



चिन्मयाल

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Issue 17: Focus on children

“One little child can change the entire history of the country. That is how all the great men of the past were – a Shivaji, an Einstein, a Tagore, a Mahatma Gandhi.”

Swami Chinmayananda



Editorial

Grown-ups never understand anything for themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery, "The Little Prince", 1943

This issue is dedicated to children, in our Bal Vihars (children's classes), in our teenage classes (Junior Chyk classes) and inside all of us.

We are tremendously lucky, in the Bal Vihar team, to be able to enjoy being with children, playing games, learning to unravel the mysteries of the universe and ourselves, basking in their wide-eyed and rapt attention as we bring to life the stories of ancient heroes. We are children again, carefree, innocent and happy – the grown up world of stress and strife firmly left outside. We grow through teaching the children, by listening to them, by sharing their world and gently introducing them to ours.

Pause awhile and come with me to a Bal Vihar class. Meet your friends, swap stories and settle down to some gentle chanting. Let me transport you to Ayodhya, where you will see Rama in all his splendour, feel sorry for him when he leaves home, worry when Sita lets Ravana in, stand up and fight shoulder to shoulder with the monkey army – cheer when Ravana is destroyed. Let us make a bridge to go to Lanka, and see who can jump the farthest ... do you really want to go home?

The 5 year old child will thrill at the adventure, gasp at the dangers and giggle as she 'falls' into the sea – but she will remember that closing her eyes and saying 'Rama' gave her the extra courage to jump. The 10 year old will think about parents and duty and choices, but he too will remember to reflect on Rama to find inner strength. The 12 year old will

rationalise about Sita's temporary lapse into wanting the 'golden' deer and compare that with her own lapses into excessive TV or chocolate; she will consider the relevance of the 'lakshman rekha' aka parental rules. And she will start to define her own boundaries.

The teenager will go beyond the stories and symbolism, and generate heated discussions on boundaries: parental pressures, peer pressure, cultural clash. Can he still tap into that inner 'Rama' to achieve his goals, to resolve conflict? He will ask about the schools, hospitals, and homes run by the Chinmaya Mission; tell all his friends about the Chinmaya Organisation for Rural Development and burn with the ambition to transform lives for the less fortunate. 'Rama' has grown up and is ready for action.

But it is not just the children who learn. The sevaks (teachers) read, research and reflect to create the drama/art/games and bring the values to life. So they too 'learn' with the children. They too are reminded of the values they teach. What is more, they know that children learn from their words AND their actions. Now they have to live the values they teach (at least for one day a week!).

It does not end there – children learn from us, from our actions and the way we live our lives. Parents attend study classes or the Bal Vihar classes as sevaks and they, too, reinforce at home the values learnt so that children are exposed to a holistic and consistent approach.

As I welcome you to this issue, let me share with you why I love Bal Vihar:

Being a teacher is like being present at a gradually unfolding piece of creation, when the clay begins to transform itself. And as it does, I occasionally find myself, quite magically, transforming a little too.

Teaching Bal Vihar is not just what we do – it is what we are.

Madhavi Vadera, Bal Vihar Co-ordinator

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This issue has been sponsored by members of the Chinmaya Mission study classes

Teaching future generations the art of living

Vishva Samani

Britain's 12 million children and teenagers are the unhappiest and unhealthiest of any wealthy European country, a major new study has revealed.



Growing up in the UK should be a blessing. If you apply yourself early on, the opportunities open to you later in life are immense. In fact, British children grow up in one of the wealthiest, most technologically advanced nations on earth. Many families continue to come to the UK from far-away shores to give unrivalled opportunities to their children. The country has enjoyed sixty years of peace and prosperity with free education and medical services for all. British homes are crammed with labour-saving devices and electronic entertainment that previous generations could not even dream of.

Yet a study conducted by UNICEF earlier this year on 'childhood well-being' prompted heavy debate after it revealed that out of 21 nations across the developed world, British children are the unhappiest.

In the words of Bob Reitemeier, the Chief Executive of the Children's Society,

"Unicef's report is a wake-up call to the fact that, despite being a rich country, the UK is failing children and young people in a number of crucial ways."

Journalists, politicians and community leaders all have various theories on why kids in Britain are the

"The tragedy of human history is decreasing happiness in the midst of increasing comforts."

Swami
Chinmayananda

unhappiest, but here are some general observations. Children growing up in the UK are encouraged to maintain an insatiable appetite to accumulate and continually have the best new toys, gadgets, trainers etc. available. Many of the role models the media bombards us with are accidental celebrities, often famous for all the wrong reasons. They may either be outwardly beautiful, materially successful, or indeed part of a major scandal; but it would be rare to find the face of a genuinely admirable figure on the front page of a high-selling magazine.

The common factor in all these things is that the emphasis is on the outer. The things that we focus on and believe make us happy from a young age are not linked to serving others, doing our duties, learning to live up to higher ideals or feeling happy with just enough of what we need. Instead the spotlight is on looking good, and possessing more.

Many young British Indians lament over identity issues and hold the view that it is difficult to reconcile two clashing cultures. Living in the modern and developed West is in conflict with the ancient traditions and customs their parents have brought with them to the UK. But in actual fact, British born

"Only when a plant is young and we are sincerely watching it, can we train the plant to grow straight. A plant can be trained but not a tree. If the tree has got a bend, it has got a bend - full stop! Then we can only trim the branches but not the trunk."

Swami Chinmayananda

Hindus are in a uniquely fortunate position. Not only do they enjoy the benefits of free health care and compulsory education, but they also have privileged access to a wonderfully rich culture within which exists the profoundly logical and timeless teaching of how to be happy, regardless of where you live.

Value-based education for children has an important role to play in the present day, here in Britain. Bal Vihar provides an atmosphere for children to grow with noble ideals, healthy emotions and physical discipline. It trains children to



develop a sense of reverence for Hindu culture and inspires them to live up to it with the correct understanding. It creates self-confidence in children to serve and act cheerfully in their immediate surroundings, and it helps them nurture their creativity.

In short, Bal Vihar children are taught how to be happy children. And in a climate where British youth have been declared 'unhappiest in Europe' the need for value-based education that teaches the future generation the art of living, could not be greater.

Building a strong foundation Bal Vihar with the Chinmaya Mission

Where can your child gain a glorious, ancient spiritual and cultural education, taught in a practical and applicable way? Where can your child come to be in like-minded company, where the focus is less on fierce competition and material gain and more on individual worth and the wealth of values and virtues? Where can your child learn about great saints and sages of all faiths; about people who have made a difference and are special for all the right reasons? Where can your child start appreciating devotional music and prayers, taught in a fun and friendly way with explanations of the meaning and significance? Where are the stories so enthralling for your child that Sri Krishna becomes a friend, Hanumanji is a hero and Lord Ganesha is a role-model? **Answer: Bal Vihar!**

Σ Bal Vihar is a group of children, meeting once a week, at a set venue, for 90 minutes, for the sole purpose of learning about our precious culture and gaining good strong values.

Σ Bal Vihar classes are conducted by trained sevaks and sevikas (volunteers). These dedicated workers impart to children the glory of our rich culture, aiming at character formation and reverence for our ancient heritage.

Σ The high ideals and values from our great scriptures are taught in the form of stories, games, quizzes, crafts, bhajans, hymns, shlokas, skits, dances, etc, with the most

up-to-date teaching aids and resources available.

Σ The current syllabus includes: Bala Ramayana, Bala Bhagvatam, Symbolism in Hinduism, Hanuman Chalisa, Saints and Sages, In Indian Culture ... Why Do We?, and much more ...

Σ A Family Camp is held annually in the UK with a Chinmaya Mission Acharya. Bringing the entire family together for value-based learning and spiritual growth, these events are acknowledged by all who attend them as transforming and unifying experiences for the family. Past camps have been based on the following themes: "Win the Mind, Win the World", "Hanumanji's Adventure Camp" and "We Stand as One Family". Teenagers' events have included "MSN – the Mental & Spiritual Network", "Face In" and "Dare to be different".

Bal Vihar in the UK has been growing from strength to strength for over 10 years. Bal Vihar sevaks are regularly invited to schools and other assemblies to talk about Hinduism. Bal Vihar coordinators also participate in dialogue with and promote awareness of value-based child development at other spiritual and educational organizations in the UK.

We now run Bal Vihars in 4 different locations across London, each split up into classes based on the different age groups of the children who attend. These locations are in Harrow, Hendon, St. Johns Wood and Wanstead. For more information see the back page of this magazine or visit www.chinmayauk.org

Enrol your child today!

Trishna Gulrajani

Parenting Pearls

The Hindu scriptures guide parents on raising children. From birth to age two and a half, parents should shower babies with love, fulfilling their needs and indulging them fully. From age two and a half to seventeen, discipline is of utmost importance. Love and discipline should be present both at home and at school. From age seventeen upward, parental love should express as friendship; but not to the extent that the level of respect towards parents changes. Below are some

pearls of wisdom on the subject of parenting extracted from teachings of various Chinmaya Mission Acharyas (teachers).

From a spiritual standpoint, much of the worry and anxiety a parent feels for their child stems from a sense of 'I-ness' and 'my-ness.' We are not concerned with the behaviour of all children, but only with our own children. The actions of my child have a direct repercussion on 'me' (the parent) and 'my image'. It is often the 'I' that is the cause of all the worry. We all belong to the Lord and as parents remembering this helps reduce the sense of possessiveness we feel for our children. A wave arises in the ocean. Just as one wave is not born of another wave but is born of the ocean; we all ultimately belong to God.

It is human nature to force our ideas on to others. As parents, we should not impose our ideas on children or fulfil our selfish dreams and ambitions through them. Sometimes, if we have failed to achieve something in life, we want to experience and enjoy it indirectly through our children.

Often parents want their children to be cultured but they do not want it for themselves. They say to their children, 'You go to BV [Bal Vihar] and we will watch TV!' But the family should grow together so that they share the same vision. There is the famous saying, 'The family that prays together stays together.'

The role of a parent is like that of a gardener. You do not create the seed or the soil but you prepare the soil and sow the seeds at the right time to produce a conducive environment for the seeds to grow. The duty of the parent is to provide the right atmosphere to nurture a child's growth. If the seed has potential in it, it will grow. Every seed will grow at its own pace when it is ready.

It is extremely important to establish a rapport between you and your children. In the children's hearts there has to be love and total confidence in you. They must be able to confide in you. When this kind of rapport is built, everything else becomes easy. Otherwise, even minor things can be very irritating and disturbing.

Spirituality and noble values should be taught to children before they reach the age of three as the amount a small child is able to absorb is immense at this young age. Between the ages of three and five, children should be introduced to stories of the great saints and spiritual giants of the world. Finally, between the ages of eight and ten, introduce children to reading the Ramayana for half an hour daily. The endless stories and analogies will lead their minds on an independent journey to see for themselves a greater message and a larger value in life.

Give children the vision to not just get carried away by the outer beauty of things, but try to see what is really good. For example, people in the West work very hard and uphold other strong values such as punctuality and cleanliness. Teach children about what is good in the West, and teach them to be discriminative; to absorb what good they see here and simply drop whatever they see as not right.

"We, the parents, must change. Children learn not from books. Higher values cannot be imparted to the students by institutions, by a society or a community, or even a committee."

Swami Chinmayananda

A parent's journey

It all started seven years ago ... a family member wanted his ten year old son to attend a children's camp entitled 'Hanuman the Hero' and wanted to make sure an adult was there to look after him. The only adults allowed in this camp were parents of children under five and since our son was four and a half at the time, he thought we should go along with Paavan - our son, Bansri - our daughter (aged 6) and Anique - our nephew. That weekend we met and interacted with Swami Swaroopananda and during his spell-binding sessions with the 42 children and handful of adults there, he said the words that touched our hearts: 'Hanumanji's purpose in life was to serve Ram – it is also our purpose, only we have forgotten it'. This was the start of an incredible journey that has changed all our lives and given us a new identity and an enormous family (the Chinmaya Mission family) of which we are a part.

At first we gingerly dipped our toes into the vast waters of Vedantic knowledge that the Chinmaya Mission offers. We went along to the Yagna talks (public talks held by the Mission on Vedanta), sometimes only attending one or two sessions. Even getting to Sunday study classes at 10.30 a.m. seemed like a chore but we kept at it because we felt that the children were benefiting. Then the spring and summer would arrive together with visiting Swamis and Yagnas. I would normally turn up at the venue for the seven days, help for a while on the bookstall, hand in my donations and walk out feeling that I had done my bit.

In the meantime the Chinmaya Mission decided to run Hinduism GCSE classes and Paavan and Bansri were really keen to attempt them. At 11, Paavan would be the



youngest child in the Chinmaya Mission (UK) to attempt this exam. We were sceptical at first but the depth to which they learnt about our religion was a joy to behold. After all, how many of us could write an essay on 'the relationship between a jeevatma and paramatma – and give another religion's viewpoint' or questions of a similar ilk. And before you ask, all the kids did really well including our two who both scored an A grade.

Then one fine day, Brahmacharini Sumati Chaitanya summoned us and asked why we were not working for the Mission to the best of our ability? That was hard and it was a real wake up call. Why weren't we? It was only our own limitations that were stopping us and so we took on more and more responsibility. Before, we would cite work and family commitments as the reasons we could not give of our time to a worthy cause. This summer we found ourselves part of a team to run a large Yagna at the Advait centre. It meant leaving the children (now 11 and 13) to get on with life by themselves. They had to wake up with their alarms rather than mum's constant calls, fend breakfast for themselves and get dressed in time to go to school by themselves. The message? Give of your time and God will teach your children to look after themselves. The Mission and its activities task us to develop ourselves through work. And whether that work is a small thing like setting chairs in a hall, it all has to be done with acceptance, with trust, with faith but most importantly with the knowledge that it is not about 'me' but about 'we'. The journey has begun ...

HARSHA BUDDHEV

Culture and values cannot be taught, they can only be caught. When children watch their parents, they automatically do the same thing. Therefore it is important not to lecture children on how they should behave, but through your own actions teach them life's values.

From a young age teach children to do all their work as an offering. Treating every small action as an act of worship inculcates orderliness in everything and inspires devotion in children.

"When we sit down and try to analyze how to remould and recast our future, we see that it is certainly through the children of today who are going to be the leaders of tomorrow. We must supply them with a vision and teach them to have the courage and heroism to live up to their convictions."

Swami Chinmayananda

East meets West 480 Students from 22 states of India and 17 different countries in value-based education

At the Chinmaya International Residential School (CIRS) in Tamil Nadu, India, children are offered a revolutionary system of education carved out by Swami Chinmayananda's vision and propelled into motion by Senior Chinmaya Mission Acharyas.

How does a CIRS education differ from other education?

Education in the West focuses largely and almost exclusively on the academic success of a student. Western schools prepare children for successful careers – but teach them very little about life. Education at CIRS is the grooming of the entire being based on the strong foundations of the Gurukula tradition of ancient India, which has been adapted to suit modern educational leverage. CIRS offers a unique fusion of culture and academics - the best of the East and the best of the West.

What is the purpose of education according to CIRS?

An individual differs from others due to his vision of life, which includes his values and ideals. To develop the right vision in children is to create a generation of truly educated, refined and noble citizens, inspired and equipped to serve the world in various capacities, thereby fulfilling their lives.

The purpose of education is the overall unfolding and gentle blossoming of the child at the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual levels of his/her personality.

True education compliments academic excellence with character and personality development. CIRS provides the best environment where the student can unfold within and shine without.

How is this unique approach to education structured into the academic programme?

Through the Chinmaya Vision Programme, also known as CVP. The philosophy of CIRS pivots around a noble cause - the betterment of humanity. This has been translated into action through the Chinmaya Vision Programme (CVP). It is a comprehensive educational programme that integrates the best in Indian culture and philosophy with academic education.

Developed by the former director of the school, Swamini Vimalananda, it aims at giving the future citizens of India and the West a true vision of life to help them face challenges in a positive and dynamic manner and heartily contribute to society. The child is the focal point of this programme, which also embraces the school management, teachers and parents. Through the child, the light of this vision spreads to society, the country, and the world at large. CVP can be identified under the following four headings:

- 1) Integrated development of the child
- 2) Hindu culture
- 3) Patriotism
- 4) Universal Outlook

What is the school setting like?

The Chinmaya International Residential School is located in a lush and beautiful mountain setting just outside Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

What are the main facts and figures about the school?

CIRS education is provided to both boys and girls. We have 480 students in class sizes that does not exceed 25 pupils. The teacher-student ratio is 1 to 9. A child needs to be 9 years of age to join the school.

Is CIRS affiliated to any other educational body?

We are affiliated to the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi, India and the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO), Geneva, Switzerland.

Is Hindi compulsory for students from overseas?

No. There is a special rule for overseas students. In addition to English which is compulsory, every student has to take two more languages as juniors, and one language when they are seniors. Students can choose from Hindi, French and Sanskrit.

What facilities does CIRS have?

The basic living unit is the students' hostel, managed by the Resident House Master, who is also a faculty member. He/She is always available to students for personal counseling and guidance. Being a co-educational school, separate dormitories exist for boys and girls. They are spacious and well-ventilated. Common bathrooms for each dormitory are fitted with all modern facilities. Spacious common rooms are equipped with televisions, music systems, reading materials and a number of indoor games.

The dining hall caters to all students and staff. Delicious and balanced vegetarian dishes are prepared under strict hygienic conditions. The cuisine consists of Continental, Chinese and Indian. The school has a full time Resident Medical Officer who is in charge of a well-equipped and modern clinic / dispensary. CIRS also boasts excellent sports facilities. There is a large swimming pool, a state-of-the-art multipurpose gymnasium and fitness centre as well as basketball and tennis courts.

CIRS has a sophisticated multi-purpose auditorium to host functions and show movies. It also has state-of-the-art communication facilities including a telephone, fax, an internet connection and a laundry service.

Message from Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayanada, Founder of CIRS



Never before in our national history did the best minds of India move out in such spectacular numbers to serve communities in distant foreign lands, living amidst unusual climates, strange food habits, peculiar social customs and confusing cultural environments. Everywhere young Indians are scoring success with their performances in science and technology, commerce and art. We salute them for all their excellence and wish them even greater success in their professions.

Those who have gone abroad with their families try to contribute to the lifestyle of their adopted countries with their Indian way of life. At times such attempts create pressures and conflicts over moral values and cultural patterns. The children see one thing at home and meet contradictory situations outside. Because of this bi-cultural experience they run the risk of picking up attitudes potentially dangerous and sometimes suicidal to their future happiness and success.

CIRS will provide an environment that will help integrate the best of each culture. It will be a cultural home away from home for our growing children.

Send us your children. Let them have one to six years of cultural adventure when they are 11-18 years of age. Let us give them a chance to understand and absorb Indian culture and heritage and return to the countries from where they came, to continue their studies. Let us build up sufficient knowledge and taste in them to feel a sense of identity with and a pride in their Indian heritage.

I wish you all success. Hari Om!

A STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE

Chirag Hathirami, in his early twenties, attended CIRS. He now lives and works in Washington DC.

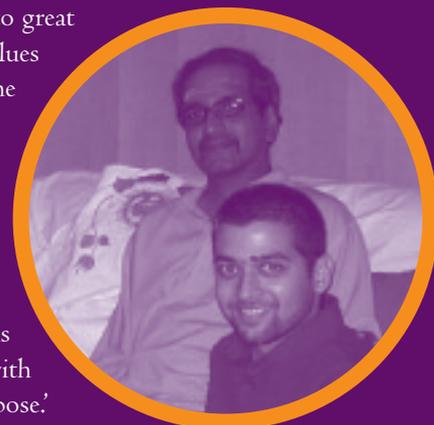
'CIRS gives you two things. 1) A top notch Indian education. 2) A framework and the essential tools you need for logical self-inquiry.

An education at CIRS is focused on the big picture. It promotes the overall physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual development of a student. Science and religion blend seamlessly, philosophy is an integral part of the CIRS curriculum. All members of staff including the Brahmacharis and Swamis, went to great lengths to carefully explain the science of the Self to their young audience. At CIRS, values were quietly ingrained into our very nature. It is clearly reflected in my personality and the decisions I make today.

The most essential qualities I picked up were discipline and direction. CIRS was a mental and spiritual boot camp. Many of the kids that went to CIRS will soon be leaders in the fields they have since chosen.

I think I would be very different if I had gone to school at home in the Philippines. The school taught me how to apply myself in any direction I chose.

CIRS was a gratifying experience. Almost everyone I know from the school still recalls our days there as some of the best we have ever had. It left the vast majority of us with precious memories, but most fundamentally it has given each of us a clear sense of purpose.'



"Religion provides that art of living by which one discovers in oneself the equipoise to stand up to life's situations, meeting efficiently the ever-changing world of challenges thrown at him."

Swami Chinmayananda



Other Chinmaya Mission Schools

CIRS plays a unique role in bringing together both international and Indian born students in an academic environment which couples a deep understanding of Indian culture with the best of learning facilities. But the Chinmaya Vision Programme that underpins the syllabus taught at CIRS is also available to thousands of other children across India.

The Chinmaya Education movement encompasses 75 Vidyalayas (state schools), 6 colleges, a Harihar school (free schools for poor village children) as well as the International

Residential School. At present, more than 50,000 students are studying in these institutions where they benefit from 'education with a difference'. They are governed by the Central Chinmaya Mission Trust Education Cell ('CCMT Education Cell'). But the educational philosophy of the Chinmaya Vidyalaya reaches even further than this. The Central Board of Secondary Education in India has over six thousand schools under its wing and has featured the educational philosophy of the Chinmaya Vidyalayas in its value-based education handbook for teachers as one of the top value-based educational programmes in the country.

The Chinmaya Educational Cell Scholarship

The CCMT Education Cell has created the 'Chinmaya Education Cell Scholarship' (CECS) for students of Chinmaya Vidyalayas who are academically gifted but need financial assistance in continuing their studies in our Vidyalayas. The scholarship money is shared by the Cell and the Vidyalaya, enabling both to reach higher and wider in their service.

To find out more about this scheme or to donate, please go to: www.chinmayamission.com/CECS

Special Children and CORD

The Chinmaya Organisation for Rural Development (CORD) was set up in 2003 by Gururji, Swami Tejomayananda with the vision of transforming the lives of the poor in various parts of India with their own active participation. The work of the Chinmaya Mission in rural development has covered over 400 villages and involved 40,000 people directly, mainly in the areas of Women and Girl Empowerment, Primary Health Care Services and Income Generation Activities. One area in which it has been extremely successful is in children's development.

The story below, reported in the online media, describes how the lives of a number of disabled children and their families have been transformed through CORD initiatives:

Hearing Impaired Himachal Kids Find a Livelihood in Kangra Paintings

Disability is not an impediment for some. Eight hearing impaired youth of Himachal Pradesh make a living by selling their Kangra-style miniature paintings, greeting cards and bookmarks, and by painting on village houses. With the money they get in selling their art, the artists share the expenses of their families.

Initially often seen as a burden by their parents, these children's lives were changed when, in 2001, the Chinmaya Organisation for Rural Development (CORD), a self-help group based in Himachal Pradesh's Kangra District, recognised the children's hidden talents.

Twelve hearing-impaired children of school-going age were given training in the Kangra style of painting by the Kangra Art Gallery in Dharamshala. Developing their expertise in the delicacy of line, brilliance of colour and minuteness of decorative details unique to Kangra painting, the children have transformed what might have been a hobby into earning power by practising and selling their art after school hours.

The works of the children are slowly being recognised on a larger scale. A short time ago, they displayed their works at Canada House in India. David M Malone, the Canadian High Commissioner to India, bought over a dozen paintings. Of these, Malone says he has presented a few in France and to his friends abroad.

The programme shows that, given the right care and attention, any child's talents can be nurtured to enable him or her to contribute to the wider community and grow into a productive and useful member of society.

The world is your clay, mould it as you desire ...

"Live dynamically,
think positively,
plan out
deliberately, pray
ardently,
meditate
regularly, read
daily, correct
minutely, grow
divinely."

Swami

Chinmayananda

Article written by
Jankee Gobil (16),
and based on talks
given by Swami
Swaroopananda called
'Dare to be Different'
which is part of the
'Potential to

Performance' series.

Recordings of these
talks can be purchased
from our bookshop or
from our e-bookshop
on
www.chinmayauk.org
/ebookshop

If you were handed back a mock exam with the letter F branded on the front in thick, red ink, would your teacher tell you that you couldn't achieve an A? When you are asked to talk or sing in front of 300 people, does your best friend tell you that you will not be able to do it? So who is it that forces us to run away and give up?

If you think about your class at school, you will see that there are some kids who seem to get the best of life; their list of achievements is never-ending! On the other hand there are those who do what they have to and that's that. So, what is the difference? If they are all taught by the same teachers and given the same opportunities, what is the cause of this gap?

The achievers have unwavering faith in their ability and never lose sight of their goal. We seem to base our happiness on the people and things around us. It is so easy to blame others or even luck when we have tried yet failed at something. Big-achievers are those who have understood that there is no limit to what they can do, their potential is limitless. They have understood that any disappointments are not caused by those around them, but can be traced back to themselves and any hope for change is down to them. Therefore, they live their lives putting 110% into

everything that they do, living by the phrase "you reap what you sow".

Of course, sometimes we do fail at some things, for example we may not achieve our desired grade in an exam, but giving up is what really defines a failure. Certainly, this is the easier option: getting a low grade in one exam, then feeling that the A is out of reach and then not bothering to aim high ever again takes a lot less effort than putting in the work to raise the mark. So it is easy to see why it appeals to many! However in all honesty, everyone wants to reach his or her full potential, whether it is a grade C, B or A, and only you know what it is. How do we reach our full potential?

We first have to change our mindset. From a very young age we are constantly being told what we can't do, forgetting the vast majority of things that we can do and our lives become plagued with negativity. We need to remind ourselves that the only person limiting us is our self. Obviously, we do need to be realistic, no matter how much you believe that you can fly without wings, it will only result in injury! However, if we aim to put an end to a bad habit, anything from biting nails to smoking, or meeting any other challenges, we have to be absolutely firm in believing that it is entirely down to us to make a change and that it is not an impossible task, especially if others have done it before.

Another factor that plays a part in stopping people reaching their full potential is fear. Fear of the unknown, fear of what others think, fear of failure ... It is said that great people are those who are able to handle their fear and manipulate it to reach their goal. Fear in itself is a reason to go for the challenge, because once you overcome the fear it is an immense achievement in itself. As for the fear of what people think, if you believe that what you are doing is correct and you will benefit from it, then it does not matter what others think.

In achieving your own full potential, it is important to always be yourself. If you live behind a façade, you will never be completely devoted to doing your own best, your mind will always be clouded with concerns of how you are being perceived, when actually, the most important thing is that you believe in yourself, your true, unique self.

So, next time you are faced with a challenge, remember that you can succeed in anything that you put your mind to. In the same way that dreams are merely potions of the mind, you can create your own success with the desire and will to succeed.



Welcome to Warrior School

Junior CHYKs (teenagers aged 12-17) in St Johns Wood followed a unique syllabus last term. They took to the streets to perform random acts of kindness and learnt techniques to practice awareness, amongst other activities. The teachings, rooted in Eastern spirituality, taught the qualities of a warrior. Below is a summary of what was covered:

What is a Warrior?

A warrior is not some mythical person guarding a gate in the ancient world. A warrior is not a soldier in an army, nor a person who can fight well. A warrior is not characterised by race, gender, or culture. A warrior is you and me; it is the person you see walking down the street, the quiet poet sitting in the corner. A warrior could be a mother or father, a friend or a stranger. We are all warriors; we all have the warrior gene built in us. Look around, you'll see warriors everywhere. But look carefully because to see a warrior you must first understand why you are a warrior. Welcome to Warrior School.

Focus and Humility

A warrior sees the world through focused eyes, a mind sharpened by knowledge. A warrior sees an opportunity in every obstacle, the possible in an impossible situation. With keen readiness and firm resolve, he stands before each challenge, knowing that it will make him stronger, sharper, better. But there is no bragging here, no pride or arrogance. Rather the warrior thanks the grass for cushioning his footsteps, thanks the trees for providing him with shade. Humility ensures that he understands that he is part of something bigger, something which unites all things, and as a result the beauty in everything is seen. For this he is grateful, eternally.

Determination in Discipline

With determination he strives to better himself. To overcome every challenge, that arises both within and from the outside world. Discipline and training pushes the warrior to become better than he was yesterday, and to be better tomorrow than he was today, never allowing a day to pass without learning something new, or improving himself in some way.

Adding not Subtracting

The warrior knows that in every moment there is an opportunity to put back into the world rather than taking away. He 'practices random acts of kindness and beauty' on his many journeys during the day.

Stopping to help someone who needs assistance, buying a cup of coffee for the 4 people in the line behind him. Picking up the litter that is left on the ground or simply leaving an encouraging message for someone he has met. He 'practices' acts instead of thinking about them, they are 'random' because great beauty can be found in spontaneity, and 'kindness' because a warrior gives back to the earth, rather than taking away.

Awareness of Knowledge

The warrior listens to those that have walked the path before him. He studies the environment around him listening to the teachings presented along his path from many different sources. The warrior stands apart because of the knowledge that he has been bestowed with. Looking on the path before him, the warrior takes his step with self assuredness, a stillness of mind that enables him to go beyond, with limitless potential, to shine, to soar, to be everything one can be.

Vijay Sodbi (Junior CHYK Sevak)

"Nobility in your heart must shine out in your actions, in your conduct, in your work."

Swami
Chinmayananda



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Our international children's monthly magazine is in its 34th year of publication. It contains stories, pictures, puzzles, articles on Hindu culture and general information. To subscribe, please visit our ebookshop at www.chinmayauk.org/ebookshop

Chinmaya kids

The rat who forgot

Once upon a time there was a Guru who was sitting outside his little cave and he was looking at the beauty of the sky and contemplating on the Lord who created it all. Suddenly something fell right in front of him. He looked and it was a small rat. He wondered how can a rat fall from the sky? So he asked, "Rat, what happened?" The rat was trembling and said, "A bird caught me, he tried to eat me and then he took me in his beak and started flying. Luckily I fell down....!" So the Guru said, "Don't fear anymore. You stay with me in my cave, I will look after you. Thereafter, every day, he gave him a little food and some sugar, and the rat slowly became fatter and fatter.

One day the rat went out to play but suddenly it ran inside to the Guru and sat there shivering ... from the tip of his nose to his feet. The Guru said, "What is wrong, why are you afraid?" The rat said, "A cat has come here!" The Guru responded, "Don't worry. I will make you a cat." And he closed his eyes and said a mantra. That rat became a big tall cat and when he went out of the cave, the other cat ran away.

The cat remained in the cave with the master and the master started giving him milk. Once again, after a few days the cat ran to the master and sat near him trembling. "Cat, now what happened?" asked the Guru. The cat said, "Save me!" "Why?" asked the Guru. The cat replied, "A dog has come here!" The Guru said: "Don't worry I will make you a big Alsatian". And that cat became an Alsatian dog. The tall dog went outside and the little dog got up, stuck its tail between the legs and walked meekly away. The Alsatian dog was happy.

Now the Guru started feeding the dog. A little food, sugar or milk would not do, and so he had to cook food for the dog. After some days, the dog came back, shivering and crying. The Guru said: "Keep quiet. What is the matter?" The dog replied, "I saw a tiger, a small tiger has come from the forest! I will be eaten up!" The Guru reassured him, "Don't worry I will make you a lion." And the dog became a lion with a huge mane, no longer afraid of the tiger.

The lion then came back, and sat in front of the teacher. He suddenly thought, why not eat the teacher as the lion wanted to eat meat, but the Guru had never given him meat, since he never ate meat himself. The lion forgot that in truth it was only a rat. It was only by the blessings of the Guru that he had become a lion.

The Guru called the lion to sit down to do bhajans with him. The lion said: "Why should I do this? I am not doing it." The Guru said, "Do it!" The lion said: "What are you doing, you are only a man! I AM A LION. I can ..."

And as the lion came forward to attack the Guru, the Guru smiled and said: "Oh, I see, you have forgotten everything, OK ...", and immediately the lion turned into a little, shivering rat. Just as he had come to the Guru the first day.

The story is one that we must learn from. Even though, by the blessings of our teachers and parents, we grow up and become big children, never forget that we were little children at the beginning, looked after and loved by our parents. If we forget that, we may end up back in the same place – helpless and sorry. As we grow up, we must remember this, and look after, serve and respect our parents.



The Brahmin & the Cobbler

Narada Muni, the sage of the Gods, was once approached by old Jara, the daughter of Time. She wanted to marry him, but he refused her. Greatly offended, Jara cursed him that he would never have a fixed place to live. As a result he travels constantly, playing on his stringed instrument, the vina, as he chants the holy name of the Supreme Lord Narayana.

During his travels, Narada once came across a proud brahmin priest who had just finished his fire sacrifice. Seeing the famous sage, the brahmin greeted him, "Namaste, my dear Narada."

Narada replied. "May your life be successful, my dear brahmin."

"If you are going to the spiritual world," requested the priest, "then please do me a favor. Ask Lord Narayan when I am going to join Him there. I think it should be very soon, but I'd like to verify it anyway."

"All right," agreed Narada, "I'll ask him."

The next day Narada passed a humble cobbler, the lowest of the castes, repairing shoes by the roadside.

"All glories to you, Narada Muni," the cobbler called out.

"All glories to the devotees of Lord Narayan," returned Narada. "And how are you?"

"By the grace of the Lord," responded the cobbler, "all is well. But speaking of the Lord, will you be seeing Him soon?"

"Oh yes," replied Narada. "But why do you ask? Do you want me to speak to Him on your behalf?"

"Oh yes" answered the cobbler. "You see, I'm tired of living in this material world. Please would you ask the Lord how many more lifetimes I have to wait before going back to the spiritual world?"

"Yes. I'll certainly do that for you," replied the sage.

Narada, who has a spiritual body, then left for the spiritual world to see Lord Narayan. Upon arriving he bowed his head to the lotus feet of the Lord. Narayan received him with honor and affection.

"How are you, dear Narada? Is there anything I can do for you?"

"By your mercy all is well, my Lord," replied Narada. He then spoke of both the brahmin and the cobbler, putting forward their questions.

Lord Narayan, who knows everything – past, present and future – then informed Narada, "The brahmin will be returning to Me only after one hundred lifetimes. But I will see the cobbler at the end of his present life." Narada was surprised at this answer since it is traditionally considered that brahmins are very spiritually elevated.

Narayan smiled. "When you see the brahmin and the cobbler, they will both ask what I was I doing,

Tell them I was threading an elephant through the eye of a needle. By their reaction to this you will understand everything."

Intrigued by the Lord's words, Narada left immediately. Arriving at the house of the brahmin, he told him that he would have to wait one hundred lifetimes. The arrogant brahmin was visibly shocked.

"One hundred lifetimes! I don't believe you even saw Lord Narayan. Tell me what he was doing."

"Threading an elephant through the eye of a needle" replied Narada.

"Threading an elephant through the eye of a needle?" spluttered the brahmin. "IMPOSSIBLE! No one can do such a thing. You are probably lying to me about the one hundred lifetimes as well!"

Unperturbed, Narada took his leave and went to visit the cobbler. He conveyed Narayana's message that soon he would be returning to the spiritual realm.

"I will go back at the end of this life?" exclaimed the cobbler in great joy. "How merciful the Lord is! But my dear Narada, please tell me what my Lord was doing and thus bring pleasure to my heart."

"Why the Lord was threading an elephant through the eye of a needle." Narada answered.

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" exclaimed the cobbler.

"You actually believe that?" Narada asked.

"Why, yes, of course," the cobbler said without hesitation. "See that big oak tree across the road? It came from just an acorn. So if the Lord can pack a huge oak tree into such a seed, He can easily thread an elephant through the eye of a needle."

Seeing the difference between the proud brahmin and the humble cobbler, Narada came to understand why they were to be rewarded in different ways,

Narayan Narayan!!!



Chinmaya kids

Tell, never teach, a story A special and beautifully revealing article by Swami Chinmayanada for parents on story telling.

Historically, there has never been a time so badly cracked up. The maximum conflict that we notice today is not in politics or economics, but it is in the relationships in each home between parents and their children.

Parents consider their duties towards their children are only to feed, clothe and groom them and to help them with their education. However, all creatures in this world demand some emotional contentment to thrive and grow healthily and intelligently. Man, the most sensitive animal in the Universe, needs a great deal of personal attention especially in his early years.

The Art

Story telling is an art that should be cultivated by all conscientious parents. There is a treasure of joy for the story teller, and a heritage of good that the young and innocent listeners can gain from a story that is well told to them. Not only will children's ability to talk in coherent and meaningful ways improve, but the practice teaches them the art of listening, an invaluable gift in education and for success in the wider world.

To tell an enchanting story, remember the following tips:

- Select the best stories. Any story will not do. Children must be exposed to the right type of stories, which must ring true and interesting to the children's minds. The stories of the Puranas, carefully selected, can be very effective. Choose the story based on what you would like to achieve – to inspire heroism, to generate confidence, to evoke generosity or to bring out a spirit of forgiveness.
- Children have boundless energy, and to keep physically quiet for even a short interval is to them unnatural, insufferable. And yet, I have kept them with me for hours, quieter than the elders sometimes. The secret is to animate the story. Let them dream of impossible distances, endless exertions, noble actions and heroic deeds.
- You, as the story-teller, must feel the story. Give it life, enliven it by your sincerity and enthusiasm, your cheer and pleasure in narrating it to the children. These are contagious emotions – for both you and the child.
- Be natural and do not show the vanity of being an adult. Be yourself a child. They will come to

recognize the child in you and the walls that separate the adult from the child will crumble down.

Avoid the pitfalls

Avoid these pitfalls and you will find your children's faces shining with fresh surprise and joy:

- Avoid long descriptions and wordy narrations. Children are, by their very nature, fancifully creative and our words should only stimulate - not clog - their minds with details.
- Avoid or quickly glide over situations describing lack of discipline, cruelty, disobedience etc in the stories. Let not the negative values even unintentionally take root in the children's hearts.
- Do not be overly scientific. No doubt children must be introduced to the mysteries of the universe and the glories of science. But let not the story be loaded with these. Children are thrilled with fantasia and should be allowed to remain in this divine enchantment.
- Lastly, the golden rule is 'Don't preach, but portray'. Fully narrate. Clearly describe. Vividly portray. Eloquently tell. But never try to preach a moral. The very story will itself instil the great truths and higher values of life.

Tell, never teach, a story, and your children will learn more from the story and from you than what could ever be taught directly.

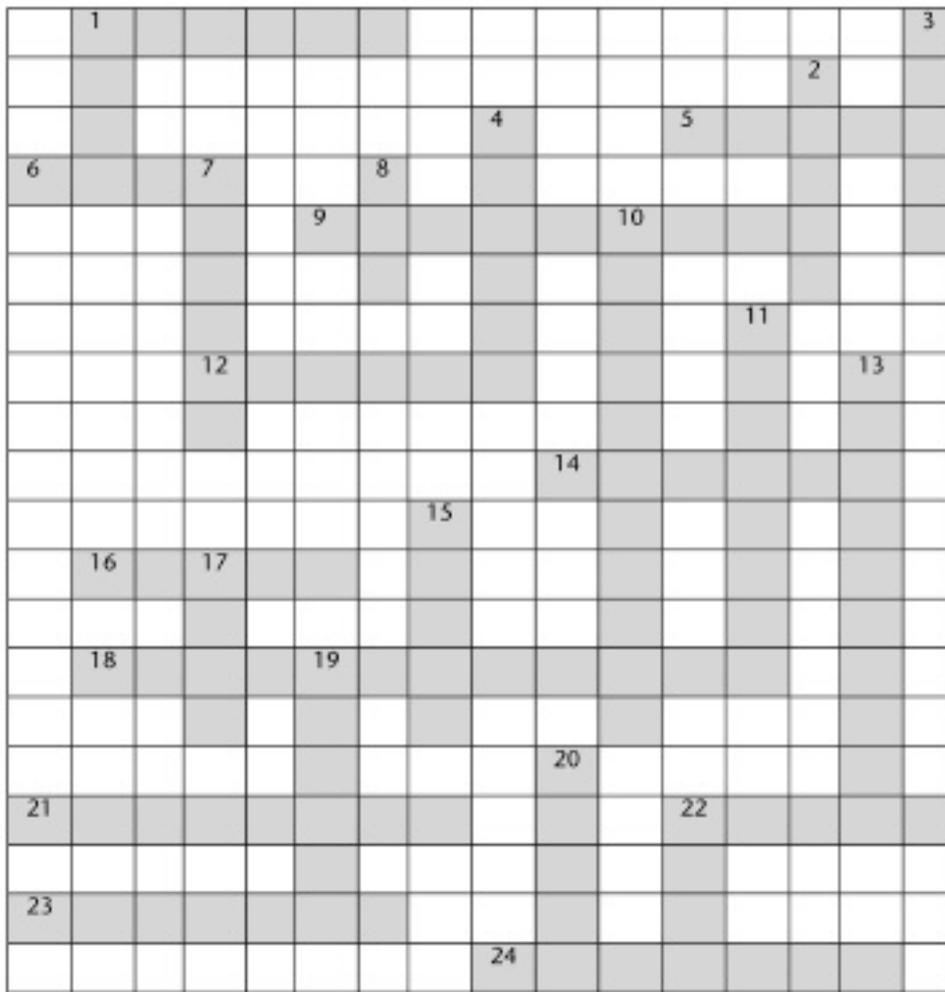
Ganeshji's Cart

This cart has four wheels, but we only see three -
And three is a magic number that some call, "A Trinity".
Three says, "I love you," and, "I really care,"
Three says, "Do not worry," and, "I'm always there."

But the fourth wheel I wonder, "Is it really there?"
As we cannot see it so why should we care?
The fourth wheel reminds us of how things should be,
Like thinking nice thoughts and feeling happy!

So, how many wheels are on Ganeshji's cart now?





ACROSS

- 1 What form did Hanumanji take?
- 5 Who taught Hanumanji in his younger years?
- 6 What is tied onto Hanumanji's tale?
- 9 What is the name of the life-giving herb Hanumanji had to get from the Himalayas?
- 12 Under what type of tree did Hanumanji find Mother Sita?
- 14 Which valuable items did Hanumanji bite into to look for Lord Rama and Mother Sita?
- 16 How many verses are there in the Hanuman Chalisa?
- 18 What is the name of the section of the Ramayana where Hanumanji starts his search for Mother Sita?
- 21 What is the name of the mountain that offered Hanumanji a place to rest?
- 22 What scriptures did Lord Rama indicate to Lakshmana that Hanumanji had mastered?
- 23 What disguise did Hanumanji adopt on meeting Lord Rama and Lakshmana?
- 24 Who was Sugreeva's minister?

DOWN

- 1 What weapon does Hanumanji use?
 - 2 What did Hanumanji mistake the sun for?
 - 3 Who persecuted Sugreeva?
 - 4 Who had Hanumanji's flag on his chariot in the Mahabharata?
 - 7 Who was Hanumanji asked to save by obtaining a medicinal herb?
 - 8 Who was Hanumanji a messenger for?
 - 10 Who pleaded to Ravana to let Mother Sita go?
 - 11 Who was the king of the Vanaraas?
 - 13 What is the name of the monkey kingdom?
 - 15 What is the name of the Golden City?
 - 17 What did Lord Rama give to Hanumanji to show Mother Sita?
 - 19 Who is Hanumanji's mother?
 - 20 Which God is Hanumanji the reincarnation of?
 - 22 Who is Hanumanji's father?
- Answers on following page

Spot the Difference

Can you find 12 differences between these 2 Krishna's?



CHINMAYA MISSION UK STUDY CLASSES & ACTIVITIES

ADULT STUDY CLASSES (AGE 30+)

Adult study classes are held on every day of the week by Brni Sumati Chaitanya and experienced sevaks. Classes are held for all levels of advancement in various locations in London including Hendon, Harrow, St John's Wood, South Croydon and Southsea Portsmouth. Texts and subjects currently studied include Self Unfoldment, Art of Manmaking, Bhaja Govindam, Kindle Life, Atma Bodha, Vivekachudamani, Upadesha Saar and Tattva Bodhah. These classes are free and all are welcome to attend. Please contact Rameshbhai Pattni on 07765 837 134.

VANPRASTHA SANSTHAN (SENIOR CITIZENS' GROUP) (AGE 55 +)

The motto of the Vanprastha Sansthan is 'Graceful Ageing through Spiritual Living'. Classes and a wide range of workshops and other programmes are held. Please contact Mannu Bhalla on 07946 581 929.

CHYK (YOUTH) STUDY CLASSES (17-30 yrs)

CHYK classes for the youth are conducted in Baker Street, Hendon and Moorgate for beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. Talks by our Acharya, Brni Sumati Chaitanya, and our experienced young speakers are held at universities and other events around the country. These classes and talks are open to all. For more information contact Milan Samani: 07957 568 879 or on chyk@chinmayauk.org

BALVIHAR (CHILDREN'S) CLASSES (4-12 yrs)

Value-based education classes for children are held at our Balvihara centres in Hendon, St John's Wood, Harrow and Wanstead. For more information contact Madhavi Vadera on 07980 597 810.

JUNIOR CHYK (TEENAGERS') CLASSES (12-17 yrs)

Junior Chyk classes for teenagers are held in Hendon, St John's Wood and Harrow. In addition, Junior Chykas are offered the chance to sit for GCSE Hinduism, taught by our trained sevaks. For information please contact Mita Patel on 07866 774 244..



DISCOURSES

Weekly discourses are given by our resident Acharya, Brni Sumatiji, at Chinmaya Kirti in Hendon on the following texts: Mandukya Upanishad, Bhagavad Geeta Chapter 14, Tulsī Ramayana and Ashtavakra Geeta. Please contact Surabhi Vaghadia 07985 425 792 (for Upanishad), Uma Khambhampati 07704 284 907 (for Geeta), Aruna Bhalla on 01494 711 917 (for Tulsī Ramayana) and Jayasri Pillai on 020 8578 0800 (for Ashtavakra Geeta).

SANSKRIT CLASSES

Weekly Sanskrit classes are held for all levels of advancement and are taught by experienced sevaks. Please contact Bal-Krishna Patel: 07973 472 042.

GUIDED MEDITATION, CHANTING AND PUJA, MUSIC AND BHAJANS

The following meditation, pujas, chanting and bhajan sessions take place at Chinmaya Kirti:

- Guided meditation. Contact Steve Fitch on 020 8880 7622
- Guru Paduka Puja (devotion and prayers at the feet of the Guru). Contact Sapna Khanchandani on 07801 064 296
- Sponsored Hanuman Puja and Hanuman Chalisa. Contact Aruna Bhalla on 01494 711 917
- CHYK Soul (Youth music group). Contact Darpan Patel on 07956 855 017
- Swaranjali (Bhajan sessions). Contact Darpan Patel on 07956 855 017

UPCOMING YAGNAS & CAMPS



JULY GURUJI SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA VISITS LONDON & SWITZERLAND

- Morning talks at Chinmaya Kirti in Hendon – 'Manas Bhakti Sutra' – 20-25 July 2008
- Evening talks in London – Bhikshu Geeta (Shrimad Bhagavatam) – 'The Song of The Enlightened One' – 20-25 July 2008

AUGUST PUJYA GURUDEV MAHASAMADHI CAMP IN SWITZERLAND

With Swami Chidatmananda and Swamini Umananda – 3-9 August 2008

SEPTEMBER SWAMI SWAROOPANANDA VISITS LONDON

- Morning talks – Gems from the Upanishads
- Evening Talks – Geeta Chapter 6 – Meditation
- Youth Conference
- Make It Happen Seminars

DECEMBER/JANUARY INTERNATIONAL FAMILY CAMP WITH PUJYA GURUJI SWAMI TEJOMAYANANDA

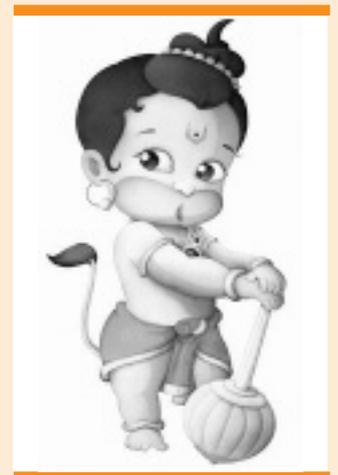
- At Chinmaya Vibhooti, Kolwan (near Pune), Maharashtra – 26 December 2008-I January 2009
- Geeta Chapter 10
- Vibhooti Yoga

VEDANTA COURSE 2008-2010

Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, Head of Chinmaya Mission worldwide invites applications for the 14th Vedanta course for the study of the Upanishads, Bhagavad Geeta and other Vedantic literature. The course is a two year residential course and is catered for sincere students of Vedanta who seek to learn this subjective science in an intensive monastic environment. University graduates between the ages of 20 and 30, who are unmarried and free from family encumbrances are eligible. Accommodation, food, clothes, books and medical care will be provided free of cost by Tara Cultural Trust.

6 WEEK VEDANTA COURSE

This 6-week course, held at Chinmaya Gardens, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, is a condensed version of the 2-year Vedanta course allowing sincere students a brief but intensive insight into the study of the scriptures. It is open to all under the age of 65.



Answers to Crossword (P15)

Across: 1. Monkey 5. Surya 6. Bell 9. Sanjivani 12. Ashoka 14. Pearls 16. Forty 18. Sundarkaanda 21. Mainaaka 22. Vedas 23. Brahmin 24. Hanuman
Down: 1. Mace 2. Fruit 3. Vaali 4. Arjuna 7. Laxman 8. Ram 10. Vibheeshana 11. Dasratha 13. Kishkindha 15. Lanka 17. Ring 19. Anjani 20. Shiva 22. Vayu

For detailed information on all our study classes, including timing and venues, please visit www.chinmayauk.org or call 0208 203 6288. Please visit our e-bookshop on www.chinmayauk.org/ebookshop

