of Gurudev serving as panelists – **Gulu Advani, Swami Shantananda, Dr. AppaRao Mukkamula, Jyoti Madhavan, Sharada Kumar, Rudite Emir and Brni Robyn Thompson**. This centered around the last days of Gurudev. The discussion reduced many, including some of the panelists, to tears. “I remember it like it was yesterday,” said Madhavan, a nurse who had traveled with Gurudev on many of his trips in India and abroad, making sure he took his medications for his cardiac condition on time. “He knew he was not the body,” Madhavan said, noting: “I got much from his (public) lectures, but I learned just as much watching him.”



## Lighting the *Chinmaya Jyoti* at *Chinmaya Jyoti*

The ***Chinmaya Ārāadhanā Pujā*** was conducted at *Chinmaya Jyoti* on Aug. 4, 2018 evening by **Pandit Ravichandran** with 108 *jyoti arcanā* following lighting of the *Chinmaya Jyoti* at 5:45 pm.



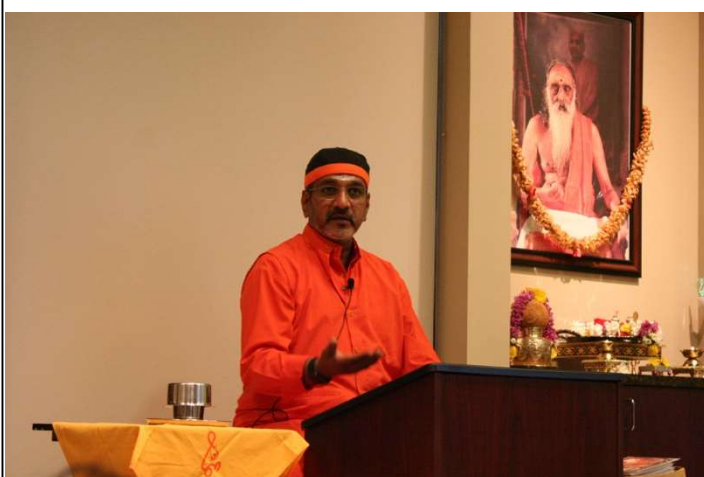
The 25<sup>th</sup> *Mahāsamādhi* Camp at San Diego was very special not only being twenty-five years since Pujya Gurudev's *Mahāsamādhi* but also being conducted at the very location where Pujya Gurudev left his body. Truly His presence was felt throughout the camp, and it offered a powerful medium to strive hard and connect to our Pujya Gurudev's teachings and become His worthy disciples.

**Contributions to the Chinmaya Mahāsamādhi article by  
Viji Sundaram, Nimmi Raj, Manasi Popat, Ashwin Mohan & Mahesh Subramanian**



## Swami Mitrananda's Visit to CMSD

CMSD welcomed Swami Mitrananda on August 20 and 21, 2018. CMSD enjoyed a beautiful *satsaṅga* and Q&A session with Swamiji. CMSD families also had an opportunity to offer Bhiksha and Bala Vihar children took this opportunity to have a joyful conversation with swamiji.



## Bala Vihar Sevaks' Workshop

The Bala Vihar Sevaks' Workshop was conducted over the three days of the Labor Day weekend this year. This is a special training that occurs before the commencement of the Bala Vihar sessions every year. The purpose of this workshop is to bring all the sevaks in-line with the Mission statement and its vision.

The workshop included several sessions on key ways of imparting the value-based knowledge such as effective communication, impromptu topic discussion, storytelling and drama presentation. The core message highlighted at the workshop was: conscious living is the beginning of spontaneous living.

"Children are not vessels to be filled but lamps to be lit". This vision of Pujya Gurudev is always kept alive through the CMSD training workshops, and an environment of conscious living and high thinking is created in and through the classrooms – pervading the entire *āśrama*.





## Gaṇeśa Caturthī Celebrations

On Gaṇeśa Caturthī day, we performed traditional *Pūjā* to take the blessings of Lord Gaṇeśa to remove all the obstacles in the way for our Spiritual progress.

**Jay Parikh** shares, “It was divine and festive atmosphere at the *āśrama*. Nagesh-ji performed the *pūjā* guided by Lakshmi Aunty, who also explained all the *pūjā* steps to show that we were welcoming and celebrating with Gaṇeśa like we would treat any other guest that arrives at our home.”

Many of the CMSD families participated. The children made their own clay Gaṇeśa and performed the *pūjā* to it. One hundred and eight *modak*-s were offered to the lord.



**Nagesh Nookala** adds, “Gurudev encouraged community-based *pūjā* activities and performed them with *yajña* spirit. We saw the same atmosphere in the *āśrama* during the *pūjā*. When I looked at the clay statues made by the kids, it was a great feeling to realize that all the *pañcamahābhūta* (Earth, Water, Fire, Air and space) were in that clay idol. The fact that the same elements that make up the entire universe are also part of this small statue reminded me of my connection with the universe.”

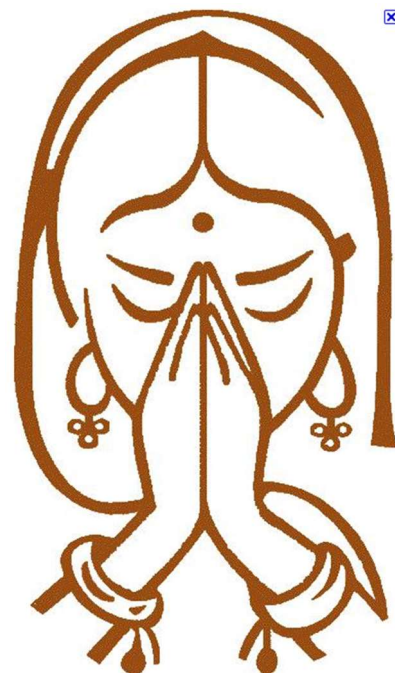
We ended the program with rendering *bhajan*-s that uplifted our souls. The *prasāda* served after the *pūjā* was delicious as usual.



## Chinmaya family reflects on the 25th Chinmaya Mahāsamādhi Camp:

Both of you (Lakshmi Aunty, Sukumar Uncle), along with your wonderful team of sevaks, did a **superb** job of the Ārādhana Camp! Every aspect of the Camp was truly excellent and amazing, full of creativity, inspiration, and heartfelt dedication. Truly the best Camp I ever remember attending. I'm sure your hearts must be completely full to overflowing with Gurudev's Grace. I feel most grateful and happy that I was invited and able to attend the Camp and to assist with music for the different age groups of kids every day (and the "CHyks bhajan-jam" on the last night was great too -- all the kids were wonderful!).

Wishing you all a blessed year full of Gurudev's Grace as CMSD continues to GROW and GLOW BRIGHTLY with HIS ETERNAL LIGHT! **Swamini Radhikananda**



Thanks for offering the unique and powerful *Mahāsamādhi* camp celebration to the Chinmaya family. From my side, immense gratitude for special extension at the ashram and more so at your home which is none other than Gurudev's dynamic shrine. **Swamini Shivapriyananda**

It has been very awesome to see Pujya Gurudev's Vision – People's lives be uplifted through the teaching of Vedanta. At this pūjā, one could see the whole room filled with people grateful to Gurudev for that very reason. How we are uplifted by this knowledge - that's really Chinmaya Mahima – his life story itself is very inspiring. It is far more inspiring to see inspiration in each person whose life Gurudev touched. One can clearly see that at this camp and at the Gurupaduka pūjā. **Brahmachari Yatindra Chaitanya**

The teachers and volunteers in *Chinmaya Jyoti* are equal to 20 volunteers in other centers. Keep it up. Glory to our dearest Lakshmi amma. All the best. **Swami Sharanananda**

I have to thank San Diego team, Lakshmiiji and Sukumarji for this beautiful experience. It has been flawless and smooth and so delightful. I am seeing many people – the old timers, seeing them again after 25 years. It is so precious to be in this company and to be able to remember Gurudev and sing His glories. Pujya Swamiji's talks are beyond words.

**Vilasini Balakrishnan, Chinmaya Mission, Washington D.C.**

I am here with my family, and we are very happy to be here for this *Mahāsamādhi* Camp. We were longing to touch this earth where our Gurudev passed his life. We are blessed to be here...

**Bindu Hariprakash, Chinmaya Mission, Washington D.C.**



The exhibits of Gurudev's life and teachings through pictures were very good...Art work of Gurudev's lamp and Rangoli are excellently done...awesome display of Mahābhārata and childrens' Mela...thanks to CMSD for their commendable effort in making the event highly successful. **Ramamani Gopal**

We were truly blessed to attend this camp and have enjoyed every moment while in the camp including tasty food provided to all devotees. I was so happy to see cheerful faces of children, adults and senior citizens like us. Every session was very well planned, and the discourses have moved my soul. **Prabhakar Parimi**

This past week and the months preceding have been very special and close to my heart. They have allowed me (the little self) to grow beyond my limitations and work towards a common goal in an inspired way. It would not have been possible without the grace of Pujya Gurudev giving San Diego team this opportunity, and without Lakshmi Aunty's constant guidance. I truly feel privileged to be a part of the CMSD "senā" that has constantly supported each other and showed that no work is small or big and we all are in it together. **Manasi Popat, CMSD**

Gurudev is Lord Krishna to me, and I enjoyed all the programs thoroughly at the camp. **Sharda, Chinmaya Mission, Los Angeles**

I enjoyed today's experience that highlighted how the last days were with Gurudev in San Diego. We did not know of this for last 25 years, and today we got an opportunity to experience here in San Diego which was priceless. **Panna Goswami, Chinmaya Mission, Chicago – Badri Center**

A camp of this magnitude takes a lot of love, dedication and commitment for it to be successful, you have achieved what you set out to do. **Indra Singh**

*Contentment is good, but be not content with your spiritual progress. The Ātman is not gained by weaklings. The Guru's grace is that which makes the impossible possible!*

**-Swami Tejomayananda**

