



# CHINMAYA PRADĪPIKĀ

CMSD QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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## IN THIS ISSUE OF CHINMAYA PRADĪPIKĀ

The highlight of this issue is the 26th Chinmaya Ārādhana and the 16th CMSD Annual Summer Camp. The quarter began with the Guru Pūrṇimā day celebrations. The CMSD 2019-2020 academic year kicked off on Aug 18, 2019. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī and Śrī Gaṇeśa Caturthī were celebrated in a grand manner.



## THE MASTER SPEAKS

*Seva is action dedicated towards higher ideal.  
Through Seva, the Sevak benefits the most by growing  
internally with pure and quiet mind. The entire  
Universe functions on the principle of Seva.  
May we all dedicate our life for the same.*

## Chinmaya Mahāsamādhi Ārāadhanā - Aug 3, 2019

With respectful prostrations, on Gurudev's Mahāsamādhi Ārāadhanā day, we renewed our goals as *sādhaka-s* & *sevak-s*. We celebrated this day to express our Gratitude to our Guru. In our āśrama, this was beautifully depicted by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp at 5:45 pm, same time that Gurudev left his body 26 years ago. Further, to show that this knowledge flows through the *guru-śiṣya paramparā*, the main light was used to light other lamps: A symbolic representation of the GPS (*guru-śiṣya paramparā* system). Parag Kelkar expressed "...There was a strong resonance of Pujya Gurudev's presence during the *pūjā*. I saw the sun's rays touch gurudev's *pādukā* as the *pūjā* started and the beam of of light was moving up HIS photo as the *pūjā* proceeded. The sun's rays were in sync with the *pūjā* and reached the top of the picture at the exact moment the 108th name of the *aṣṭottaraśatanāmāvalī* was chanted and then there were beautiful colors in the sky"



After the *pūjā* and *ārati*, children presented a glimpse of what they had learned in the Summer camp. It was quite beautiful to watch the children assimilate and present the theme of the *Upaniṣad* in such a unique way. The joy was visible as they performed the vedic chants of *samvananasūktam*, the chanting of hymns, and the *āḍityahṛdayam stotram*. Creative posters and the *kutiya* models spoke volumes about their pure love for the guru. We concluded the day with dancing, and a healthy sumptuous dinner.

- Nagesh Nookala









Om Alone Board Game Time



Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

## CMSD 16th Annual Summer Camp

### *SACRED SCRIPTURES OF THE SAGES, LET US PARTAKE OF THE PAGES!*

Veda – an ocean of sacred knowledge and partaking of this spiritual knowledge is in itself a true privilege and a blessing for all who were a part of this beautiful two-week journey. Each day uncovered a special theme based on the teachings from the *Upaniṣad*. The days were planned with morning prayers and chanting, thereby tuning the minds to the highest knowledge. This was sustained by different creative activities, stories from the *Upaniṣad*, arts and crafts, *Upaniṣad Gaṅgā* episodes, puzzles and riddles that tied to the daily theme of learning. The colors and grains corresponding each day were beautifully incorporated into the daily theme enabling to move with the rhythmic patterns of energies present all around.



Variety of objects with Clay as a substratum



Creativity with Clay





There is Intelligence present everywhere, and one needs to tune oneself to be able to feel this presence. This idea was brought about in a variety of special activities including Labyrinth meditative walk, Rhythm beats, *Sattvik* food, *Yoga* and *Bhajan*-s. Children were encouraged to maintain silence during the morning hour with a focus on contemplation. Library time gave the children an opportunity to enjoy and appreciate short stories and soak in the quiet time, enabling them to further tap into the learnings and develop note writing skills. Discussions in small groups with Aunty promoted an open environment for children to clear their doubts. *āhāraśuddhau sattvaśuddhiḥ, sattvaśuddhau dhruvā smṛtiḥ* - the essence of this śloka from *Chāndogyopaniṣad* was appropriately brought out at the camp not just in terms of discussion but also in the way the food was prepared and offered – the Chinmaya way. It was a delight to see how all the children came together during the lunch hour followed by *Gītā* Chanting, and enjoyed a wholesome meal with a spiritual attitude. In today's age of fast and convenient food, children were made aware of the importance of healthy eating choices, not just vegetarian and organic but also the subtle aspects of preparing the food and eating the food with the right attitude.



Children offered their learnings at the feet of Pujya Gurudev on the 26th Chinmaya *Mahāsamādhi Ārādhana* Day, as a culmination of the Camp. The presentation captivated the audience right from the beginning with a powerful statement from the Kathopanishad - “*uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varānnibodhata*”. It was a seamless presentation highlighting powerful messages from some of the key *Upaniṣad*-s, supported by Vedic chanting and beautiful *bhajan*-s and *śloka*-s. *Upaniṣad* literally means to sit near and below - at the feet of the Guru in all humility and sincerity; enabling a direct and unperturbed flow of the highest knowledge. Indeed, the spirit of the presentation highlighted an eternal *Kṛtajñatā bhāva*.

- Manasi Popat



## Summer Camp related Reflections

My favorite parts in the camp were practicing for the presentation, learning *Samvananasūktam* and *Ādityahṛdayam*, and practicing the Eighteen ity's. I also liked these songs: Song of Endurance and courage, Song on *brahman*, *Sarva dharma prārthanā*. I enjoyed walking the labyrinth, learning about the *Upaniṣad*-s, and *Upaniṣad Gaṅgā*. I also liked the stories and *pānī pūrī*.

-Achintya Puttur, Grade 4

Both my kids were first time summer campers and they thoroughly loved it, in fact they were sad to see it end. Children learnt a lot of good values! Today's program is highlight of all. The children were expressing themselves very well. The best part was there was no script, and kids spoke it all from their heart!

-Banu Hariharan

I attended the Chinmaya *Mahāsamādhi Ārāadhanā* Day Celebrations on Saturday, August 3, 2019 in San Diego. It was a very spiritual experience. I was impressed with the Chinmaya mission volunteers' soulful involvement in the event. It is commendable to see how the next generation was being familiarized with Hindu sacred texts like the *Upaniṣad*, which is very lacking in our modern-day society. Kudos to the great initiative.

-Jeysree (visiting from Bay Area)

The presentation reflects all the hard work and dedication of all the teachers behind the scene. The Children thoroughly enjoyed the show while imparting heavy weight messages. It was a treat to watch. Big thank you to CMSD.

-Sandhya Kumar

Thank you so much for making the summer camp so memorable. It was so fun and I learned a lot. I will always keep what I learnt with me and it will stay with me everywhere. One subject that stuck to my mind the most is about how Brahman (the Supreme Truth) is present everywhere and we have an idol so that we have a point to worship. Thank you for making healthy and tasty food, especially the bean dip. I also enjoyed playing Om Alone and Knock Out games. From all the crafts, my favorite was when we painted the *hṛdaya kamalam*.

-Isha Popat, Grade 6

Well organized - accomplished a lot in two weeks. Atmosphere is conducive to the feeling of service to Guru.

-Priya Venkitaraman

The program was fabulous, and every day my children would wait to share all the details about the camp day. I feel that just the two weeks is like one whole year of learning experience, and it is a special time for my children with Lakshmi Aunty. The program was fantastic especially all the stories from the *Upaniṣad-s*.

**-Ramya Bharadwaj**

Our children had a positive experience with summer camp. They learnt to eat different food, made so many new friends, learnt new shlokas and chanting. Both of my kids felt very special talking to Lakshmi Aunty. They learnt that with wrong attitude we make our mind our enemy – we have to make our attitude positive. Thank you so much for this experience.

**-Priyanka and Bhavik Patel**

I am really happy to attend this program. It was run really well, and a lot of people worked behind it and their effort really showed up. Good to see children, parents, teachers and coordinators all come together.

**-Sushil Baluja**

We are new to San Diego Mission, coming from San Ramon. Truly one big difference I felt was how well all children presented such a beautiful theme in a grand way to Gurudev on this special day. Not only did the children learn to chant all the *śloka-s*. but more importantly also shared the meaning behind it! -

**Archita and Vijay Pemmaraju (from Bay Area)**

I am very fortunate to attend the *Mahāsamādhi Ārāadhanā* celebrations today. My children have thoroughly enjoyed the camp and today's program was very beautiful.

**-Rajendran Kumaraswamy**

My children absolutely enjoyed the camp. Today's program was fantastic – nicely done!

**-Rupali**

The key idea that I learnt in this camp is not to give out the answer when a question is posed to the kids. I saw time and again how the kids exercised their grey cells and came up with creative answers when left with the question. It is important to look at a question/problem from various perspectives. To think critically and solve problems is an essential life skill. To have this opportunity to observe and interact with children is a special privilege. At camp, I get to interact with a wide age group of children, not just a single age group. In the course of a day, I can soak up chanting, singing, storytelling, games, crafts – all artfully planned by a dedicated team to fit a common theme. And to top it all, great food too!

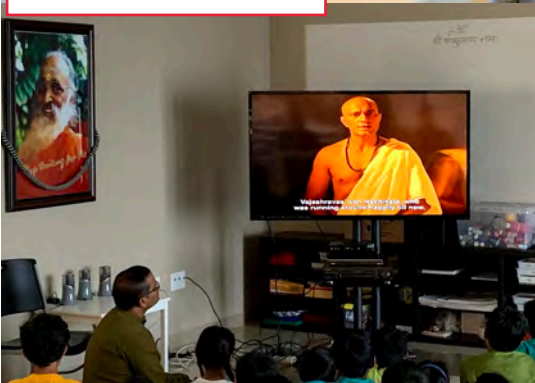
**-Lalitha Kumar**

Today's program was amazing. I felt the energy all around especially during the song “mushkilein...” I undoubtedly feel that children will always remember this song and will be able to face any challenge in their lives. I also feel very grateful to get this opportunity to learn this sacred knowledge at this camp while doing my seva.

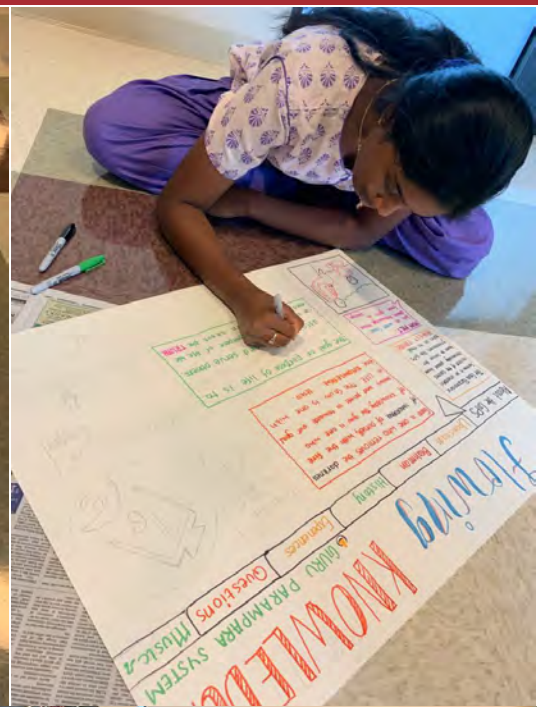
**-Sujata Kulkarni**

It was a wonderful opportunity to serve in the summer camp this year. The theme of *Upaniṣad-s* was well knit into stories, songs, chanting, games and activities. Teachings of Vedanta couldn't be any more fun.

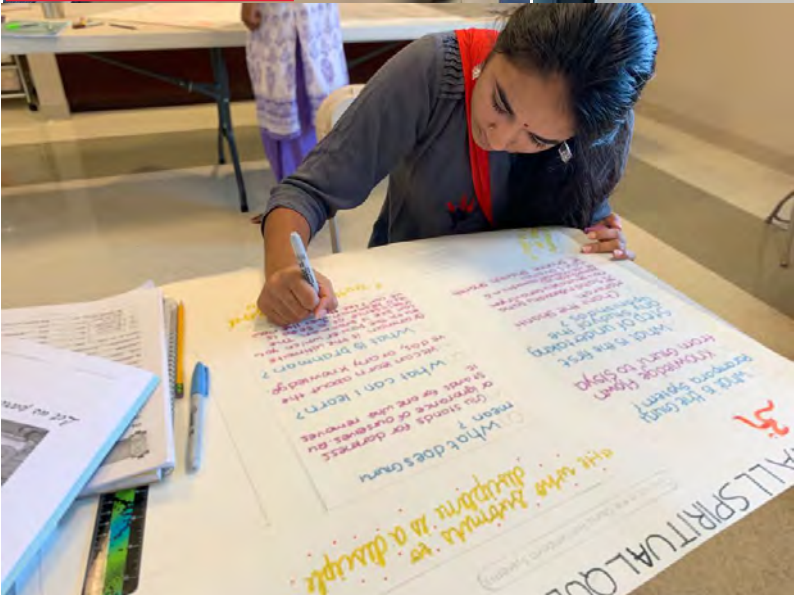
**-Pallavi Kulkarni**







Web of Creation



Bhajan Time



## Guru Pūrṇimā celebrations

*Guru Pūrṇimā*, a sacred day for all spiritual seekers, was celebrated at CMSD on July 16, 2019. *Guru pādukā pūjā* was performed by Hinal Parikh under the guidance of Lakshmi Aunty. The *Guru-stotram*, the *Guru-Śiṣya paramparā stotram* and the *Guru pādukā stotram* were chanted. Chinmaya Swaranjali and Chinmaya Dhvani offered their devotion and respects in the form of melodious *bhajan-s* in honor of our Gurus. The members saw a special message from Swami Swaroopananda before the evening concluded with *ārati* and partaking the *prasādam*. We paid homage to our puja Gurudev and the entire *Guru paramparā* on the sacred day of *Guru Pūrṇimā*.

-Mahesh Subramanian





## Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī - Aug 23, 2019

On August 23, 2019, we celebrated *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī* at our *āśrama*. We rejoiced the birth of Lord *Kṛṣṇa* by welcoming baby *Kṛṣṇa* and performing *pūjā*. It was an absolute delight to watch every step of the *pūjā*. The *pūjā* invoked peace in our minds and filled us with love and devotion towards the lord. It felt special when the yogurt prepared by us, Grade 9 students, was offered to Lord *Kṛṣṇa*. Each occasion teaches us new things, and today we learnt that we can show our love to lord *Kṛṣṇa* by dressing him up (wrapping new clothes, putting nice jewelry, offering beautiful flowers.) “*Enna Tavam Śaidhanai Yaśodā*” a song sung by Lakshmi Auntie made *Kṛṣṇa līlā* come alive and it felt like adorable baby *Kṛṣṇa* came running to play in the *āśrama* with mother *Yaśodā*. Later, we all chanted chapter 15 of *Bhagavad Gītā*, a scripture of life given by our *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*. The celebration felt complete when lord *Kṛṣṇa*’s favorite food was served as *prasāda*. Mihir Pandya, CMSD CHYK, expressed “Meditating upon lord *Kṛṣṇa*’s name was very rejuvenating.” Manasi Popat, CMSD member also has expressed her thoughts on the event. “CMSD *Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī* was a perfect way to celebrate Lord *Kṛṣṇa*’s birthday. An elaborate *pūjā* of *bāla Kṛṣṇa* carried everyone to his magical childhood *līlā* in Gokul, which was followed by beautiful *bhajans* and the most awaited time - swinging *bāla gopala!*”

Celebrating *Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī* is a wonderful way to remember the significance of the birth of Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, in the words of Pujya Gurudev, “The blue form of *Kṛṣṇa* clothed in yellow suggests pure and infinite Consciousness coming down to earth, to play in His finite form.”

-Neha Mahesh, Grade 9





## Śrī Gaṇeśa Caturthī on Sep 2, 2019

In *Śrī Gaṇapatyarthavaśīrṣa*, Lord *Gaṇeśa* is addressed as, 'tvam mūlādhārasthitosi nityam', the one who is ever residing at the 'mūlādhāra', the root or the foundation. A root marks the beginning as a seed germinates into a plant. It also supports and provides nutrition as the plant grows. In Hindu households, Lord *Gaṇeśa* is prayed at the beginning of any project, small or big, for a strong foundation, as the obstacle remover.

The premises of Chinmaya Jyoti blossomed with the presence of young and old to pray to Lord *Gaṇeśa*, on the auspicious occasion of *Śrī Gaṇeśa Caturthī*. Young kids lined the floor of Pranava Nilayam with hand painted *pūjā* plates, Lord *Gaṇeśa*'s picture, and *akṣatā*. Lakshmi Aunty performed the *pūjā* of *Jyoti Vinayakā* with offerings of Lord *Gaṇeśa*'s favorite flowers, *dūrvā* and leaves, *vastra*, and *naivedya*. It was a blissful experience as Pranava Nilayam echoed with the chants of *Śrī Gaṇapatyarthavaśīrṣa*, Lord *Gaṇeśa*'s 108 Names, and bhajans. The program culminated with *ārāti* followed by a sumptuous *prasāda* and of course Lord *Gaṇeśa*'s favorite sweet, the *modakam*.

-Sujata Sovani

### Additional Member Reflections

"I really enjoyed the *Gaṇeśa Caturthī*. Watching the *pūjā* allowed me to calm down and tune my mind to Lord *Gaṇeśa*. I had a lot of fun singing the *bhajans*, and the *pūjā* overall was a relaxing and pleasant event."

- Arushi Bharadwaj Grade 9

"The *pūjā* was absolutely divine. The *bhajans* were serene and peaceful."

- Smita Bhatia

"The *bhajans* were energetic and I really enjoyed them."

-Madhumitha



## Fifth CHYK Alumni meeting and workshop in San Diego on Aug 10 2019

It was an absolute pleasure to attend the Fifth Annual Chinmaya Mission San Diego Alumni Meeting on Saturday, August 10, 2019. The topic for the meeting this year was how to avoid the **Seven Social Sins described by Mahatma Gandhi-ji**, inspired by the high school presentation during the 2018-19 CMSD Balavihar Annual Presentations. **Mihir Pandya** shares his experience "I really enjoyed insightful discussion led by Lakshmi Auntie and Sukumar Uncle, and with my peers, on this very relevant and pertinent topic. It is always enjoyable to be able to connect examples from the world around with the conversation at hand; this really opens up the discussion and allows for critical concepts to sink-in. I highly recommend all CMSD alumni attend in future years, as the program and agenda expands to provide a rewarding, enriching opportunity for alumni to connect with CMSD."



# WE ARE BALA VIHAR – The Voice of CMSD Youth

Bala Vihar teachings apply everywhere and to all aspects of our life. From school to home, from our family to our friends, the lessons we learn here are for life. When we learn about these valuable teachings, we become our treasured Bala Vihar culture. In **We ARE BALA VIHAR**, we discuss daily topics that show how the valuable teachings in Hinduism from over 1,000 years ago still apply and are relevant in today's world. Purifying our mind comes with practice, and what better way to learn how to become the better version of ourselves than by hearing the experiences of the great *ṛṣi*-s and the incarnations of Gods of our *Sanātana Dharma*. So instead of thinking these stories and their teachings as 'old', we dive into the deeper meaning behind them to help us learn become stronger cultured individuals.

## Focus

During the celebrations of *Gaṇeśa Caturthī*, we acknowledge the admirable qualities of Lord *Gaṇeśa* - his small eyes being a symbol of his concentration and focus. **What is focus and why do we need focus?** As we reflect on this question, it becomes clear that focus is a state of mind in which we are thinking about no more than one entity. When Arjuna's Guru asked him what he saw when he was aiming to shoot the eye of a bird, Arjuna replied that he saw only the eye of the bird. His vision at that moment did not consist of the body of the bird, let alone the tree that the bird was on, or the things surrounding the tree. That is true focus! **Why do we need focus?** The simple answer is to learn effectively. If Arjuna had not mastered concentration, then his skill in archery would never have reached the level of perfection it did. In addition to becoming efficient, focus is a very beneficial time management strategy. The next question that comes to mind is **how do we stay focused?** Some ways to stay focused when doing homework is to keep all possible distractions away, including phone, create a homework schedule and most significantly, try to stick to it. To stay focused during tests at school, one can mentally chant a prayer before starting the test. The key to staying focused is practice and consistency. We know we are focused enough when we can see nothing but our target, and to help us get there, we must remember Lord *Gaṇeśa*'s small but highly focused eyes

## Time Management and Balance

**How do we find time to do what we love, with the increasing workload as we journey up the grades?** As children, it is our duty to study and gain academic knowledge to aid us in the future. However, we also have things that we like to do outside of school. Some of us dance, some of us play musical instruments, some of us play sports. We know that we must work hard for academic success, but how do we keep up our innate talent? The answer to that is simple – by gaining the spiritual knowledge, which promotes *balance* in life. We have all heard of Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, his epic battles against evil, his plots to steal butter, and his adventures with his friends. How was he able to work and play with balance? Lord *Kṛṣṇa*'s stories have an underlying pattern that relates to us! Though our roles in life are much different from HIS, we can still learn from his life and apply it to ours. Lord *Kṛṣṇa*'s job was to keep evil at bay, while our job at this stage in life is to learn. He played his flute and hung out with his friends when the evil was contained, and did not think about having fun while doing his work. We can pursue our innate talent once we have fully put our minds to our work and completed it. We must also learn to discriminate between *preyas* and *śreyas* and channelize our energies towards *śreyas*. If we keep up this pattern of focus, discrimination and good time management, we will get the most out of our school years, just like Lord *Kṛṣṇa* got the most out of his childhood! All in all, everyone has twenty-four hours in the day. No one can turn back time, not even the lord! How we **prioritize** and **manage** those twenty-four hours is what matters.

-Shreya Sapkal, Ananya Bharathwaj, Arushi Bharadwaj, Vaishavi Jay Grade 9

## Story Time -Mirabai's Life depicting an Altar Can Alter Our Life!

On August 23, 2019, we celebrated Kṛṣṇa Jayanthi at our āśrama. When we think of Kṛṣṇa, we instantly think of his devotee Mirabai. When Mira was 5 years old, a wedding procession passed by her palace and she inquired to her mother as to who will be her bridegroom. Her mother walked towards an image of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and said, "Kṛṣṇa is your husband." Mira instantly loved the image, and served the image like a wife would faithfully serve a husband. Years passed, and one day Mira was married to Rana Kumbha of Chitore. She was a responsible, dedicated wife and served her husband well. But she would often go to the temple to worship Lord Kṛṣṇa. Her in-laws did not accept this, and were enraged, for Durga was their family goddess. One day, Mira wrote a letter to Tulsidasji asking for his advice on this situation. He suggested for Mira to leave the family. Mira left the family, and gave up everything for her Lord and faced criticism and persecution. Everyone desires all the wealth of the world, but when one seeks the Lord, there is nothing more to desire.

Mirabai's steadfast devotion will always be remembered and respected for generations. At our age, our goal is to excel in our Dharma of a student and a child. We can achieve this by aligning our desires - thoughts, words and actions with our current goals as well as our highest goal of life. Just like Mirabai, we must cultivate faith, courage and devotion towards our ultimate goal and tread the path of Dharma.

- Neha Mahesh, Swetha Balasubramanian. Grade 9

# CMSD in the community

## Bridges of Understanding

On Sep 18, 2019 **Faith and Mohit Prasad** had an opportunity to attend the interfaith lecture on HINDUISM given by Lakshmi Auntie. The session started with a very nice explanation of the words Hindu and Sanatana Dharma and also brief history. Various topics were introduced such as AUM, dharma, caste system, and reincarnation with easy to understand language. The audience continued to stay engaged with a question and answer session. Auntie closed the lecture with a few selected quotes that represent the Hindu perspective. "I do not want my house to be walled on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible..." by Mahatama Gandhi.

-Faith Prasad



## CMSD at BAPS Event

On Sep 21, 2019, Lakshmi Aunty represented CMSD as a Chief Guest at the BAPS Mahila Celebration organized by women for women to celebrate their current head Mahant Swami Maharaj's Janma Jayanti. It was a wonderful and colorful musical presentation showcasing *akṣaram aham puruṣottama dāsosmi bhāva*. Aunty very beautifully interspersed the significance of upcoming *Navarātrī* festival -as a way of discovering and manifesting the divine *Devī Śaktī*. It very aptly complemented the overall theme of the program of empowering women. The captivating lines from *Gurvāṣṭakam* expressing if one's mind be not centered upon the lotus feet of the Guru, what then, what then, what then? touched all the hearts in the audience alike and created a bridge to the expression of "*dāsosmi bhāva*".

- Manasi Popat



## Navarātrī begins...

*Navarātrī* is a very special festival that is celebrated towards the feminine aspect of the divine propitiated as *Śakti*. By turning inward during *Navarātrī*, and getting in touch with the spirit within, one can overcome the negative tendencies and invoke positive qualities that are within, thus feeling elevated and renewed.

The festive mood commenced this year on Sep 29, 2019. A colorful golu has been setup in Pranava Nilayam that showcases many dolls including that of *devata-s*, sages and everyday people. Grade 10 children introduced the symbolism behind *Navarātrī* and *Vijaya Daśami*. Both students and adults alike, were fully engrossed in the fifth Grade presentation of the Legend of *Mahiṣāsura-mardini* setting the stage for the a joyous *Navarātrī*.

Stay tuned for our exclusive report in the next issue.



**SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA**



*Whenever you are ready to do anything,  
help will come from all directions,  
and the road that seemed long will become short.  
If you look for shortcuts you may get into trouble.*