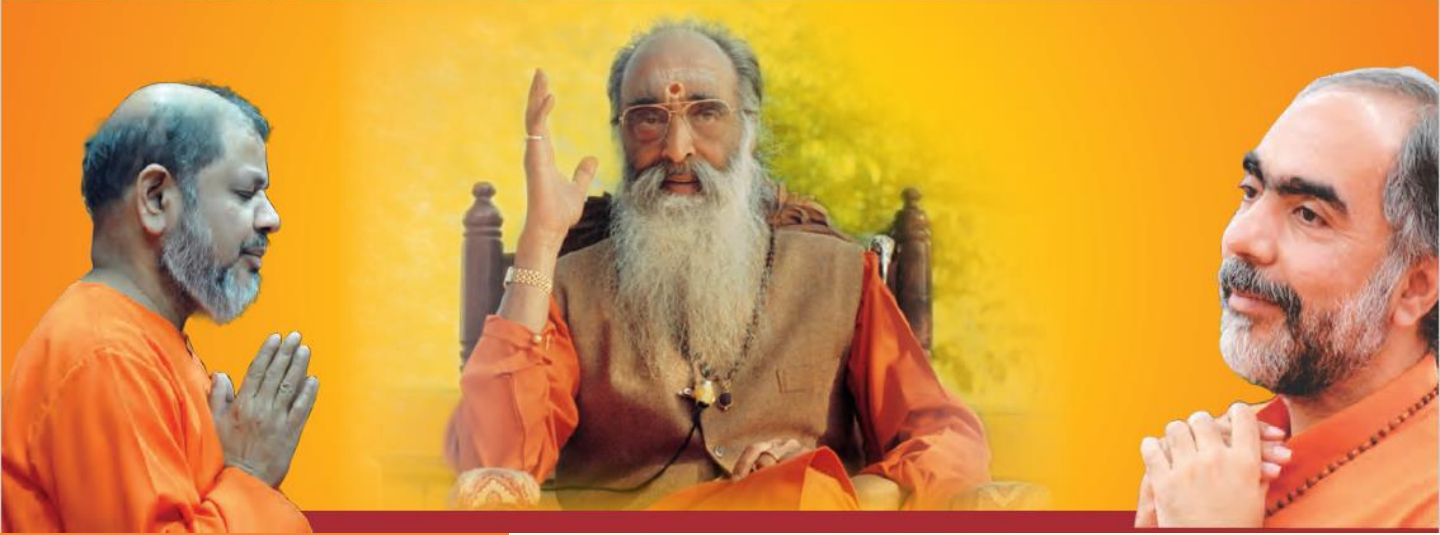


# CHINMAYA PRADĪPIKĀ

## CMSD QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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The key feature of this quarter is the visit of the Global Head of Chinmaya Mission, Swami Swaroopananda, and his *Jñāna Yajña* at our very own *Chinmaya Jyoti Āśrama*! Other events include 30th Chinmaya Mahāsamādhi Ārāadhanā Day, *Chinmaya Jyoti's* 10th Anniversary, *Guru Pūrṇimā*, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭami* and *Gaṇeśa Caturthī* celebrations. The highlights of the Ninth Annual Alumni CHYK Meet and messages from new CMSD members are also presented.



### THE MASTER SPEAKS

“It is for the Mahatma to spread knowledge and cheer around him and whenever true seekers reach him, they are irresistibly drawn into his orbit to bask in the warmth of his personality.”

## Pujya Swamiji Comes to *Chinmaya Jyoti*



The atmosphere changed its course in San Diego on **July 23, 2023**, as the hot blazing sun gave way to divine showers with cool breeze and serenity spreading all around. Amidst such a peaceful backdrop, CMSD families and guests were eagerly awaiting the arrival of their *Guru*, **Swami Swaroopananda**, the global head of Chinmaya Mission.

Lakshmi Aunty, Sukumar Uncle and the CMSD board members along with Brni. Akalka welcomed Swamiji at the car and escorted him to the entrance.

### Welcome and Inauguration



The rhythmic drum beats reminding everyone of Śiva's *ḍamaru* and CMSD Chinmaya *senā* reverentially welcoming Swamiji with "Tvam hi no netā" composition by Pujya Guruji was indeed an apt reception, as it paid obeisance to our entire *Guru Paramparā*! Swamiji lovingly whispered, "This is the best reception I have ever received". What a blessing from the Guru himself!



## Pujya Swamiji Comes to *Chinmaya Jyoti*



Swamiji was accorded a *Purnakumbha* welcome after which he offered his prayers to *Jyoti Vināyakā* in *Praṇava Nilayam*. CMSD president Sukumar Uncle and chief *sevak* Lakshmi Aunty delivered an enthusiastic welcome address recalling Swamiji's brief visit to the *Chinmaya Jyoti āśrama* five years ago during the 25th Chinmaya Mahasamadhi camp and welcomed him for his first *Jñāna Yajña* in *Chinmaya Jyoti*.



The meditative “*Śiva namanam*” was presented elegantly by CMSD children. This was followed by a Hindi play depicting sincere devotion of *Pārvati* towards *Śiva*. Even when *saptaṛṣi-s* playfully mocked the virtues of *Śiva* or questioned *Pārvati*’s intellect, she was unfazed. She matched *saptaṛṣi-s*’ wit in expressing her unwavering devotion to Lord *Śiva*. It was a fitting beginning to the *Jñāna Yajña* as Swamiji unlocked the secrets of *Śiva-Pañcākṣara-Stotram*.



# Pujya Swamiji Comes to *Chinmaya Jyoti*

***Jñāna Yajña on Śiva-Pañcākṣara-Stotram, July 23 through July 27, 2023***



**CMSD Swaranjali** rendered a beautiful *bhajan* "*Guru brahma rupa jāno, Śiva kā svarupa māno*" as Swamiji ascended to the podium.

Swamiji's book on the *Śiva-Pañcākṣara-Stotram* was officially released in the *āśrama* prior to the start of the *Jñāna Yajña* and the first copy of his book was presented to Lakshmi Aunty.

What an auspicious week at Chinmaya Jyoti with Swami Swaroopananda's unfoldment of the *Śiva-Pañcākṣara-Stotram*. Each evening Swamiji successively unfolded the five verses of the sacred *mantra* "*Om Namaḥ Śivāya*" revealing the correlation between the symbolism and vedantic essence depicted by the embodiment of compassion - *Śiva*.



Along with humor, engaging stories about Gurudev, and practical insights on *dharma*, relationships, and old age, the audience was moved by Swamiji's special emphasis on the need for our hearts to bloom with love for the higher to overcome the five main worldly fears we deal with as humans.



Swamiji also inspired us when he shared that this whole creation, including ourselves, comes about from a *yajña*, or sacrifice. Sacrifice is only possible where there is love. Love knows only to give of itself, whereas compromise contains selfishness.

During the week, fresh Bilva plant brought by Kelkar family was anointed by Pujya Swamiji himself. A perfect offering for Lord *Śiva*!

## Pujya Swamiji Comes to *Chinmaya Jyoti*



Each evening after the lecture, Swamiji met with CMSD members - some seeking his blessings, some wanting to share their joy of learning from the discourse and some wanting to offer *praṇāma*-s. And to all, Swamiji's gestures showed his warmth and affection. One such joyous moment captured above shows Swamiji cheerfully singing along “*Janmadinamidam*” to celebrate the birthday of **Eshan Patibandla**. What a blessing!

### Candid Reflections from Attendees:

“Very peaceful - blessed to be here in San Diego! A fantastic way to explain the mantra in such simple language.” - **Aparna and Vipul Dalal, Chinmaya Mission Mumbai**

“I felt connected, I belong here. I am taking bhakti with me!” - **Falguni Patel**

“I learnt that old age isn't bad.” - **Arnavi (BV Grade 5)**

“Today Swamiji talked about the fear of old age. His advice to us was to enjoy the subtle things and see God everywhere. With every śloka Swamiji emphasized upon acceptance.” - **Rajendran Kumar Swamy (CMSD Member)**

“Swamiji's lucid style of explaining advanced concepts and mixing modern references such as the “multiverses” to the age-old traditional knowledge is invigorating. I earnestly pray that his words and teachings remain fresh in me forever.” - **Dr. Manoj Hariharan (CMSD Member)**



## Pujya Swamiji Comes to *Chinmaya Jyoti*

As Swamiji stepped outside the courtyard, he was delighted to see some Bala Vihar children seated on the electric cart. He joyfully asked the children if they would like to go on a short ride and, of course, the children happily agreed to the prospect of the treat! The children spontaneously broke into chants of "Jaya Guru Omkāṛā, Jaya Jaya Sadguru Omkāṛā Om" to which Swamiji waved smilingly from his vehicle. He continued to wave as the car moved towards the main gate and the children roared 'Boliye Śrī Sadgurunātha Mahārāja ki Jai'."



### *Bhikṣā* during Swamiji's Visit



*Bhikṣā* offering is one of the precious opportunities to be in Swamiji's presence, to serve him and receive his blessings. About 29 families offered *bhikṣā* during Swamiji's visit, wherein a variety of cuisines were prepared and served with reverence. Five days of festivities and celebrations in the *āśrama* with Swamiji was inspiring and recharging.

[Click here](#) for more pictures



# Pujya Swamiji Comes to *Chinmaya Jyoti*

**Satsaṅga with HighSchoolers and CHYKs on July 24, 2023**



“I really appreciated how Swami Swaroopananda provided succinct yet thorough answers to several questions asked by the CHYKs.” - Mihir Pandya (CHYK)

**Satsaṅga with CMSD Sevak-s and Sevikā-s on July 25, 2023**





## Pujya Swamiji Comes to *Chinmaya Jyoti*

“*Satsaṅga* with Swamiji was very beneficial. Swamiji talked about the attitude parents and Bala Vihar teachers should have while interacting with teenagers and high school students. He shared his experience as well. Key message I learnt was setting the goal or vision so high, focus on the thing that is constant or not changing and work on the goal without likes and dislikes.” - **Hema Subburaman**

“Listening to Swamiji's Question & Answer session reminded me of how fortunate I was to be under the guidance of Gurudev. His clear and simple answers were a joy to listen to.” - **Nagesh Nookala**

“I specially found Swamiji's answers to our questions filled with valuable insights and very practical that can be applied to our day-to-day life.” - **Ashok Bhatia**



The *satsaṅga* culminated with a special ceremony to honor all the key CMD *sevak*-s and *sevikā*-s. Indeed, it is only a *Guru* who can honor a *sevak*! The atmosphere was charged with a profound sense of gratitude and renewed inspiration to “Keep *Chinmaya Jyoti* Glowing!”

[Click here](#) for more pictures



## Pujya Swamiji Comes to *Chinmaya Jyoti*

### “OutThink Uncertainty” - Talk at Qualcomm on July 26, 2023



Many CMSD members and other Qualcomm employees attended a revealing talk by Pujya Swamiji at the Qualcomm facility.

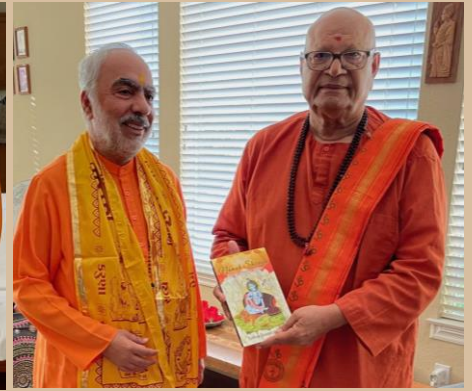
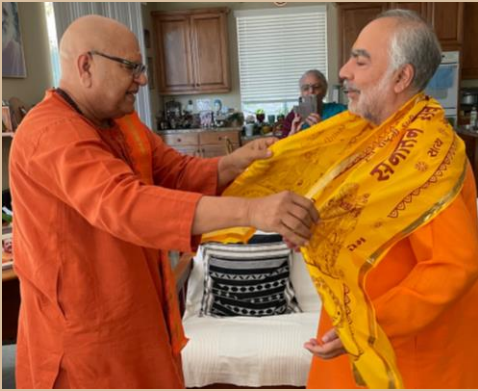
“After Swamiji’s discourse, I understand that if we allow our core to embrace the changes and focus on setting a high bar, the uncertainty paradigm seems to be momentary and there’s no anxiety, fear or anger.”- **Srajan Raghuvanshi**



“The couplet from Saint *Kabīr* was an apt example with *duī pāṭan* and *caltī cakkī* constantly in motion and how the stability is gained by going to the pivotal point at the center. Finding this center in our lives, while not being self-centered, was the right dichotomy that is needed for a student of *Vedānta*.” - **Chandu Manda**

“While we look for certainty in the temporary, Swamiji asked us to look for certainty in the permanent.”- **Santosh Ram**

### Divine Meeting of two *Mahātmā-s* on July 26, 2023



**Swami Keshavananda** of Sanatan Seva Mandal of Dwarka has been associated with CMSD for many years. He was also present in June 2012 along with Pujya Guruji to bless the bricks to be laid in the foundation of *Chinmaya Jyoti*.

It was a great coincidence that he was in San Diego during the *Jñāna Yajña* and visited **Pujya Swami Swaroopananda** at Chinmaya Nivas. It was indeed a divine meeting of two *mahātmā-s*, exchanging words of love and brotherhood!



## Pujya Swamiji Comes to *Chinmaya Jyoti*

### Swamiji's Visit to Self-Realization Fellowship on July 27, 2023



Lakshmi Aunty had previously arranged for a private tour of Pujya Swamiji to the hermitage of **Swami Paramahansa Yogananda** at the **Self-Realization Fellowship** in Encinitas. Sisters and Brothers at SRF cordially welcomed and received Pujya Swamiji at the hermitage along with CMSD *sevak-s* Sukumar Uncle, Lakshmi Aunty and Prem Venkatesan. CMW Secretary, Aparna Devi Jujavarapu, who flew down from San Jose that morning also joined the tour. Swamiji was extremely delighted to walk through the rooms. He paused in the living room where Pujya Gurudev had met Sri Dayamata and also in the room overlooking the Pacific ocean where Swami Paramahansa Yogananda penned his book “Autobiography of a Yogi”.



While walking through the beautiful gardens at SRF alongside the vast ocean, Swamiji took keen interest to stop for clicking some pictures of the colorful, vibrant flowers himself. The tour ended with a visit to the bookstore where Swamiji also paid a visit to the Musical Instruments' collection at the back of the store.





## Chinmaya Mahāsamādhi Ārāadhanā Celebrations



On August 3, 2023, CMSD family gathered on the solemn occasion of the **30th Mahāsamādhi Ārāadhanā** of our Pujya Gurudev - a day to express our gratitude to the Great Master. The occasion also marked the 10th anniversary of *Chinmaya Jyoti*. A special video presentation showcasing the *bhūmi pūjā* and inauguration of the beautiful *āśrama* rekindled memories in all the hearts.

The message from Pujya Swami Swaroopananda for this auspicious day through a poem composition "Look Within" was fitting for this "sādhanā day".



As is the tradition at CMSD, the *āśrama* wore a festive look as all members came dressed in traditional Kerala outfits. After chanting of *Guru stotram*, the *Chinmaya Jyoti* lamp was lit by Lakshmi Aunty at 5:45 PM, which is the exact time of our beloved Pujya Gurudev's *Mahāsamādhi* in San Diego 30 years ago.



**Chinmaya Swaranjali** chanted the meditative *Cinmayāṣṭakam*; this was followed by the *ṣoḍaśopacāra pūjā* to *Guru pādukā*. The special chanting of the *aṣṭottaraśatanāmāvali* accompanied by the lighting of the 108 *jyotis* by the *āṣṭalakṣmī*-s.



## Chinmaya Mahāsamādhi Ārāadhanā Celebrations



After *ārati* and *naivedyam*, the *upacāra* consisted of the chanting of the *Guru-pādukā-Stotram* followed by CMSD Swaranjali offering *Guru Brahma Rupa Jāno* - a beautiful ode to the various blessings bestowed on us by our beloved *Guru*.

**Rajasekar Vaidyanathan** and **Brni. Akalka** shared their insightful journey at CMSD and reminded all of us about how we are brought into this Chinmaya family through a deeper bond!



As the CMSD families lined up to offer flowers to Gurudev's *Jyoti*, Lakshmi Aunty along with few other members chanted the entire *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* as an offering to Gurudev. A special feast consisting of various Kerala delicacies completed the celebrations.



## Guru Pūrṇimā Celebrations



The auspicious day of *Guru Pūrṇimā* was celebrated on **July 3, 2023** at *Chinmaya Jyoti*. All members had an opportunity to join the live streaming of *Guru-pādukā pūjā* at Chinmaya Mission West Piercy in the divine presence of Swami Swaroopananda.

## CMSD 2023-24 session commences

### “Meet and Greet” for New Member Families



On **August 19, 2023**, all the new CMSD families were invited to the *āśrama* for a “Meet and Greet” with **Lakshmi Aunty and Sukumar Uncle**. It was an informal session to familiarize the new families with the Shishu Vihar and Bala Vihar environment followed by Q & A.

### First Day of Bala Vihar





## CMSD 2023-24 session commences

The *āśrama* was once again filled with vibrant energy upon the beginning of the 2023-2024 Bala Vihar and Shishu Vihar session on **August 27, 2023**. All the members were eagerly waiting to embark upon another year of spiritual learning. Children aptly presented the Eighteen-ities song.

### Bala Vihar Parent Orientation



BV Parent Orientation Grade 1



BV Parent Orientation Grade 7

All Bala Vihar parents got an opportunity to visit their child's classroom on **September 17, 2023** and connect with the respective BV teachers to gain insight into the value based education.

### New CMSD Members Speak

“We have moved from Minnesota, and were looking for a place for our children to instill moral values. This is our second day at CMSD and overall it has been a pleasant experience and we are looking forward to learning more!” - **Pranam Shetty**

“Raising two sons (Grade 2 and Grade 7), we felt a need to be a part of a cultural society that can nurture cultural and emotional values in our children. Our goal is to ensure that our children reflect on their inner peace and do the right things.” - **Sameer Kanade**

“I feel connected with our culture after joining Chinmaya Mission San Diego, and am looking forward to this year.” - **Sonal Mishra**

“I love coming to CMSD and enjoy the vibrations of chanting and *bhajans*. I have already experienced a big difference in myself, and am looking forward to this year with my two children.” - **Preeti Shukla**

“This is a school not only for children but also for the entire family, which gives a great learning curve for us to grow together. I am glad that we are able to join CMSD this year.” - **Chandra Sekhar Reddy Yeruva**



## Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭami



On **September 6, 2023**, beloved Gopāla came to our āśrama! His buttered little feet left tracks none could miss. The presiding deity Lord *Jyoti Vināyaka* as well as Lord *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* adorned earthly yellow *pītāmbara* clothes on this auspicious day.

As the evening progressed, the devotees at *Chinmaya Jyoti* welcomed the Lord of the Universe with melodious love-filled *bhajans*, *Śoḍaśopacāra pūjā*, *stotrams* and *Viṣṇu Sahasranāmam*.

Seven-month old baby Raghava dressed up as *Bālakṛṣṇa* stole everyone's hearts and reveled in the arms of Lakshmi pati.



Devotion overflowed through offerings of fresh fruits, milk, ghee-appam, sweet-poha and other delicious foods. Lord *Kṛṣṇa* was adorned in grand princely clothing and ornaments bedecked with flowers from devotees' homes.



At the stroke of midnight, in the dark room lit just by His lamp, all the devotees privileged to be present there partook in the *ārati* of the most compassionate liberator of all sins. Placing that supremely adorable baby in a lovely cradle handmade by our āśrama devotees, everyone took turns to rock Him with sweet lullabies.





## Celebrating *Gaṇeśa Caturthī*



Young children and parents participated in the clay *Gaṇeśa* Workshop held on **September 17, 2023** at CMSD to mark the beginning of *Gaṇeśa Caturthī* celebrations.

**Vidyaanjali Yeruva (Grade 5)** shared, “I really enjoyed making clay *Gaṇeśa* wholeheartedly.”

**Santosh Ram** (Parent of Grade K student) expressed, “The insightful instructions by Swaroopaji along with the significance of each step really helped.”

**Vasanthi Ganji** (CMSD Member) added, “I am feeling blessed to take part in the making of the clay *Gaṇeśa* idol.”



## Celebrating *Gaṇeśa Caturthī*



*Gaṇeśa Caturthī* was celebrated on **September 18, 2023** with great enthusiasm, by offering 21 bright red hibiscuses, 21 different varieties of flowers and leaves and 108 *modakās*.



Children embraced the opportunity to perform the *pūjā* along with their families to their very own sculpted clay *Gaṇeśa* idol with devotion.



## Celebrating *Gaṇeśa Caturthī*



The **Chinmaya Dhvani** and **Swaranjali** team offered *bhajans*, and **Shweta Anand Rao**, a new CMSD member, sang a melodious *kṛti* for Lord *Gaṇeśa*. The source of naming of *Jyoti Vināyaka* was revealed during the *bhajans*.



The *upacāra sevā* concluded with a lively dance by all CMSD members followed by *ārati* and *prasādam*.

## Conscious Parenting Workshop



Workshop on “**Conscious Parenting**” hosted by CMSD on **September 24, 2023** was led by **Lakshmi Aunty**. It aimed to provide insight from the ancient texts and present a cogent view of parental *dharma*.

In the words of **Padma Priyatham Gorjala**, “I have left the workshop with clarity of thought and action items to implement.” For **Nita Mehta**, “I got answers to my questions and became much more aware of conscious parenting. My take away - Have faith, don't be afraid to change and find the courage to let go of things you have no control over.”

**Suchira** added, “The workshop was an eye opener to many aspects of parenting. It gave me an insight on what I am doing correctly and what needs to be improved as a parent.” **Sandhya Srinivasan** expressed, “To bring up children in the backdrop of *dharma* emphasizes that I should stay on the path of spirituality.”



## CMSD Ongoing Events

### Monthly *Sundarakāṇḍa Pārāyaṇā*



July 15, 2023



August 19, 2023



September 23, 2023

## CHYK Corner



The Ninth Annual CMSD CHYK & Alumni Meeting “**Seeking Inspiration from the Great Saints of India**” was held on **August 5, 2023**. **Lakshmi Auntie** and **Sukumar Uncle** initiated first part of the session with quotes from Swami Sivananda - comprehensively defining who a saint is and what is saintliness. Brief anecdotes from a multitude of saints belonging to our great tradition were also incorporated. Second part of the session was peer discussion on topics that were raised earlier and how our group can continue to stay engaged throughout the year, primarily through continuation of the study group for CMSD CHYKs and Alumni.

### Reflections:

In this workshop, I was able to dive deeper into one of the qualities that all the saints abide by - compassion. Getting angry or harboring negative feelings towards people because of the events that I go through is like *Rāvaṇa* getting angry at the messenger. Thus, I must remember to see people through the lens of universal oneness and be fearless. - **Arushi Bharadwaj**

This year's CHYK workshop was deeply inspiring and led me to think for myself on what it means to be a saint and how I can translate those qualities to practice in my daily life. The main quality that resonated with me was fearlessness and how it ties into unity, compassion, and becoming a citizen of the world. When I learn to stop differentiating and separating myself from the world around me, I will become truly fearless and be able to adopt compassion as an instinct rather than an afterthought. - **Rachna Halker**

I enjoyed discussing different aspects of compassion and fearlessness, two attributes of saints. I was able to think about these topics in a new way while having fun and productive conversations with other CHYKS, Lakshmi Auntie, and Sukumar Uncle. - **Harini Rangarajan**

## Bala Vihar/Shishu Vihar Corner

### Shishu Vihar class activities



### Pre-K students make feather crown for *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī*



### Pre-K students make Lord *Gaṇeśa* mask for *Gaṇeśa Caturthī*





## Bala Vihar/Shishu Vihar Corner

Grade 2 students celebrate *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī*



**Event Contributors:** Radhachandran Padmanaban, Monali Varaiya, Lakshmi Sukumar, Prem Venkatesan, Sridevi Akkala, Ashwin Mohan, Sumathi Iyengar, Sandhya Srinivasan, Mihir Pandya, CMSD Pradipika & CMSD Photography Team.