



# CHINMAYA PRADĪPIKĀ

CMSD QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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The highlights of this issue are 28th Chinmaya Mahāsamādhi Ārādhana day and Seventeenth Annual CMSD Summer Camp. Also featured are *Guru Pūrṇimā* celebrations, Seventh Annual CHYK Alumni Meet, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī* celebrations and *Śrī Gaṇeśa Caturthī pūjā*. Special messages from children on returning to Bala Vihar sessions in-person are precious - especially after being away from the grounds of the āśrama for over one and a half years.



## THE MASTER SPEAKS

*"Plan out your work" and then never neglect to "work out your plan".  
The former without the latter is a sheer waste;  
and the latter without the former is mere unproductive confusion.  
Where these two are followed sincerely, success will shine out,  
in spite of all the piled up difficulties enroute.*



## 28th Chinmaya Mahasamādhi Ārāadhanā Day



The Chinmaya Family gathered together on August 3, 2021 to mark the 28th *Mahasamādhi* Day of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanandaji, and also the 8th Anniversary of *Chinmaya Jyoti āśrama*. This is a special day of *sāadhanā*, in remembrance of the life and teachings of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda. Like each year, the *āśrama* was decorated beautifully with flower *raṅgolī* (*kolum*), and 108 *jyotis* were placed surrounding the sacred octagon in the courtyard. All members came dressed in traditional Kerala outfits. As per CMSD tradition, the celebrations started with the ceremonious lighting of the Chinmaya Jyoti lamp at 5:45pm, which is the exact time Pujya Gurudev left his mortal body 28 years ago in San Diego. Lakshmi Aunty performed the *pādukā pūjā*, which was followed by the *aṣṭalakṣmīs* lighting the 108 *jyotis* to the melodious chanting of *aṣṭottaraśatanāmāvali*. Thereafter, CMSD's Swaranjali group offered many compositions and bhajans honoring Pujya Gurudev and **Smt. Subashinee Venkatesh** performed the *Guru pādukā stotram*, a beautiful rendition expressed through *bharatanāṭyam*. The program concluded with Gurudev's *ārati* and distribution of *prasādam*.



### - Hetal Babla

**Brni. Akalka** shares, "It was a great privilege to witness the gratitude, dedication and love of our Centre on the special day. Seeing the children, their glowing and resplendent faces, reminds me what a great responsibility we have to create and grow such spaces for them. May Pujya Gurudev bless all of us, the families of Chinmaya Mission San Diego, and our dear Aunty and Uncle, to keep this bright flame of Divine Knowledge glowing."





## 28th Chinmaya Mahasamādhi Ārāadhanā Day





## Guru Pūrṇimā Celebrations



*Guru Pūrṇimā*, a sacred occasion to offer salutations to the *Guru Paramparā*, was celebrated at CMSD on July 23, 2021. The evening started with opening prayers and chanting of the *Guru Śiṣya Paramparā*. The reverential chanting of Gurudev's *aṣṭottaraśatanāmāvali* invoked a deep sense of gratitude towards the great Master who brought down the sacred knowledge from the peaks of the Himalayas. With a grateful heart one can only surrender and offer *Guru pādukā stotram* at the feet of one's beloved *Guru*. Chinmaya Swaranjali offered the soulful *bhajan* "guru mahārāja guru jai jai" that expounds the *Guru Śiṣya Paramparā* and extols the glory of the lineage of *Gurus* who shower their grace on all spiritual seekers. The evening of celebration ended with everyone present offering flowers and their salutations at the feet of the *Guru* with the mellifluous chanting of the *nāmāvali* "jai guru omkāra".

- Ashwin Mohan

## Seventeenth Annual Summer Youth Camp

Bala Vihar children were all aboard this summer to find God at the Seventeenth Annual Summer Camp “**Finding God**”! For the entire week from August 9 to 13, 2021, children were immersed in the thoughts of “Who is God? Does he exist? Where and what does he do? How can I find him?”

All the topics were beautifully taught by Lakshmi Auntie in a blissful environment within a *Guru Śiṣya Paramparā* system. The camp days started with prayers followed by learning chanting of *Śrī Bālamukundāṣṭakam*. To make the topic more interactive and personal, various inspiring stories of different devotees of God such as *Nārada muni*, *Hanumānji*, *Sant Nāmdeva*, *Eknātha Mahārāja*, *Sant Jñāneśvara*, Swami *Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa*, were narrated. All of these great devotees developed different relationships with God as a servant, friend, child, mother, and realized God. Children chewed on the thoughts of how they did it! This further strengthened the idea of how we all should also be greedy for God like them, then we will also discover God.

Lunch time was initiated with chanting of chapter 15 of *Bhagavadgītā*, as in this chapter *Bhagavān* himself says, “I reside in every being in the form of prime digestive fire - *Vaiśvānara agnī*”. Afternoon was the time for arts, crafts and singing *bhajans*. This year children built a beautiful temple and also painted the *Hṛdaya Kamalam raṅgolī* on *pūjā* plate. It signifies our body as a temple and God as the one residing within our lotus heart.

On the last day of the camp everyone was transported to the land of Saints - Maharashtra, as all children went on a small pilgrimage in the *āśrama* parking lot walking, singing and dancing to reach Lord *Viṭṭhala* or Hari! All children were immersed in the poster making session on this day - creating their own roadmap to reach God. The highlight for all was watching a very special movie, **Oh God! Book II**. The innocent and unperturbed faith in GOD, as displayed by the young girl, captured all the eyes alike; and it was quintessence of all the learnings.

The camp concluded with a beautiful message for children to obey and perform all our duties by imbibing spiritual values into our personality and discovering “**God is All and God Loves All**”. Camp finale was a short presentation by the children in the presence of their parents and a potluck dinner.

- Pallavi Kulkarni





# Seventeenth Annual Summer Youth Camp

## Summer Camp Reflections

I loved this camp because of the arts and crafts, food and *bhajans*. But, more importantly, it taught me to sit for long hours on hard floors, to think along with the *Guru* and also obedience to *Guru*. I now have a temple where I can worship a deity and I know how to perform a *pūjā*. I know a lot of songs like *Bālamukundāṣṭakam*. Overall, it was a great experience for a first-timer. HariH OM

- Tejas Chakravadhanula, Grade 3

The whole week of the Summer Camp felt like I am not in America, but rather in a *Gurukula* in India. I am so blessed to be a part of Chinmaya Mission San Diego. My humble request to all parents and teachers is that you all enroll your children in the Bala Vihar program each year. Our children are valuable to us, let us educate them with our own culture and the scriptures by taking this opportunity. This knowledge will make their future life peaceful and beautiful.

- Gira Pandya, BV *Sevikā*



I really enjoyed the theme of this year's camp -- 'Finding God'. I learnt so much and I will make sure to continue remembering what I learnt and living by it. One discussion that I really enjoyed learning was about Religion. We learnt that there is only One God and in philosophy it is called the Truth, but we worship different forms of that One God. Religions were created by humans and all religions lead to the same Truth. The food in camp was really good, my favorite meal was idli sambar. I enjoyed chanting the *Bālamukundāṣṭakam* and learning many different *bhajans*. To conclude, I enjoyed the camp a lot and am really grateful that I got the opportunity to experience it and I look forward to next year's summer camp.

- Isha Popat, Grade 8

I enjoyed singing all the *bhajans*. My favorite *bhajan* was *jaya jaya jaya gaṇa nāyakā*. During the camp, we found the path to God - it is by fine tuning my mind and focusing on God that I can find God. The main value that was discussed at the camp was obedience. We must always obey our parents, teachers and our *Guru*. It is only when I obey in doing my duties, I am able to fine tune my mind to God.

- Nimay Popat, Grade 4

# Seventeenth Annual Summer Youth Camp

My Camp experience was fun! I liked seeing my friends and also enjoyed the arts and crafts. I learned more about God that I didn't know. Something I really liked is how Lakshmi Aunty explained the different steps of the *pūjā* and what they mean! I also liked the story about *Nāmdeva* and how he was really devoted to God, loved God. I liked learning the *ślokā*, and *bhajans* and singing them everyday. On the last day of camp, I really enjoyed the movie! I liked how in the movie, the girl never gave up even when everybody thought she was lying about seeing and talking to God! Another thing I learned is that if I want to find God I need to chant daily, do *Likhita japa*, and Mental *japa* everyday to show my love for God.

**- Ria Kotta, Grade 4**

My camp experience was amazing. My favorite parts were making new friends and coloring. I also loved the *bhajans* and crafts. My favorite craft was making a temple. My favorite *bhajan* is Om Tat Sat. I loved camp and it was the best camp I have been to.

**- Akshay Kotta, Grade 2**



I really enjoyed dressing a specific color each day at the camp, and also learning about a specific grain to go with it. The arts and crafts were very fun; my favorite was making a temple. The *bhajans* were also very melodious and the lunch was very tasty. A lesson that really stuck with me was that all religions are different paths to the same point. There is no right or wrong religion, but rather different ways to reach the same supreme Lord. Through this camp, I participated in many fun activities, and learned many lessons that will stick with me throughout my life.

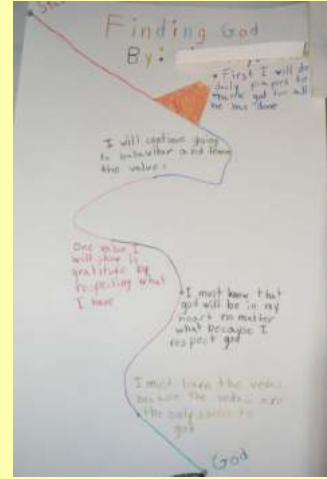
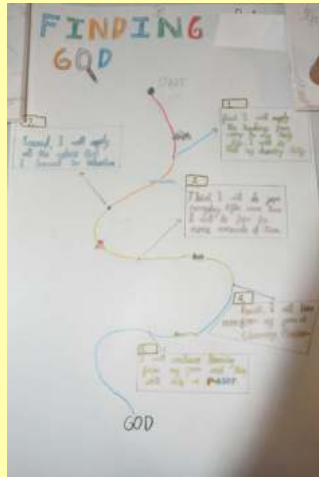
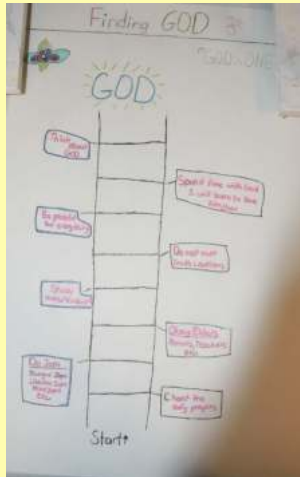
**- Aditi Bharadwaj, Grade 8**

It was a blessing to be part of "Finding God" themed camp in-person this summer. Everyday, Lakshmi Aunty dived deeper on this subtle topic of "Finding God" with stories of saints and devotees of God and questions like who, where, what does God do, one God, many forms, Creation is in essence God. Every camp is a learning experience for me and I will continue to apply values learnt in this camp in my life to reach God.

**- Mamatha Puttur, BV Sevikā**



# Seventeenth Annual Summer Youth Camp





## Bala Vihar Back to Āśrama with Renewed Zeal



CMSD Bala Vihar, Shishu Vihar and Adult sessions commenced on August 22, 2021, an auspicious day beautifully coinciding with *Rakshabandhan* Day. The entire *āśrama* lit up with children and adults eagerly awaiting the commencement of an in-person session. As we approached the grounds of *Chinmaya Jyoti*, a sense of calmness engulfed. One can experience the magnitude of this loving community better than ever seen before. It is an experience that was deeply missed in a long time, and the twinkle in all the eyes showed how glad we are to be back in our very own *āśrama*!

- Sindhu Narasimha, Grade 11

### New Members joining the CMSD Family

My life is transformed by the Self Unfoldment class. Also, the Adult Sunday sessions have shown how the Bala Vihar children give a summary of their class with outstanding poise, deeper knowledge, commitment and ease. It gave me an incentive to bring my own granddaughter, Theresa, to the Bala Vihar Program so that she may also be exposed to the amazing teachings of the *Bhagavadgītā* and also lead her life based on these values.

- Thushara

It has been a wonderful experience learning invocation prayers. It is our first year, and we are trying to follow the Sunday Sessions as our family ritual, learning and chanting the prayers together.

- Shridevi Surpurmath

We love the classes - there are a variety of activities supported by music. For my daughter Rohini, to feel that she belongs here and she is part of it all - it is wonderful to participate in the Bala Vihar sessions.

- Kamya Manda

# The Little Lamps of Bala Vihar Speak....

"It felt good to see all my friends on the first day of Bala Vihar. I am excited for all the craft projects that we are going to do this year like the "Parachute Project."

- Advhay Iyer, Grade 5

"I love to be back at Bala Vihar and see everyone in person. It is more interesting because we can actively share and discuss."

- Meghna Pillai, Grade 6

"It felt great to be back in person at Bala Vihar after being virtual for over a year. I enjoyed performing on the stage for CMSD Summer Camp. I also want to learn new *bhajans* and *ślokās* this year."

- Ayaan Buch, Grade 5



"After almost one and a half years of virtual sessions, coming to the *āśrama* in-person has most certainly been a blessing."

- Hemadarshini Rajendran, Grade 10

"Coming back to Bala Vihar has been really fun because we get to have discussions and interactions in person. It is also fun to be with friends, and I am able to understand the concepts more clearly."

- Shravani Prem, Grade 10

"I am excited to learn about Hanuman ji! Also I am excited about learning new *ślokās* and values."

- Varshinee Venkatesh, Grade 4



# The Little Lamps of Bala Vihar Speak....

"It is a lot easier to focus and learn in person. It is pretty exciting to come back for all the events rather than watching it from a screen."

- **Samitha Senthilkumar, Grade 10**

"I am first and foremost looking forward to the coherent and rich in-person class discussions. Along with this, the entire environment and aura that accompanies being in a classroom surrounded with peers with the same spiritual interest is something that excites me about "coming back to Bala Vihar"!"

- **Ananya Bharthwaj, Grade 11**

"It is really nice to come back to the *āsrāma* in our classrooms and have a lot of fun."

- **Swara Sathe, Grade 2**

"I like to come in person because I get to meet my teachers and Lakshmi Aunty." -  
**Samarth Raghavan, Grade 4**



"Being back in Bala Vihar in the midst of a pandemic, to my surprise, does not feel awkward. After stepping past the front gate of the ashram, I immediately felt calm and at peace. Saying Hari Om to my mentors and peers felt natural. Chanting along with a mass group felt as liberating as it always was. Most of all, being back in the community that raised me with culture, values and friendships felt like home."

- **Vaishavi Jayashankar, Grade 11**

"I enjoy coming back to Bala Vihar and love that our classroom is upstairs. I cannot wait to continue with studying *Rāmāyaṇa* and learn more about *Hanumān ji*."

- **Kimaya Buch, Grade 4**

# Welcoming *Bālakṛṣṇa* on *Janmāṣṭhamī*, August 30, 2021

...the Lord is here ! He has come! He is amongst us!

Adorning this blue planet with his lotus footprints, He has come.

What more now? Heavens have descended...

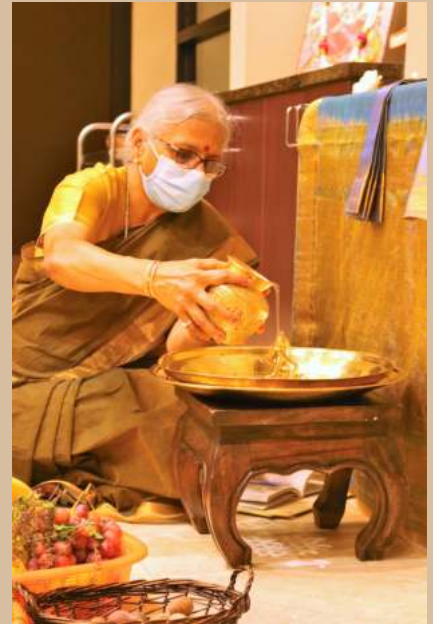
The innocent, playful and captivating *Bālakṛṣṇa* drenched the atmosphere of Pranava Nilayam with His love. And does not God's love transform? The gathered Chinmaya Mission families sang, danced and laughed with joy under the spell of the enchanting *Mādhava*. "*Cilaṅga Keṭṭī*" was a song that brought out the child in all. The little *Rādhās - Swara* and *Rachana* offered songs to *Madhusūdana* with their nectar filled voices. Little *Kṛṣṇa*, *Adhvay* rendered a beautiful offering as well. Into the night as dark as *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, the devotees offered songs inviting the *Gopīkā vallabha* to come play, rejoice & steal our hearts like he steals butter.

As the hour of the Lord's birth approached, *maṅgala āratī* was performed and *Devakīnandana* was placed in a beautiful cradle. As little children swung the cradle, we all were blessed to be *Yaśodhā maiyā* & *Nanda bābā* as we sang lullabies to little *Śyamasundara*. And in an engulfing silence that followed, we all took refuge - "*Śrī Kṛṣṇa saraṇam mama*."

O great Preserver, Preserve our devotion, Stay etched in our hearts as we ride the waves of time!

- **Akhila Koneri**

One of our members, **Manasi Popat**, recollects her experience, "The footprints of *Bālakṛṣṇa* led us all into the mesmerizing ambiance within Pranav Nilayam. I was able to experience the joy of chanting, worshiping, singing and dancing -- all for *Kṛṣṇa*. Truly grateful for *Chinmaya Jyoti*, providing such a special opportunity to immerse into a divine celebration."





# The Joy of Sculpting and Worshipping Śrī Gaṇeśa

The auspicious occasion of the birth of Śrī Gaṇeśa was celebrated with a festive spirit at CMSD on the evening of October 10, 2021. Some of the children had spent the previous weekend making their own special clay Gaṇeśa idols, making the *vighnahartā* even more dear. The *pūjā* began with a resounding Om and was followed by the main *vidhi*. Children who participated came with their Gaṇeśa idols and had the opportunity to follow Lakshmi Aunty, who not only gave instructions but reflecting the true nature of Śrī Gaṇeśa, also educated them about certain practices. After the initial invocation, there was *aṅga pūjā*, followed by *pūjā* with flowers and *patra pūjā* that is exclusive to Gaṇeśa *Caturthī*. Then there was *modaka arcanā* that would have certainly satiated the *modaka priya*. The evening ended with energetic *bhajans*, *ślokās* and dance from children and adults alike.



## Some of the members who participated recount their experiences:

“This was my first time participating at the Gaṇeśa *Caturthī* celebration. The students (and their parents) got the unique opportunity to perform a guided Gaṇeśa *pūjā* to the clay Gaṇeśa they made, chant *stotrams* and sing *bhajans*. Energy, dedication and devotion radiated throughout the evening making it a truly memorable experience.”

**-Vivek Rajendran**

“It was our first-time attending Gaṇeśa *pūjā* at CMSD. It was bliss. I felt we were so blessed with the opportunity to hear the *stotrams*, the *bhajans*, being part of warm atmosphere to devote fully to Śrī Gaṇeśa on Gaṇeśa *Caturthī*. Another blessing was my daughter also got the opportunity to chant the Gaṇeśa *stotram* on the mic, which she enjoyed.”

**- Sandesh Kuckian**

“We made clay Gaṇeśa sculpture during the Labour Day weekend before the *pūjā*. I enjoyed making the clay sculpture because it was fun, and I was doing it with my friends. During the process we also made a mouse at Śrī Gaṇeśa's feet and a bowl of *modakams*. During the *pūjā* on Friday, we used our sculptures as our own idol. It was interesting how in the *pūjā*, we offered 21 types of leaves to Śrī Gaṇeśa (some we did not have). Also, along with the 108 *nāmas* of Śrī Gaṇeśa, we offered 108 *modakams*. Lastly, at the end of the *pūjā*, I enjoyed singing *bhajans* and dancing for the Lord.”

**– Adhvay Iyer, Grade 5**

# The Joy of Sculpting and Worshipping Śrī Gaṇeśa





## CMSD Ongoing Events

### Monthly *Sundarakāṇḍa Pārāyaṇā*



July 24, 2021



August 21, 2021



September 18, 2021



### Monthly *Samskṛti Pālakās* Meeting



September 12, 2021

## Seventh Annual CMSD CHYK Meeting



CMSD CHYK Annual Meeting, which was held on August 15, 2021, was a successful endeavor. The first part of the session was a discussion led by **Lakshmi Aunty** and assisted by **Rajasekar Uncle** on the “Art of Communication”. It included many different types of *subhāṣita* on the topic, a comprehensive definition on the multiple dimensions of what communication really is, as well as personal anecdotes from all participants. To state a few that resonated with the audience at large:

- Don't speak the truth in an unpleasant manner.
- Don't hurt the minds of others even if they have done great harm.
- Words spoken sweetly bring auspiciousness.

The discussion brought to light that only when the inner self is "worked on", purity reflects in outer actions like speech.

The second part of the session was a peer discussion, facilitated by **Mihir Pandya**, CHYK Alumni, continuing on the topics raised earlier. In addition to this, the Alumni group shared ideas to determine how it can continue to stay engaged throughout the year, primarily through the continuation of the study group for CMSD CHYK & Alumni.

- **Mihir Pandya and Akhila Koneri**



## BV Teachers' Workshop



On September 6, 2021 all the Bala Vihar *Sevaks* and *Sevikās* of CMSD met with Lakshmi Aunty for the **Annual Teachers' Workshop**. This workshop is a special opportunity for all the teachers to align with the Mission statement and vision.

The workshop consisted of several discussions on the Bala Vihar teaching principles, effective communication and activities to supplement classroom learning. The core message from the workshop this year was to find ways to inspire our children to inculcate the values learnt in Bala Vihar to their daily lives.

The message from Pujya Guruji about the importance of revision as “revisiting the vision” as well as Pujya Gurudev’s quote “Children are not vessels to be filled, but lamps to be lit”, pervaded the discussions as the teachers embark upon another Bala Vihar academic year.

**Gira Pandya**, BV Grade 5 *Sevikā*, reciprocates a similar thought, “I felt that this workshop was so important for us all to learn and improve ourselves to be able to better serve our little children.”

- Ashwin Mohan

## Shishu Vihar/Bala Vihar Corner



Kindergartners welcome *Bāla Gopālā* with inquisitive minds and open hearts!



**Akhila Koneri** beautifully describes the scene in SV4 as the children dressed as *Rādhā*, *Kṛṣṇa* and *Gopīs* offered flowers and fruits at the altar and swung the cradle of *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*. The teachers enacted the story of the birth of the blue boy of Mathura while all the children watched in rapt attention... the coming of the Lord, all the guards being put to sleep and the rising Yamuna waters pacified by a soft touch of the Lord's feet. **Purvi Shah** (SV4 Mom), then completed the ambiance of Mathura by teaching the children some dance steps to the tune of a song based on sweet *Kānhā*'s pastimes.





## Shishu Vihar/Bala Vihar Corner



Children engrossed in creating Clay *Gaṇeśa* - the beautiful smile expresses their ineffable joy!



On September 12, 2021, BV and SV parents got an opportunity to visit the classrooms, and get an insight into their childrens' class curriculum, structure and much more.



Shishu Vihar Parent Orientation



Bala Vihar Parent Orientation (Grade 5)

## BV Youth Corner



### Why Do We worship Śrī Gaṇeśa?

Śrī Gaṇeśa is worshipped before starting any new task, project, year, or *pūjā* because he is *Vighnavināśakā*, or remover of obstacles. When one surrenders at Śrī Gaṇeśa's lotus feet, he removes our obstacles, both physical and mental, and leads us on the path of *dharma*. Let us take a look at each of Śrī Gaṇeśa's features and better understand their symbolism!

Śrī Gaṇeśa is known for his **big elephant ears**. He listens to all the prayers of his devotees with these ears, but they too have a deeper meaning! His big ears symbolize that a wise man should listen twice as much as he talks.

Next, moving onto Śrī Gaṇeśa's **two long tusks**. He is known as *ekadanta*, Lord with one tusk. As one of his tusks is fully intact, while the other is broken; symbolizing non-duality and how he has become choiceless. In every situation in life, we are presented with two choices, one that will take us on the path of immediate pleasure, and the other to eternal happiness, *Śreyas* and *Preyas*. Śrī Gaṇeśa has used his choice to become choiceless and go beyond these two ways of thinking and choose to always do the greater. Similarly, I should do the same and choose to do the greater good when approached with difficult situations in my life.

Below his ears is his **big elephant trunk**. Elephants are known for their trunks, as they have great strength to lift huge trees while also having the skill to pick up a small needle. This symbolizes how a wise man should have immense strength when needed, but also know when to use his *viveka*, or discriminate between what is right and wrong, according to the situation.

Śrī Gaṇeśa has **four hands**, each symbolizing an important meaning. In his top left hand, he has a rope, or *pāṣā*. He uses this rope to pull us closer to him and attain our ultimate goal, *Mokṣa*. In his top right hand, he has an axe to cut off all our negative tendencies. Once one gets over his evil tendencies, he rewards them with a *modaka*, or liberation, found in his bottom left hand. His bottom right hand is always blessing devotees, as he is known as *Varapradāyaka*.

A noticeable feature of Śrī Gaṇeśa is his **big, round belly**! His belly symbolizes how he can stomach and digest all problems that are surrendered at HIS feet. Nothing is too big for Śrī Gaṇeśa to handle, so any troubles or problems we have, when sincerely surrendered at HIS feet, will be taken care of by him.

As we reach the Lord's **feet**, we can see that one foot is crossed, while the other is placed on the ground. This symbolizes the mind and intellect. Oftentimes, the mind may desire for something while the intellect may instruct us to do something else. This creates a conflict between the two but Śrī Gaṇeśa has aligned his mind and intellect into one path, so that they are under HIS control and do not deviate from the path of *dharma*.

Lastly, Śrī Gaṇeśa's **vāhana mūṣaka**, a mouse, symbolizes the human mind. A mouse can be very hard to catch in real life, similar to our mind which is constantly filled with distracting desires and thoughts. But when the mouse is under Śrī Gaṇeśa it sits obediently and waits for permission from the Lord, symbolizing that when one surrenders and prays to Śrī Gaṇeśa, all of one's thoughts and desires can also be controlled. Additionally, Śrī Gaṇeśa's mouse is always ready to serve the Lord, showing how we should always be committed to serve and dedicate ourselves to our community and loved ones.

- Hemadarshani Rajendran, Grade 10, Aniket Chakradeo, Grade 9, Dev Babla, Grade 9,  
Nidhi Babla, Grade 9, Ria Kulkarni, Grade 9





## SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA

*Lord Ganesha is the abode of all achievements, accomplishments and powers. If we have control over ourselves, possess faith and knowledge, we too can become the abode of all success.*

