



January 2023

## Hari Om!

Typically, when we think of a leader, their followers come to mind. However, to only focus on followers is shallow. What truly makes a leader and how can we be this leader?

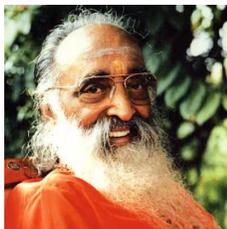
- At a relative level - their commitment to their dharma (responsibilities). They are dedicated to fulfilling the responsibilities that are given to them, without complaining, criticizing, and crying.
- At an absolute level - their conviction of their svadharma (nature). Their immersion in doing leads them to knowing and Being.

In both cases, the leader is engaged in a unique blend of meaningful action and meaningful observation which are entirely independent of their followers.

We all have the potential to be leaders of such caliber by embracing our own responsibilities. Shri Krishna validates this in Bhagavad Gita by sharing that better than fulfilling another's responsibilities perfectly is fulfilling one's responsibilities imperfectly. When we embrace our unique dharma, we enable our evolution towards joy.

As we take on greater responsibilities in our lives, what is imperative is to feel them as a yajna (offering). Instead of letting context control us, with the yajna-feeling, we are able to take control of the context and craft this into a meaningful experience.

-Shri Vivekji



Pujya Gurudev,  
Swami  
Chinmayanandaji

### Upcoming Events:

#### Finding Calmness in Chaos

March 13 - 16, 2023

Shri Sumanji, Shri Vivekji, Shri Shankarji  
London, ON

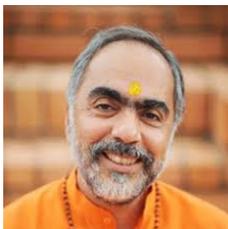
#### How to Be Happy

June 12 - 16, 2023

Shri Sumanji, Shri Vivekji, Shri Shankarji



Pujya Guruji, Swami Tejomayanandaji



Mukhya Swamiji, Swami Swaropanandaji



Swami Sarveshanandaji  
CHYK West National Director



Brahmacharini Akalkaji  
CHYK West Deputy Director



Vivekji  
CHYK West Deputy

Houston, TX

**Embracing Discomfort**

July 24 - 28, 2023

Shri Sumanji, Shri Vivekji, Shri Shankarji  
Chantilly, VA

**The Art of Being Quiet**

August 7 - 11, 2023

Shri Sumanji, Shri Vivekji, Shri Shankarji  
Boston, MA

**Meaningful Mornings**

Daily

Shri Vivekji

Virtual

[www.chinmayaniagara.com/  
communities/mornings](http://www.chinmayaniagara.com/communities/mornings)

**Youth Culture**

Wednesdays 9-10 pm

Shri Shankarji

Virtual

<https://lu.ma/youthculture>

**Seeking Culture**

Mondays 9-10 pm

Shri Shankarji and Shri Vivekji

Virtual

<https://lu.ma/seekingculture>

**Parenting Culture**

Mondays 9-10 pm

Shri Vivekji

Virtual

<https://lu.ma/parentingculture>

Director



Dhirenji  
CHYK West Deputy  
Director

**meaningful mornings**

A DAILY OPPORTUNITY TO INVOKE CALMNESS · QUIETNESS · STILLNESS

**JAN 14 - FEB 4**

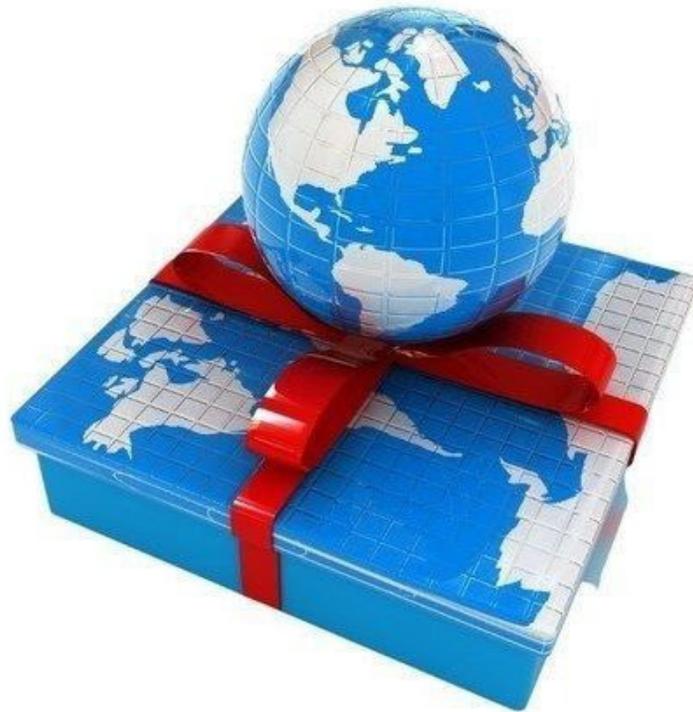
**07.30A ET RECITING**  
Vishnu Sahasranama with Shankarji

**07.45A ET REFLECTING**  
Bhagavad Gita with Vivekji

virtually in ZOOM  
full names and cameras on

RECORDINGS AVAILABLE FOR 24 HRS (FB & IG)  
INFO: [WWW.CHINMAYANIAGARA.COM/COMMUNITIES/MORNINGS](http://WWW.CHINMAYANIAGARA.COM/COMMUNITIES/MORNINGS)

*Inspire - Love - Be*



Did you know? Household waste in the US increases by 25% between Thanksgiving and New Year's, generating one million tons of extra trash per week! Starting this holiday season, let us show our care for our planet through a [Prthvi Sevasanga](#) pledge that provides alternatives to giving 'stuff'.

Sign the Gift Giving Pledge.

Share why you are signing the pledge with a comment on the pledge page.

Send the pledge to others!

**Sign the Pledge**



**2023**  
**YOUTH TOUR**

For rising ninth graders  
to rising college freshmen

- LONDON, ON** **FINDING CALMNESS IN CHAOS** March 13-16
- HOUSTON, TX** **HOW TO BE HAPPY** June 12-16
- CHANTILLY, VA** **EMBRACING DISCOMFORT** July 24-28
- BOSTON, MA** **THE ART OF BEING QUIET** August 7-11

Camps FILLED with Discourses-Discussions-Dialogues

Guided by Sumanji, Vivekji, Shankarji



**Monthly Musings**

*A Conversation With*  
**Brni. Kritikaji...**

Part 1



## Hari Om Kritikaji!

### What inspired you to join the Vedanta course?

Swami Prakashanandaji! Swamiji once told that we "should follow in the footsteps of Mahatmas, for they are walking Sastras." Growing up, Swamiji knew all the answers to questions on Hinduism, philosophy, and morality and He made it so simple. Following university, I was blessed with the opportunity to study in the Mission under Swamiji [as] I came to CMTT for the Course.

### How was your transition from Canada to Trinidad? Do you find any differences?

My parents were born in Trinidad and we often travelled from Toronto to visit. It was quite easy to transition! While weather is the most obvious difference, I love how openly and visibly Hindus can practice here: there are over 500 Mandirs across the island, Divali is a national holiday and the entire nation is lit up in observance and celebrations, we can host/take part in village or nation-wide Yatras, there are Puja stores all over the country (some groceries have Puja samagrhi available as well!), vegetarianism is widely respected and accommodated, and in many homes there is a small private Mandir in their yard with jhandis (flags). It is very beautiful. In North America, these elements are not there.

### How has it been to be with and serve with Pujya Swami Prakashanandaji? :)

Swamiji is the embodiment of Gurudev's teachings and we are so blessed to be in His presence. Swamiji teaches Vedanta in the classroom and continues to teach and practice Vedanta outside of the classroom through His actions. He is very patient and loving with all and it's a bonus that we laugh so much by His jokes! I think apart from Swamiji being an embodiment of discipline and selfless hard work, I am learning from Swamiji how to think clearly and have right thinking. We usually see things in a grey area and struggle with what if's etc - Swamiji sees it in black and white!

### What was your big takeaway from the recent Yatra that was just conducted?

I think my biggest takeaway is discipline is freedom! This 87 person Yatra is the largest residential camp we've accommodated thus far. We all planned so much over the months, and it was only because we planned out our work and worked out our plan that we were settled during the Yatra. We were able to be present and enjoy all the Satsangs and classes. There was no tension or running around like headless chickens!

### What would you say should be the overall purpose and takeaway for any Yatra?

The overall purpose should be to perform tapas, practice titiksha and quieten the mind. Our minds are usually whirring with a hundred thoughts a minute trying to get this or obtain that...when on Yatra, we learn that it is so easy to live a simple life and not need so many material things. This leaves us to be fully absorbed in our Sadhana and truly appreciate Bhagavan in all His forms.

### When returning from any spiritual retreat there is always a reluctance to "return to reality." What should be our mindset to come back from spirituality to our daily life smoothly?

The return to reality being spoken of here refers to your job/household/family, etc. Remove the likes and dislikes to simply do your duties, and it will be fine! Actually, the same circumstances you encountered while at the ashram are the same circumstances you encounter in your own lives - eating, taking care of yourself, obeying someone else, etc., but your bhaava was different. While you all were

here, you happily did so much work in the form of seva - and no one was paid a dime! In America/Canada, you do your work and you get a decent salary...yet you'd rather work for free. The happiness you're looking for is not in the action, but in your own mindset. Practice Vedanta in every action!

**Tune in next month for Part 2!**

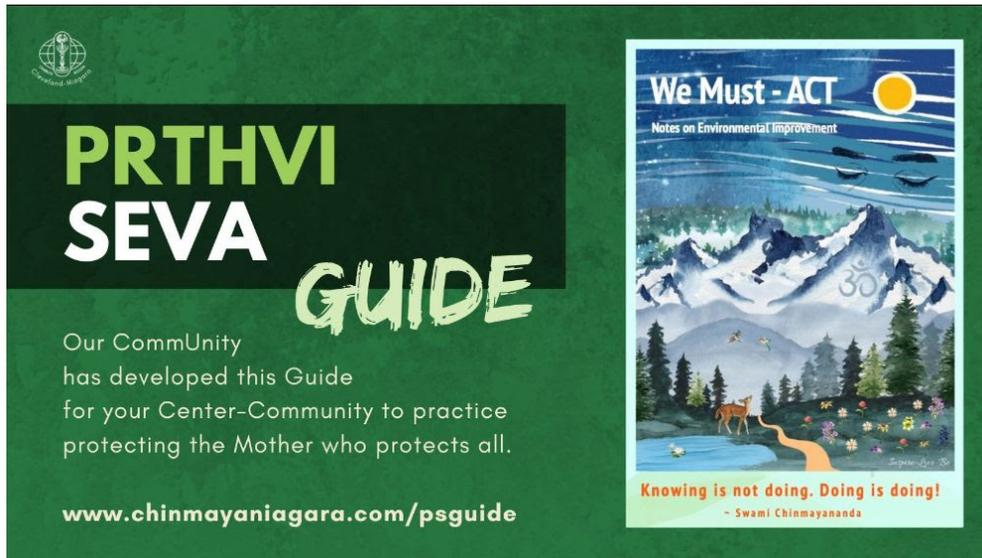
## Ask an Acharya

Pondering over a thought or need some advice?  
Click the button below to submit your question, and an Acharya will give a response in the CHYK West Newsletter!

Ask an Acharya



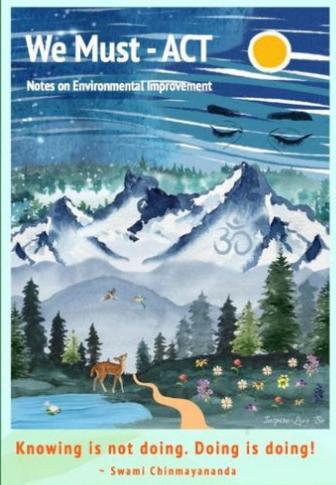
[Learn more about Dial for Direction!](#)



  
**PRTHVI SEVA**  
**GUIDE**

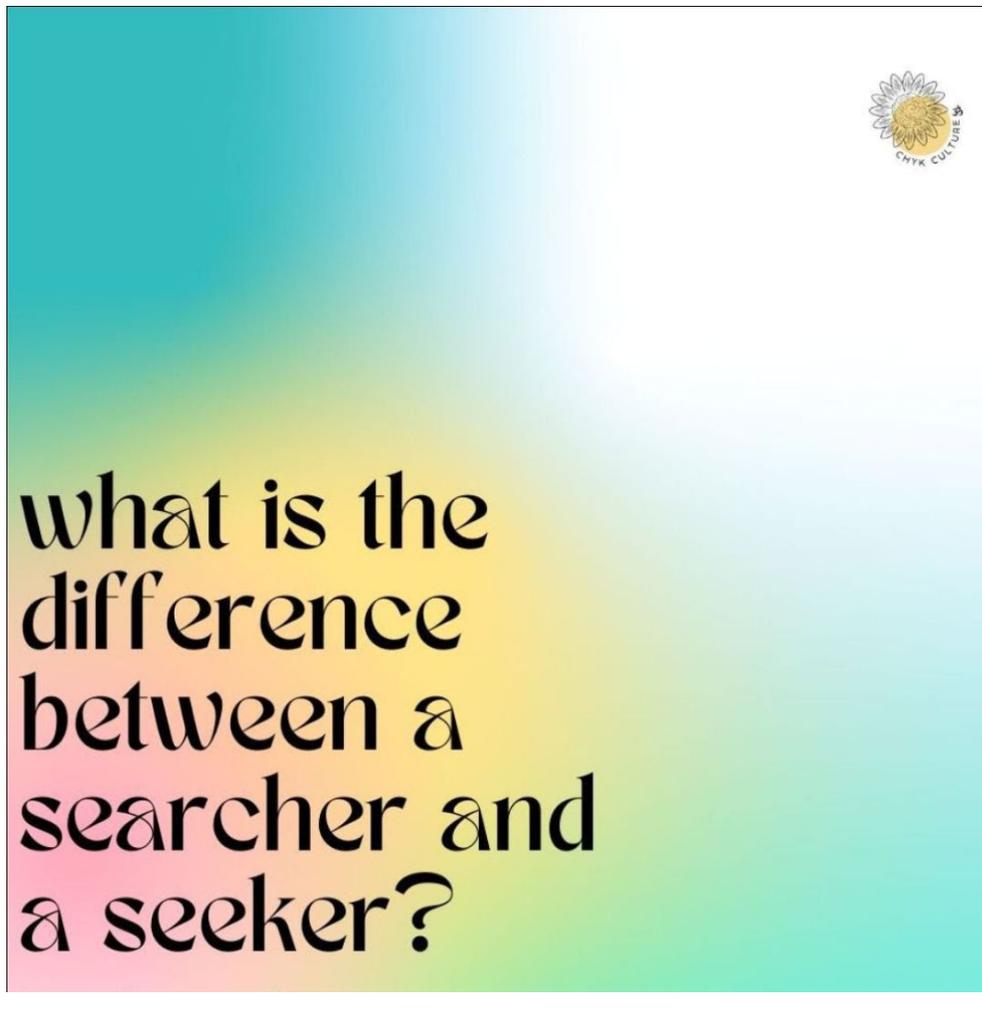
Our CommUnity has developed this Guide for your Center-Community to practice protecting the Mother who protects all.

[www.chinmayaniagara.com/psguide](http://www.chinmayaniagara.com/psguide)



**We Must - ACT**  
Notes on Environmental Improvement

**Knowing is not doing. Doing is doing!**  
- Swami Chinmayananda





**what is the difference between a searcher and a seeker?**



**Both are seeking happiness**, but a **searcher** directs their potential outwards, in an extroverted way, while a **seeker** directs their potential inwards, in a self-reflective way.

In **Seeking Culture**, we direct our potential inwards so that we can convert that which we **idolize** (values) into that which we **internalize** (virtues).

Most importantly? This is a space for you to **follow your own advice**.

 "My mentor has been open, understanding and offers me a space to share freely. It feels like having an older sibling or an objective view to help me through what I'm going through"

## chinmaya mentorship program

→ Register to be a mentor (ages 29-45)  
share your life experiences with your mentee to support their journey

→ Register to be a mentee (ages 15-28)  
form trusted relationships and learn from the wisdom of like-minded seekers

Registration for Mentors and Mentees:  
<https://bit.ly/CMmentorship>  
Have questions? Email us at [chinmayamentorship@gmail.com](mailto:chinmayamentorship@gmail.com)

## Chinmaya Inspiration Yatra XIV: Trinidad & Tobago



From November 21st to November 27th, 2022, Vivekji of Chinmaya Mission Niagara led a yatra of 87 seekers from across the US and Canada to the Chinmaya Ashram in Couva, Trinidad & Tobago. Swami Prakashanandaji and Brahmacharini Kritikaji of Trinidad ashram welcomed the yatis and helped with all the coordination. It was a week of satsang, seva, and inspiration.

The yatra week had activities planned for each day. The mornings started with Swami Prakashanandaji's discourses on Shiva Sankalpa Suktam, a text on how to divinize the mind's thoughts. The first few days consisted of trips to (1) Maracas Beach, where the group played in the water during a pouring rainfall, (2) a trio of temples, including "The Temple in the Sea" and one with an 85-ft tall Lord Hanuman statue, and (3) the new Chinmaya Vidyalaya that combines secular and sacred studies. Meals included Bake and Cheese sandwiches, Trinidadian street food 'Doubles', and dinner at the Ashram restaurant, Garam Masala.

In the evenings, Vijayji gave discourses on the Ramcharitmanas, and how the Ramayana directly represents one's inner personality. The last adventure was the hike up Tapovanam Hill, through the rainforest, to the ashram at the top. The group set off on Jeeps and pickup trucks until a certain point, and after that most yatis hiked on foot through the mud and river ahead.

After reaching the top, everyone enjoyed Swamiji's hot cocoa and freshly made dinner, before sleeping on foam mattresses. The next day, the yatis headed back down, and spent most of the

last day in maunam reflecting on the learnings of the experience. After Swamiji made a pizza dinner for everyone in his handmade oven, it was time for the Closing Ceremony, where several seekers shared their reflections. The following day was full of departures, when it was time to bid everyone goodbye.

-Raghav Pajjur

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### **Key Takeaway from Meaningful Mornings:**

When we know Shri Krishna, integrating His Presence into all environments (controlled and uncontrolled), then we are full-time seekers. Shri Krishna has given us pointers on how to not just know in a controlled environment (with His name and form) but to know Him in an uncontrolled environment - in the mountains and casinos, in death and birth, in the mind and intellect. When we internalize how much Shri Krishna loves us and is looking after us, then devotion is irresistible.

Chapter 10, Sankalpa Vakya  
**Srimad Bhagavad Gita**

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*satsangatve nissangatva*  
*associating with inclusivity leads to Independence*

# WEEKLY COMMUNITIES

for relating in a changing world

Sep 2022 - May 2023

*with vision to Oneness*



## MONDAY

**Seeker's Culture**  
9.00p Workshop  
**Parenting Culture**  
9.00p Workshop

## DAILY

**Meaningful Mornings**  
7.30a Chanting  
7.45a Class

## WEDNESDAY

**Vanaprastha Culture**  
12.00p Workshop  
**Youth Culture**  
9.00p Workshop



Guided by Vivekji and Steered by Shankarji - Sumanji - Vijayji



**registration** • [www.chinmayaniagara.com](http://www.chinmayaniagara.com)  
**information** • [hello@chinmayaniagara.com](mailto:hello@chinmayaniagara.com)

Hosted with ZOOM [in ET]  
*Inspire - Love - Be*



*satsangatve nissangatva*  
*associating with inclusivity leads to Independence*

# WEEKLY COURSES

for navigating a changing world

Sep 2022 - May 2023



## SUNDAY

**Vedanta in Bhagavata**  
 10.45a Chanting  
 11.00a Class

## TUESDAY

**Upanishad Course**  
 8.45p Reading  
 9.00p Class

## WEDNESDAY

**Happy Hour**  
 7.45p Imagining  
 8.00p Children's (Grades 1-4) Class  
 8.30p Kids (Grades 5-8) Class

## THURSDAY

**Practices to Perfection**  
 8.45p Writing  
 9.00p Class

## SATURDAY

**Ramayana**  
 10.45a Singing  
 11.00a Class (in Hindi)



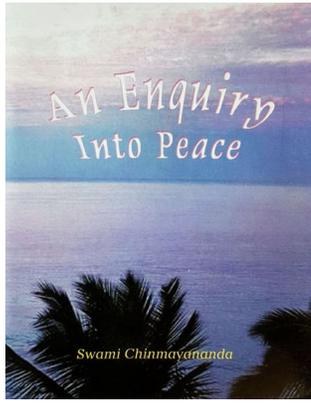
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*Inspire - Love - Be*

**Book of the Month**  
***An Enquiry Into Peace***  
**By Swami Chinmayananda**



In this succinct booklet, Gurudev unravels the seeker's journey as he travels from desire to its fulfillment - 'a phantom joy' - to that state of peace, which is real joy.

***If you would like to purchase a copy of An Enquiry Into Peace, please visit the [Chinmaya Publications website](#) or visit a Chinmaya Mission bookstore near you.***



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