

E–Vichara

Year 2

Using technology to learn how to think...

1 - Hari Om from Chicago!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Last week i was in Flint, Michigan teaching **Manah Shodanam - Purification of Mind**. While reflecting **on this most important subject**, expressions of an impure mind were shared. And **one of the foremost characteristics of a weak mind is anger**. **Appreciating the pervasive and poisonous nature of anger**, this subject demands E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (June 21, 2010) --- Understanding Anger

- In Vedantic parlance, anger is considered as one of the 3 gateways to hell - when we are angry, our minds are battered and bruised by a storm of negativity
- In Vedantic parlance, anger is considered as one of our 6 enemies - we are forever focusing on protecting ourselves from apparent external enemies and so surrender to real internal enemies
- A desire fulfilled tends to lead to greed and a desire unfulfilled tends to lead to anger - how sad that we choose to engage in a game where regardless of outcome, we lose
- Sans self created mind games (i.e. desires, likes, expectations, etc.) anger cannot exist - practicing contentment (i.e. knowing we are the only source of Joy, appreciating one's good fortune, giving what is not needed etc.) one becomes immune to anger
- We exert significant amounts of thought, time and funds to control anger when not being angry is completely natural, completely effortless, completely sane - what is wrong with us
- If we control anger this emotion becomes a tool and if anger controls us this emotion becomes a tyrant - knowing that anger burns all and serves none, let us practice sincere awareness thereby suffocating the cancer of anger

"A life of service and sacrifice is the natural and inevitable expression and proof of the validity of spiritual experience." --- Sarvepalliy Radhakrishnan

Inspire-Love-Be

2 - Hari Om from Merrillville!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Whenever we come across the word purity, we tend to think of food, we tend to think of our bodies, we tend to think of gold! **What about the thinker? Why do we not associate purity with our minds?** Is this because our minds are impure? Is this because our minds are impotent? Is this because our minds are unimportant? **Purity of mind is synonymous with peace of mind. And we are all seeking peace of mind. With this background, how to conquer our shad ripu-s (six enemies) is the strategy** for our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (June 28, 2010) --- Purifying the Enemies

- Kama (desire) is catalyzed by the sense of incompleteness and projecting fulfillment onto objects, beings and situations - reading, reflecting and realizing that the only source of Joy is our Self we no longer act for happiness, rather we act out of happiness
- Krodha (anger) is when our desires, likes, expectations, etc. are not aligned with what actually is - understanding we do not control the world, that we can only control ourselves, we should use this emotion as an instrument for peace and not let this emotion use us as an intruder of peace
- Lobha (greed) is having a desire fulfilled and then 'getting onto the sick cycle carousel' of thinking that quantitatively and/or qualitatively another desire fulfilled will be enough - by practicing contentment upon a desire being fulfilled we are not 'taken for a ride'
- Moha (delusion) is believing an illusion which naturally causes suffering (i.e. that possessions bring happiness, that relations last forever, that situations are in our control, etc.) - by knowing an illusion, we come to smile

- Mada (arrogance) is the infatuation that we are more important than another - asking ourselves the question, 'Why do we have to be more important than another' we slowly come to the answer that we do not need to be more important, we can respect and be respected sans arrogance
- Matsarya (jealousy) is when we want someone to be lower than us - by cultivating confidence we leave behind the attitude of 'live and let die' and embrace the attitude of 'live and let live'

"His gentleness was uncompromising; because he would not compete for dominance, he was indomitable." --- Ursula LeGuin

Inspire-Love-Be

3 - Hari Om from Chicago!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Now, **more than ever, gyms, corporations, teachers, etc. are promising happiness!** Happiness if you develop muscles, happiness if you eat/drink products, happiness if you regulate breathing. Well, **if these are tips for 'happiness', then sharing tips for sorrow is the reason** for our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (July 5, 2010) --- How to be Sad

- *Use our heart where we should use our head, and use our head where we should use our heart* - when dealing with children we use a different strategy as when dealing with adults and the same applies to situations in regards to objectivity and emotions
- *Glorify our inability to say no* - a superiority complex and an inferiority complex are both expressions of the ego we should be aware not to entertain
- *Take on more than we can handle* - the one who lacks the discipline to know one's limits can never know contentment
- *Ignore what we do have and expect what we do not have* - why do we choose to be 'mentally blind'
- *Take everything personally* - half the world will always censure us and the other half will always praise us so seriousness is a futile strategy to live by
- *Try to change people* - people will only change if they want to, not if we want to

"Contentment is wanting what you need. Discontentment is needing what you want."

Inspire-Love-Be

4 - Hari Om from Minneapolis!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

This past Saturday i had the **great honour of being part of Inspire 2010: Dharma Youth Convention in Toronto.** i was invited to speak on Dharma alongside such renowned thinkers as **Dr. David Frawley (American Institute of Vedic Studies), Dr. Subash Kak (Oklahoma State University) and many others.** Having shared this introduction, naturally one would wonder what i spoke of. So as not to disappoint (hahaha!), dharma is the foundation for our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (July 12, 2010) --- Foundation of Dharma

- Dharma is not a thought, not a value, not a law, etc. for all these are external practices - dharma is one's inherent, intrinsic, innate, nature (i.e. a sun's dharma is to radiate light, a tiger's dharma is to eat meat, a child's dharma is to be carefree, etc.)

- To uphold, to sustain, to support are 'loose' translations of the word dharma, formed from the sanskrit root *dhr* - dharma is being, being is joy, so our dharma is joy
- Each and every role we play in the drama entitled 'life' involves relative dharma-s (i.e. being a student, being a spouse, being a citizen, etc.) - though we all engage in differing relative dharma-s, these are simply means for our unitary Absolute dharma, to be joyous
- When we think/act different to our nature we are engaged in paradharma and the fruit of this choice is fear - when we think/act against our nature we are engaged in adharma and the fruit of this choice is sorrow
- If dharma is followed, prosperity (outer) and peace (inner) follow - yato dharma, tato jaya (where there is dharma, there is victory)
- If dharma is followed, living becomes effortless - dharmo rakshati rakshita (the one who protects dharma, is protected by dharma)

"100 litres of water are used to produce 1 kilogram of potatoes. 4,000 litres of water are used to produce 1 kilogram of rice. 13,000 litres of water are used to produce 1 kilogram of beef." --- Yann Arthus-Bertrand (from the movie Home)

Inspire-Love-Be

5 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

With the unprecedented prevalence of obesity, cancer, depression, etc., in our society we are also witnessing an unprecedented prevalence of gyms, fitness centers, health clubs, etc., in our society. **Vedanta teaches us we are 'not the body'. Society teaches us we are 'the body'. Aspiring to bring the 'plan' (Vedanta) to the 'game' (Society), health is the 'game plan'** for our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (July 19, 2010) --- Enlightening Health

- We are not the body, we have a body - the body is an instrument, a vehicle, a means to discover our Infinite Nature
- An instrument is not to be regarded nor disregarded for doing so is inefficient - the needs of a body (some food, some clothing, some shelter, etc.) are to be embraced and the wants of the body are to be denied
- Sarira madhyam khalu dharma sadhanam (the body is to be used to serve others) - to not take care of the body is to not take care of all bodies for the capacity to serve is wasted
- Spending too much time exercising (> 1hr/day) makes one body conscious - when we become body conscious our vision becomes distorted leading us to have an ugly personality
- Gyms tend to have mirrors on the walls near the weights so we can observe our lifting technique but this often just leads us to lifting our egos - if we know our technique is fine we should avoid looking at ourselves or others and just rest our eyes
- We tend to use numbers to record how many times we lift a weight but we all know how to count so this becomes a mind numbing practice - why not make the same activity enlightening by recording how many times we lift a weight with the name of the Divine or any other positive mantra

"Those stars which shine for the benefit of others, shine the brightest." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

6 - Hari Om from Las Vegas!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Administrator, child-like, brilliant, scholar, **authority**, disciplinarian, father, revered, humble, devoted, **tireless**, simple, saviour, visionary, author, composer, saint, inspiring, inspired, loved, eloquent, all-inclusive, transparent, vigilant, devotee, fund-raiser, refuge, **believer**, seer, leader, wizard, disciplined, forgiving, giving, sacrificing, living, detached, **free**, illumined, illumining, **delighting**, comforting, welcoming, welcomed, accepting, comfortable, teacher, guiding, **fearless**, adaptive, wanderer, loving, minimalist, integrated, integrating, divine, **compassionate**, dedicated, diplomatic, Self...

An offering of 60 words, attempting to describe Pujya Guruji Swami Tejomayananda, for His 60th Birthday Celebrations and Guru Purnima. This is an attempt for me, not Him, as a Master is beyond qualification and time. For Him praise and age are as real as a dream. Every word speaks of the Infinite and every moment revels in the Infinite. Striving to appreciate the grandeur of this Master, His words are what we immerse ourselves in with our E-Vichara...

Special E-Vichara (July 26, 2010) --- Swami Tejomayananda

- *If we always do what we always did, we will always get what we always got* - unless we change our attitude we will continue to drown in a sea of mundane existence
- *An altar in life, alters our life* - when our mind is engaged in an ideal our life becomes ideal
- *Do what you value and value what you do* - life is too precious to waste our time in meaningless activities and attitudes
- *True abiding success is that in which lies the welfare and well being of all people* - the joy of seva is absolutely unprecedented
- *Work like a horse and live like a hermit* - the more we give the less we need
- *A great person is great in all he/she does* - when we divide living (i.e. family, work, social, health, spiritual, etc.) we divide our joy
- *Don't tell your God how big your trouble is, tell your trouble how big your God is* - we have all been taken care of thus far, why do we believe we will not in the future
- *The greatest service we can do in this world is to mind our own business and take care of our own mind* - purifying our minds is a challenge demanding many lifetimes, why retard this journey more by seducing ourselves with the purity of other's minds
- *When the heart is full, the stomach is full* - revelling in joy all else becomes inconsequential
- *Spirituality should not remain an activity, it should become one's life, effortless and natural* - smiling as a hobby and smiling as a lifestyle is a choice

i simply cannot express how **amazing being alive is on account of Pujya Guruji...**

"What you do for yourself alone dies with you. What you do for others remains and is immortal." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

7 - Hari Om from Reston!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

In our last E-Vichara i had shared insights into the vastness of Pujya Swami Tejomayananda. This past week i had the **highest blessings of being in the presence of this Master and listening to Him expound Ramayana Soundaryam (Beauty of Ramayana). To describe this experience as any less than Divine would be insulting. Empathizing to share the same**, insights into the life of Sri Rama evoked by Pujya Swami Tejomayananda guides our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (August 2, 2010)

- Samsara (society) is tiring and boring - listening to descriptions of Infinity manifested frees us from this ocean of mundane existence

- When we are bound by attachment we are not free to Love the Divine - an extrovert mind can never break through limitations
- If we remember the Divine while we live, the Divine will remember us while we die - only the Divine and those who Love the Divine are beautiful
- Sri Rama is the embodiment of jnana (Knowledge) and Sita Mata is the embodiment of bhakti (Love) - where there is Knowledge there is ananda (Joy) and where there is Love there is shanti (Peace)
- When the mind is pure one knows what is right and what is wrong - a mother's life is fulfilled if she has progeny devoted to the Divine
- The soul of Dharma is sacrifice - individuality and surrender are mutually exclusive

Continuing with exploring the necessity of self development, the following is a short story on the consequences of living ignorantly...

Nails in the Fence

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His Father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence. The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence. Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all.

He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone.

The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, 'You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one.'

"Hardwork beats talent when talent does not work hard." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

8 - Hari Om from Washington DC!

i hope this email finds you all well...

Summer is a time for traveling. And often this traveling involves flying. Many people share with me how they **feel flying is scary or boring or uncomfortable. i actually feel flying is exciting, productive and relaxing!** Knowing this, our **experience on a plane is governed by attitude not altitude. 'How to Fly' is the message** of our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (August 9, 2010)

- When we look out the window of a grounded plane, our vision is 'low' and so our focus tends to be on the differences amongst entities (i.e. dull objects, shiny objects, ugly beings, beautiful beings, etc.) - when we look out the window of a flying plane, our vision is 'high' and so our focus tends to be on the similarities amongst entities (i.e. objects, beings, etc.)
- Most of us are physically restrained in a plane seat and this experience is quite opposite to the freedom we regularly indulge in - why not treat this temporary limitation as a test of endurance (titiksha)
- In a time when there is no time, we should use every moment on a plane to the maximum by reading and/or writing - being by oneself is an opportunity to invest in oneself by getting to know oneself
- In a time when there is no time, we should use every moment on a plane to the maximum by sleeping - staying up late to work the night prior to a flight is a catalyst to sleeping comfortably on a plane

- No one likes being told what to do (i.e. our dislike for stop signs, red lights, rules, etc.) - going through security is a tangible means of developing patience and even more, cheerful acceptance
- We are the nature of Joy with or without objects, beings and situations - packing then becomes an experiment and exercise in living with the minimum

"Be kinder than necessary. Everyone we meet is fighting some kind of battle." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

9 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Last weekend I had the **great fortune of teaching 50 young adults who had gathered from all over the continent, in Washington DC.** The theme of the Retreat was Got G.A.M.E? (Growth-Action-Maturity-Enlightenment) revolving around Adi Shankaracharya's Sadhana Panchakam (Verses on Spiritual Discipline). In this visionary text, the first sadhana shared is vedo nityam adhiyatam (study the Vedas daily). Now if **one does not know the Vedas or Sanskrit or Mananam does this mean one is ineligible for spiritual discipline? No! The best sadhana is to extract satsanga (spiritual thinking) from every passing moment.** To inspire such a comprehensive sadhana, an **innocent song called Wishlist by the timeless alternative band Pearl Jam is shared** through our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (August 16, 2010)

- *I wish I was a sacrifice but somehow still lived on* – a true sevak (server) is one who wishes for endless resources (i.e. time, effort, funds, etc.) to be able to give more
- *I wish I was as fortunate, as fortunate as me* – the one and only source of Joy in our lives is our Self and so we are absolutely fortunate that Joy is only an attitude away
- *I wish I was the messenger and all the news was good* – the secret to being happy is to get happiness to give happiness
- *I wish I was the full moon shining off a Camaro's hood* – the joy that is intrinsic to nature, simplicity, freedom, etc. is unparalleled
- *I wish I was the little phrase that you depended on* – blessed is the one who has the attitude to give and more blessed is the one who has the attitude and aptitude to give
- *I wish I was the verb 'to trust' and never let you down* – no one wants to be let down, so let empathy be the lighthouse for our every desire, thought and action

"Our success lies in the amount of transformation we can bring about in our character and behaviour." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

10 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

This past weekend **Chinmaya Mission Niagara (CMN) celebrated the sthapana (installation) of Bhagavan Krishna and Bhagavati Radha at Chinmaya Dhara. Pujya Swami Tejomayananda blessed this auspicious occasion with His wisdom, with His devotion...simply with His presence. Where the Divine and Guru are, Joy flows like the Niagara itself.** To be able to create and sustain a Spiritual Center great resources are required. We sadly live in a world where we are dependent on money to procure even basic needs. And so at the beginning of 2010 CMN embarked on a **campaign to raise \$250,000 to cover renovations, mortgages, expenses, etc. In less than 9 months we have**

raised \$260,000 with donations continuing to be offered from all over North America! For a Spiritual Center serving a relatively small population of 250,000 and a facility costing a relatively small amount of \$700,000, to raise what we have is an astounding success! With all of this in mind, revelations on the raising and donating of funds is the source of our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (August 23, 2010)

- Asking for funds from family, friends and others one has been raised by/with is a much greater challenge than asking strangers for funds - if a stranger says no we simply have to physically and mentally 'walk away' from the scene whereas if a relation says no we have to absorb the rejection and be alert to not become bitter
- Asking for funds for oneself is a much greater challenge than asking for others - when we initially become aware of the Spiritual Path we find being selfless difficult and being selfish easy, yet as we evolve mentally, selfishness becomes difficult and selflessness becomes easy
- Asking for funds is a unique, rare and blessed opportunity to face the ego - when the ego is forced to 'depend' on others, the noose the ego has on us is loosened
- Sadly, 20% of people donate 80% of funds - are 80% of people really so incapable to donate their share
- The best way to give is to donate a percentage of one's income and time to charities - ideally this percentage should be at least 10% and if this is not possible right now, grow to this percentage by adding 1%, .5%, .25% (any percentage greater than 0!), every year
- As Pujya Swami Chinmayananda has taught, having 100,000 people give \$1 is more effective than 1 person giving \$100,000 - we are One, let us live mutually, not mutually exclusive

My prostrations to each and every one of you who has contributed towards CMN's Fundraising Campaign. i cannot express the **confidence i have invoked on account of your generosity.**

"Promise to live your life as a revolution...not just a process of evolution." --- Reena Mensingh

Inspire-Love-Be

11 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

We often **compartmentalize our varying facets of living (i.e. health, family, work, social, spiritual, etc.). By doing so, what we subconsciously create is 'pockets' for us to justify unhappiness** (i.e. being unhappy at work to be happy at home or being unhappy spiritually to be happy socially, etc.). However, our **Masters unhesitatingly scream, BEING UNHAPPY IS NOT ALRIGHT! WE ARE OF THE NATURE OF JOY!!!** This is the message of all our Scriptures...this is also the message of all our Societies...if only we can **'tune in to the frequency of spirituality'**. **And so a song called *They Stood up for Love by Live* teaches us to find spirituality in society through our E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (August 30, 2010)

- *Who is this energy that never left or came* - Existence-Awareness-Joy is unborn, undying and so ever present
- *We spend all of our lives going out of our minds, looking back to our birth, forward to our demise* - all that we ever need is available to us in the Infinite present
- *Even scientists say everything is just light, not created-destroyed, but eternally bright* - every object, being and situation has a name, a form and a Essence yet the more pertinent matter is what are we paying attention to and not paying attention to
- *Masters in every time, Lord in every place, those who stood up for love down in spite of the hate* - what separates the ordinary from the extraordinary is the former falter in the 'face of hate' whereas the latter alter the 'face of hate'

- *Who lives in a different dimension, free from the struggles we know - what separates the ordinary from the extraordinary is that the former owns (attaches to) hardships whereas the latter disowns (detaches from) hardships*
- *We made it to the moon but we can't make it home, waiting on a rescue that never comes - we know everything about everything yet know so little about the Knower, the only Source of Joy*

"Courage does not always roar. Sometimes it is a quiet voice at the end of the day saying... 'I will try again tomorrow.'" --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

12 - Hari Om from Atlanta!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

At the Mahasamadhi Camp Banquet in Los Angeles, **Pujya Guruji had shared that a project is a success when those involved with the project are keen on taking up that project again.** At our Murti Sthapana in Niagara Falls, **i was sharing how preparing for this celebration was exhausting yet enlivening.** At the home of one our sevaks in Buffalo, **she was sharing how trying yet rewarding teaching/administering Bala Vihar is.** These messages are the **inspiration to write on challenging challenge** in our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (September 6, 2010)

- A challenge is a situation which demands us to be greater than we presently are – we are successful if we try to be better and we are a failure if we do not try to be better, the outcome is inconsequential
- Capability is what determines whether a situation is challenging or not (i.e. public speaking is frightening for the typical citizen whereas for the typical politician public speaking is fun, etc.) – perspective is what determines whether a situation is a positive challenge (opportunity) or negative challenge (burden)
- Why choose a situation to be a burden – why not choose a situation to be an opportunity
- Tending to one's career (viteshana), one's family (putreshana), one's status (lokeshana) is easy and sadly, has become natural – tending to another's pursuits is what makes one great and if one treads this path even minutely one will realize how difficult and unnatural being self absorbed is
- When we desire, think, act for ourselves our capabilities are limited to only our self – when we desire, think, act for another (grhasta) this leads to serving others (vanaprastha) which leads to serving all (sannyasa), manifesting Divine capabilities
- If we feel frustrated, tired, uninspired, etc. to face a challenge, we should recognize this as a sign of our incompleteness (weaknesses) and strive to make ourselves complete (strengths) – it is better to burn out than to fade away 'so push hard' and realize this is the means to making the ego fall and the Divinity to rise

"Nature gave us one tongue and two ears so we could hear twice as much as we speak." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

13 - Hari Om from Tulum!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Anger VS. Awareness. We all want to revoke anger and invoke awareness...yet we all welcome anger and refuse awareness. **why? Why? WHY? For the purpose of infusing peace within, leading to a diffusion of peace without, we strive to uncover the difference between these two practices, in**

our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (September 13, 2010)

- When under the influence of anger we are unobservant of our situation (i.e. road rage, etc.) VS. when we practice awareness we are quite observant of our situation - through awareness we are more efficient in all our activities (i.e. remembering names, etc.)
- When under the influence of anger we do not experience our situation VS. when we practice awareness we thoroughly experience our situation (i.e. the sensation of a shower, etc.) - through awareness we enjoy all our activities more
- When under the influence of anger we are in disharmony with our situation (i.e. no one likes to be in the presence of an angry person, etc.) VS. when we practice awareness we are in harmony with our situation - through awareness we live more as One in all our activities (i.e. awareness is integral to empathy and vice versa)
- Every moment is an opportunity cost (i.e. the gain of engaging in A and the loss of disengaging in B, etc.) - to prepare ourselves for every moment we should reflect on the great gains associated with aware-full living and the heavy losses associated with anger-full living
- Anger is simply an expression of frustrated desire - if we aware of how much we have and how little we need then practicing contentment will be natural and anger will be alien
- Awareness is to be developed slowly through association (i.e. take select activities and continuously remind oneself to be aware through that activity [i.e. brushing our teeth, eating our food, typing our emails, etc.]) - through a continual growth of such association, eventually every activity is encompassed and we rediscover that we are Awareness and that anger is extinct

"Young souls learn to accept responsibility for their actions. Mature souls learn to accept responsibility for their thoughts. And old souls learn to accept responsibility for their happiness." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

14 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Right now **Chinmaya Mission has approximately 15,000 students enrolled in our spiritual programs for children and youth (Bala Vihar) throughout North America.** This past month most of these students resumed their spiritual studies post Summer Vacation. Now, how many teachers are needed to help facilitate learning for 15,000 students? Right now **Chinmaya Mission has approximately 2,500 teachers serving our spiritual programs for children and youth throughout North America. 15,000 students coming together to learn from 2,500 teachers and 2,500 teachers coming together to learn from 15,000 students. And how does this learning take place? Communication. Every facet of living, whether spiritual or secular is simply an expression of communication.** With this in mind, thoughts on how our teachers can communicate with their students is the strategy for our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (September 20, 2010)

- Many times when a student is speaking we are occupied with our response, judgement of the student, distraction from the environment, etc. – students are surprisingly sensitive to the attention or lack of attention offered to them and so while a student is speaking we should be occupied with their words only
- The difference between hearing and listening is the former is mindless and the latter is mindful – being a competent listener is pivotal to being a competent speaker
- Students learn far more outside of the classroom than inside the classroom – being a teacher is not a 90 minute activity, rather we must be vigilant about our thoughts, speech and actions at all times

- To 'teach' is to learn twice – let us forever remember that we are the beneficiaries by sharing knowledge, for in time this knowledge becomes the fabric of who we are (wisdom)
- When we fail to be on time (without just reason), let alone be ahead of time, for our seva (service), we overtly and covertly convey to our students that their time and so they, are not as important as our time and us – a student learns more when they are nurtured which is why being ahead of time to serve is imperative
- The greatest resource a nation has is people – a single educated, inspired, devoted student can change all of humanity forever and ever (i.e. Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Tejomayananda, you!)

"When flood comes, fish eat ants. When flood recedes, ants eat fish. Only time matters. Just hold on." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

15 - Hari Om from Stroudsburg!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

In our E-Vichara last week i had shared **thoughts on how teachers can communicate with their students. This week i continue** to share such thoughts through our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (September 27, 2010)

- Students are well aware of when teachers are not prepared – if teachers want students to respect them, they should respect their students by being prepared
- For the typical subject, there should be an equal amount of preparation as class time (i.e. a 1 hour class should involve 1 hour of preparation for the class) – with experience and expertise this ratio can decrease on the preparation side and should increase on the class side
- Most sciences (i.e. medicine, pharmacy, education, etc.) require ongoing training/learning – the same is relevant to Vedanta (the Science of Life) and so to be effective spiritual teachers we have to be effective spiritual students (i.e. when Pujya Swami Tejomayananda teaches, all Chinmaya Mission Acharyas, regardless of seniority, come to listen)
- Generally, elementary school aged (kids) students though appearing to be more distracted than secondary school aged (youth) students, are not – we should not underestimate the attention of kids as most of the time they are absorbing what is being shared
- When teaching youth, at least spirituality, the medium should primarily be discussion – we need to read and reflect to enable us to ask the right questions for this evokes the right answers
- Youth are exposed to disgusting levels of sensory stimulation (i.e. television, radio, internet, etc.) which incites them to not be able to focus on simple, subtle, sattvic activities (i.e. studying) - empathy or 'being a youth' is the way to understand how to raise their minds from the mundane to the mystical

"You brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose." -- Dr. Seuss

Inspire-Love-Be

16 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

In our last two E-Vicharas we have been reflecting on the qualities of a spiritual teacher. And i had shared that we would reflect on the qualities of a spiritual student in this E-Vichara. However, this past week the whole world has been **immersed in Bharat (India), especially me...i was a few feet away from Bharat's**

former President Dr. Abdul Kalam as he spoke on leadership, i was a few hundred feet away from Grammy recipient AR Rahman as he sang with passion, i was a few million feet away from a poised Delhi as the Commonwealth Games commenced with joy and i was 'with' Mahatma Gandhi as he continued to inspire one and all on his Jayanti (Birthday). With this in mind, we will reflect on the qualities of a spiritual student in our next E-Vichara. **Famous messages on growth is the source** for our present E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (October 4, 2010)

- *Yadyadacharati shreshthaha tattadevetaro janaha / whatever a great man does, that the masses also do* (Bhagavan Krishna) - the nature of almost every 'system' is for 5% of people to emerge as leaders and 95% as followers
- *We must be the change we want to see in the world* (Mahatma Gandhi) - parts make up a whole and even when a single, solitary part changes the whole changes
- *Nothing can be taught* (Sri Aurobindo) - the only way to teach is to be (what we are aspiring to teach)
- *What you are speaks so loud that I cannot hear you speak* (Swami Tejomayananda) - who we want to be is as important as who we are hence why we have to be ever aware of who our role models are
- *Actions speak louder than words* (Mark Twain) - in a society where we notoriously subscribe to seeing is believing, we have to capture people's eyes before their ears will listen
- *Lead by example* (Proverb) - every situation needs betterment, every situation demands guidance, every situation creates learners and to connect all these facets of a situation, i (you) have to make the first move

"The outward freedom that we shall attain will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given moment. And if this is a correct view of freedom, our chief energy must be concentrated on achieving reform from within." --- Mahatma Gandhi

Inspire-Love-Be

17 - Hari Om from Pittsburgh!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Each and every one of us was a student, is a student and always will be a student. In what sense? We are always learning. Through our recent E-Vicharas we have been reflecting on the qualities of a teacher with the focus being on communication. And as promised, we will think about the **qualities of a student with the focus continuing to be on communication, through our present E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (October 11, 2010)

- Respect is characterized by being ready to listen to what a teacher has to say, yet not wanting to know more (i.e. the typical relationship with a secular teacher, etc.) – care is characterized by wanting to know more, yet not being ready to listen (i.e. the typical relationship with a child, etc.)
- We have to learn to revere our teachers – reverence is a confluence of respect and care in which case we are ready to listen and wanting to know more (i.e. the typical relationship with a Guru)
- In most cases, only the teacher offers concern for the student, who just assumes he/she is to receive (i.e. being available to listen/read/think of a student's problems) – we need to remember that teachers are students too and so we should offer concern too (i.e. when was the last time we asked our teachers, "How are you?" instead of just telling them how we are, etc.)
- Just as we want our teachers to encourage us by offering attention to what we are sharing, in the same way we should encourage our teachers by offering attention to what they are sharing (i.e. making eye contact, sitting still, participating in the learning, etc.) – when a student is engaged in the knowledge being shared, a teacher offers a higher calibre of knowledge thereby creating an amplified learning environment

- God helps those who help themselves and God helps those more who help others - teachers teach those who learn themselves and teachers teach those more who teach others
- All that we know today has been taught to us directly or indirectly by a 'teacher' - we should forever reflect, remember and recognize the contribution 'teachers' have made in our lives and in turn contribute the same in others lives

Teachers...students...human beings...**more important than aptitude is attitude when we play these different roles in the drama we call living.** The following are profound thoughts by Charles Swindoll on the **implication of our attitude on our affairs...**

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life.

Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, gifted-ness, or skill. It will make or break a company ... a church ... a home.

The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable.

The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude ... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me, and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you ... we are in charge of our attitudes.

"You lie the loudest when you lie to yourself." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

18 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

In the **beginning of chapter 1 of Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Prince Arjuna is poised.** With head high, chest out and muscles flexed he instructs his charioteer, Bhagavan Krishna, to put his chariot in the middle of the battlefield. And at the **end of the same chapter Prince Arjuna is sweating, shaking...shocked.** **What happened? Fear. How to change fear to fearless is the aim** for our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (October 18, 2010)

- We derive no benefit from being scared – being aware brings about cautiousness sans the leeching of mental and physical energy which fear instigates
- Fear is simply a thought – just like the supply of a good ends when the demand ends, so too when attention is not directed to the fear thought, the thought ends
- There is nothing to fear but fear itself is a statement we have heard 1,000 times yet have not listened to even once – no object, being or situation is intrinsically fear inducing, rather we grant fear access to our minds to infect our peace with agitation
- The period before most experiences is more frightening than the experience itself – we need to reflect on this universal observation and then act accordingly by simply engaging in the experience instead of allowing fear to slow us or even halt us
- Experimentation with that which we fear helps us exceed fear (i.e. register with *Toastmasters* to address the fear of public speaking, etc.) – fear is futile, fearless is fascinating, let us do whatever it takes to raise ourselves from futility to fascination

- Some of the greatest fears we have are death, public speaking and change in general – when we invoke true knowledge, as is the aspiration of our E-Vicharas, (i.e. all that is born is subject to death, preparation with the subject matter, the nature of the universe is to forever change, respectively) we let go of fear

"Those who think they have no time for bodily exercise will sooner or later have to find time for illness." --- Edward Stanley

Inspire-Love-Be

19 - Hari Om from Boston!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Recently i was part of a satsanga in Cleveland. Post satsanga one of the participants had given me some poetry he wrote. As I was **reading his poetry, the poems which stood out the most** were the ones he wrote on his love for writing poetry. With this in mind, **i too was/am inspired to write an E-Vichara on the personal developments of writing E-Vicharas...**

E-Vichara (October 25, 2010)

- (Connectedness) When we study our surroundings today, we observe that we are quite disconnected from nature, others, ourselves – the E-Vichara is a medium whereby 1,000's of seekers all around the world are connected, for however long, in reflection
- (Creativity) Writing a column, blog, email, any regular form of communication, demands one to be creative – as Swami Chinmayananda reveals *"Teaching is the art of communication"* and so creativity is the art of teaching
- (Coordination) One of the greatest sources of stress in our lives is time and one of the greatest jokes in our lives is our belief that we manage our time well – through taking on more, particularly seva, one becomes more efficient, more effective, more immune to the causes and effects of stress
- (Consistency) We have deadlines with academic assignments, mortgage payments, social affairs, etc. and these deadlines act as a catalyst to invoke and maintain discipline – as soon as the send button is clicked on one E-Vichara, ideas for the next E-Vichara begin and come weekend, this needs to be put together whether wired, tired or uninspired
- (Capability) In countless scenarios of living, the more you give the more you receive holds true (i.e. anger, emails, donations, etc.) – this truth is amplified when that which is given is knowledge, meaning, writing an E-Vichara is a greater experience to engage in vichara compared to simply reading an E-Vichara
- (Coolness) Technology is intensifying at an unprecedented pace and to deny or ignore this is to choose to limit oneself – through the growing appreciation of the E-Vichara further avenues of 'spreading the word' were and will continue to be embraced

i offer my humble, sincere and Loving gratitude to each and every person who has compassionately requested to receive the E-Vichara... you have **all contributed to my personal growth.**

"You are today where your thoughts have brought you; you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you." --- James Allen

Inspire-Love-Be

20 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

What is Spirituality? The Science of the Spirit. **What is the Spirit? Joy! And so Spirituality is essentially the study of happiness.** Now just like all sciences, certain qualifications are needed to be adept with the theory and application of that science. Spirituality is no different. One of the qualifications that is **demanding of those wanting to pursue Spirituality is vairagya (detachment).** A most revered yet **most feared word...d-e-t-a-c-h-m-e-n-t.** To remove the 'fangs' that paralyze us from embracing this quality we engage in a 'dissection' via our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (November 1, 2010) --- Developing Detachment

- Detachment is not being dependent on any object, being or situation for Joy - in other words, to be independently Joyful
- If we think about the most dynamic personalities we know, past or present (i.e. Thomas Edison, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Chinmayananda, etc.), we come to appreciate that all of them invoked and evoked detachment - is our fear than of detachment or of being great
- A few of the gains associated with cultivating this simple quality are objectivity (i.e. third party mediation), perspective (i.e. seeing the big picture), freedom (i.e. from limitations) - with such material and spiritual benefits associated with detachment, why are we consciously and unconsciously abstaining from applying this in our lives
- Our intellect is not convinced of why we should practice detachment and so we do not - to develop this conviction we need to study (through satsanga, seva and sadhana) and particularly reflect on viveka which is the quality to discriminate between what can and cannot be Joyful
- Once we know what is Joyful (our Nature) detaching from what is not Joyful (not our Nature) is natural - by attaching to the 'higher' we are detaching from the 'lower' (i.e. lower rungs for upper rungs, video games for cars, indulgence for discipline, etc.) a.k.a. Yoga
- Contrary to our belief, attachment is not needed for a relationship (regardless of what degree) - we have a duty to others and so we should engage in all relationships with seva bhava (sentiment of seva), we also have a duty to oneself and so we should engage in the courage to be detached

"Mind is consciousness which has put on limitations. You are originally unlimited and perfect. Later you take on limitations and become the mind". --- Sri Ramana Maharshi

Inspire-Love-Be

21 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Priceless knowledge – which having learned helps us lead prosperous and peaceful lives. Prosperity and Peace are perceived as mutually exclusive, but Vedanta teaches us how to have both simultaneously. How can we put a price on that? This is a **message Chinmaya Mission Chicago shared a few years back to encourage their community to contribute to their growing spiritual Centers. This message addresses a major block we have in the way we think and split our family life and our spiritual life.** Or our material life and our service life. Even better, our normal life and our abnormal life! **Building up whole ideas to tear down divided notions is the foundation** for our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (November 8, 2010) --- Balancing Living

- What is spiritual life – spiritual life is seeking within for the sake of greater peace
- What is family life – family life is serving without for the sake of greater peace
- Our spiritual life and family life are expressed differently yet have the same purpose so why the idea they are mutually exclusive
- We consciously compartmentalize the different facets of living (i.e. home, work, social, etc.) to unconsciously justify why being unhappy in one facet is alright to be happy in another (i.e. being uninspired at work is fine for the sake of providing for our families) - think, both facets, nay, all facets of

lady in the group.

Now, it was the turn of the other lady in the group to continue the drama. The waiter rushed forward to their rescue.

In the relay of throwing, the cockroach next fell upon the waiter. The waiter stood firm, composed himself and observed the behaviour of the cockroach on his shirt. When he was confident enough, he grabbed and threw it out with his fingers.

Sipping my coffee and watching the amusement, the antenna of my mind picked up a few thoughts and started wondering!

Was the cockroach responsible for their histrionic behaviour?

If so, then why was the waiter not disturbed? He handled it near to perfection, without any chaos. It is not the cockroach, but the inability of the ladies to handle the disturbance caused by the cockroach that disturbed the ladies.

I realized even in my case then, it is not the shouting of my father or my boss that disturbs me, but it is my inability to handle the disturbances caused by their shouting that disturbs me. It is not the traffic jams on the road that disturbs me, but my inability to handle the disturbance caused by traffic jams that disturbs me.

More than the problem, it is my reaction to the problem that hurts me.

"An egotist is never satisfied, be he rich, poor, a clerk, or king of the world. A divine man is happy, whether in a palace, a poor hut, or a monk's cell." --- Paramahansa Yogananda

Inspire-Love-Be

23 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

As we approach the end of the calendar year, for most people in the world and certainly most people receiving this email, winter approaches. Winter brings less sunlight, more snowflakes and typically gloom. **H O W are we allowing the weather make us believe that our Nature is not Joy? And more importantly, W H Y are we making this choice? Rationally thinking about winter to relieve us of our habituated way of feeling about winter** is the inspiration of our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (November 22, 2010) --- Weathering Winter

- Regardless of our tears and fears, winter will simply not change so why engage in such futile actions and thoughts – learning to accept the weather aids us in learning to accept other inevitable facets of living (i.e. growing old, people's personalities, inconsistent nature of situations, etc.)
- The nature of every facet of the universe is to change, change and keep on changing – while facing the wind-chill on an upcoming bitter cold January morning, remember that those mornings will soon change to rain, to sun, to wind and back to bitter cold
- When we are cold we tend to go on mentally and verbally 'talking' about how cold we are and this only makes the experience more painful – a more intelligent strategy to deal with the experience is to acknowledge the coldness and then move on
- Familiarity often breeds contempt and absence tends to breed miss – seasons are a blessing for us to appreciate seasons
- Relatively intense temperatures provide an opportunity (tapas) for us develop toughness (titiksha) – when we can engage in the intense with a smile, engaging in the normal is all the more effortless

- Some like winter, some dislike winter, and so winter, like all objects, beings and situations, is not intrinsically joy-filled or joy-less – our living is determined by our thinking, our thinking is determined by our attitude, our attitude is determined by our knowledge

"Laughing faces do not mean that there is absence of sorrow! But it means that they have the ability to deal with it." --- Shakespeare

Inspire-Love-Be

24 - Hari Om from Phoenix!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Recently, i was part of a **satsanga at McMaster University where i shared some insights on *Understanding Anger***. Post satsanga i was reflecting on how anger is sourced from desire. Add greed into the equation and we have 'The Gates to Hell'. Does this mean desire, anger and greed will cause us to suffer after we die? No. These **inner enemies cause our peace to die here and now. Heaven and hell is a state of mind. With this introduction, the nature of desire is the 1st of a 3 part series** on 'The Gates to Hell', through our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (November 29, 2010) --- The Gates to Hell - Part 1

- Ignorance of our Nature causes us to believe we are incomplete - in such a hallucination our innate and eternal motive is to reassert our Completeness (purpose of living)
- While we are in such a limbo the intellect devises plans (desires), shaking the mind into agitation (thoughts), kicking the body into restlessness (actions) - if our desires are self centered this pendulum never ends driving us mad whereas if our desires are Self centered this pendulum is 'thrown off the table' driving us mad in Joy
- The typical tendency of ours is to become greedy when a base desire is fulfilled and angry when a base desire is unfulfilled - why are we engaging in a game we cannot end let alone win
- Just as the means and goal of japa (chanting) is to change the quality and quantity of thoughts so too the desire for Enlightenment changes the quality and quantity of desires - why are we so hypnotized by the pursuit of entertainment when Enlightenment can dehypnotize
- The antidote to the disease of indulgent desire is the practice of divine contentment - where Bhagavan Rama is, kama (pleasure oriented desire) cannot be
- A natural subsequent question would be how to practice contentment - and a natural subsequent answer would be know who you are courtesy of Vedanta vichara

As we think about the ideas of Spirituality, **just as important is to think about the practice of these ideas. The following is a short story on how simple such practice can be...**

I hired a plumber to help me restore an old farmhouse, and after he had just finished a rough first day on the job, a flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric drill quit and his ancient one ton truck refused to start. While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence.

On arriving he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked towards the front door, he paused briefly at a tree, touching the tips of the tree. When opening the door he underwent an amazing transformation.

His tanned face was wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss. Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

"Oh, that's my trouble tree", he replied. "I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, those troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and children. So I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home and ask God to take care of them. Then in the morning I pick them up again.

Funny thing is", he smiled, "When I come out in the morning to pick them up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before."

"It is our choices, Harry, that show us what we truly are, far more than our abilities." --- Dumbledore

Inspire-Love-Be

25 - Hari Om from Chicago!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

We often **associate heaven and hell to be 'other worldly'**. However, in Vedanta **heaven and hell is here and now**. When we think nobly we are peaceful. When we **think selfishly we are possessed**. We are in the middle a 3 part series on 'The Gates to Hell'. Kama or desire has been explored. Now we **continue to the 2nd gate which is krodha or anger**. For all of us who tend to loiter around this gate, our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (December 6, 2010) --- The Gates to Hell Part 2

- A desire denied is frustrated (anger) and a desire accepted is satiated (greed) – regardless of what gate we enter we suffer
- Like any negativity, anger tends to be directed outside of us (i.e. car, family, economy, etc.), yet the biggest loser in the equation is us – why do we enjoy and entertain such sadistic sorrow
- Anger is a complex whereby we believe we control situations – all that we control in our lives is ourselves and so if we are going to get angry, this should be directed at ourselves and no other party
- The opposite of anger is acceptance – acceptance is not escapism, rather is embracing the truth that control is a fallacy, that all always changes
- To address and annihilate any vice, the first step is to appreciate the returns of changing (greater freedom) and not changing (continuing bondage) – the second step is acting on this opportunity cost
- Anger is a reaction and so developing the habit of pausing (how long is dependent on the person and place) before any action will act as an inhibitor to the disease of anger – anger controlled is a means of communication, controlled by anger is a means of conflict

This past week has been one of milestones for me/society. **Since returning from Sandeepany 3 years ago, Houston is the 20th Chinmaya Mission Center i have been invited to, to teach Vedanta. And having not cut my hair since the Overseas Acharyas Conference 19 months ago, i shaved my head in Phoenix offering 9 inches of hair towards making a wig for those patients who may need one.** i offer my humblest and sincerest gratitude to the Guru Parampara for giving me the opportunity to share the purpose of Vedanta and to the Divine for giving me the ability to share the purpose of this body.

"When we wake up in the morning, we have two simple choices: go back to sleep and dream or wake up and chase those dreams. The choice is ours..." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

26 - Hari Om from Savannah!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

"There is enough in this world for everybody's need, but not enough for certain people's greed." (Mahatma Gandhi) Having analyzed how kama (desire) and krodha (anger) toss us into a state of hell, we now discuss the **last of 'The Gates of Hell', lobha (greed)**. Only when we become intensely aware of the torture

inflicted by these inner enemies will we not engage them. Hence the purpose of our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (December 13, 2010) --- The Gates to Hell – Part 3

- Desire can never be satiated by the fulfillment of base desires as this only infuriates more desires a.k.a. greed – if we practice awareness and appreciation of all we have, the potency of greed will decrease and the potency of contentment will increase
- Greed is not being content and expecting quantity to change this – if quantity were the cause of contentment why would some of the privileged want more and why would some of the underprivileged not want more
- When we attribute joy to an object, being or situation, we never fully appreciate that experience for innately we know that experience will fade and so will the apparent joy, which is why we are always planning for more of that experience – when was the last time we enjoyed an experience without remembrance of a similar past experience (smaranam) or expectation of a similar future experience (cintanam)
- We can only sleep in one bed at a time, we can only eat as much as the stomach allows, we can only listen to one person speak at any given moment, so why are we destroying ourselves for more than we can handle – we all came to this world with only the impressions of our mind and we will all leave this world with only the impressions of our mind so why the craze of acquiring stuff and neglect of acquiring substance
- The message of Vedanta is not one of anti-materialism, rather is one of pro-Joy – when we are Content we are no longer dependent on any objects, beings or situations leave alone any combination or permutation of them
- Our greed needs to change in quality and quantity – first we need to be greedy for satsanga, seva and sadhana and second we need to be greedy for the Lord only

*"The world suffers a lot not because of the violence of bad people but because of the silence of good people!" --
- Napoleon*

Inspire-Love-Be

27 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

As we reflected on the **perpetual dangers of playing with (selfish) desire, anger and greed, we discovered a common safety - practicing contentment.** Contentment is a moving message offered by all our Scriptures and all our Masters. A special Scripture invoked by a special Master teaching us to **realize how special we truly are is the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.** A universal message shared through these divine portals is the **eternal niyamas (active commitments or do's), now being explored** through our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (December 20, 2010) --- Assertive Commitments

- For the mind, doing is natural and not doing is a struggle - by sincerely practicing any of the five niyamas, all are practiced and more importantly their opposite is naturally not practiced (i.e. if we practice exercising naturally we are not practicing laziness)
- **Saucha** (cleanliness) is to practice being pure in thought, word and deed - the key to cultivating purity is to reflect before we think, speak or act and if these are not going to create real peace, we should desist from following through with these
- **Santosha** (contentment) is to practice being the happiest we can be - to be genuinely happy we need to be appreciative of material blessings and ambitious for spiritual blessings

- **Tapasa** (discipline) is to practice control of the body, mind and intellect for the purpose of transcending the ego - by directing the equipments towards the Infinite, these equipments are guarded from drowning in the sea of mundane existence
- **Svadhyaya** (study) is to practice introspection of who we are - for most people reading this thought, secular studies has been encouraged from all around, yet without knowing the Knower how thorough is any of our knowledge so we need to invest some time each and every day asking ourselves 'Who am i?'
- **Ishwara Pranidhana** (surrender) is to practice living worry free and humbly - in Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavan Krishna (Guru) teaches Prince Arjuna (us) to let go of his worries towards results and having practiced this, to let go of his arrogance towards doership because the effect and cause is all the jurisdiction of the Divine

Continuing with the idea of practicing contentment, the following is a **short story about the selfishness that is inevitable by depending on objects, beings and situations for peace instead of the Self...**

There was a blind girl who hated herself because she was blind. She hated everyone, except her loving boyfriend. He was always there for her. She told her boyfriend, "If I could only see the world, I will marry you."

One day, someone donated a pair of eyes to her. When the bandages came off, she was able to see everything, including her boyfriend.

He asked her, "Now that you can see the world, will you marry me?" The girl looked at her boyfriend and saw that he was blind. The sight of his closed eyelids shocked her. She hadn't expected that. The thought of looking at them the rest of her life led her to refuse to marry him.

Her boyfriend left in tears and days later wrote a note to her saying, 'Take good care of your eyes, my dear, for before they were yours, they were mine.'

This is how the mind often works when our status changes. Only a very few remember what life was like before.

"It is very easy to defeat someone, but it is very hard to win someone." --- John Keats

Inspire-Love-Be

28 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

This **upcoming Saturday millions of hopeful people will begin their promise to be better.** Some will plan to lose weight, some will plan to read more, some will plan to overcome anger! This **upcoming Sunday millions of hopeful people will begin breaking their promise to be better.** WHAT HAPPENS IN 1 DAY, 1 WEEK, 1 MONTH FOR US TO GIVE UP ON OURSELVES? Thoughts on **how to keep promises are promised through our keeping E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (December 27, 2010) --- Keeping Promises

- We may try to be better for another person or purpose yet at the end of the day we only try to be better for ourselves - unable to absorb this truth, we should actively place our reason to be better on another person or purpose (i.e. spouse, society, etc.)
- When making a resolve, we should be humbly open about this for then we are held accountable by those we have shared with - and having succeeded or failed in our resolve, the fabric of the situation should be woven with humility
- Just as we cannot love others if we do not love ourselves, so too we will not keep promises to others if we do not keep promises to ourselves - the mind is what confuses the resolve and the intellect is what clarifies the resolve

- Everywhere we go we see clubs for the body (gyms) and clubs for the mind (bars) yet so few clubs for the intellect (ashrams) - funny is our understanding of how we live, going about believing the body guides the intellect, leading us to an utterly limited lifestyle
- How do we know what areas we should be growing in - any facet of our lives whereby growth will lead to long term peace is an area we have to grow
- For 2011 we should resolve to give 10% of our income to charity, 10% of our time to volunteering and 10% of our energy to reflection - the return on this simple and practical investment is a 1000% rise in Joy

"Walk with the wise and be wise; mix with the stupid and be misled." --- Proverb

Inspire-Love-Be

29 - Hari Om from Washington DC!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

People often share they **do not believe in 'organized religion' or 'spiritual organizations' or even 'organized learning'** to a degree. Having pursued religion, spirituality and learning in a non-organized manner as well as an organized environment, i have **come to appreciate how being involved in an organization is a catalyst to inner growth. And so we study these opportunities an organization creates** through our ORGANIZED E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (Jan 3, 2011) --- Opportunities through Organizations

- Like a society, an organization is a group of people organized for some purpose or end or work - with this in mind, if we agree with the purpose or end or work why not be part of the organization for the sake of efficiency
- If we reflect on the greatest challenges we have ever faced, we will come to appreciate that all revolved around people - dealing with people is THE opportunity to transform values (theory) to virtues (application)
- To be able to listen, reflect and meditate in one's own neighbourhood, in one's own home, in one's own room demands an evolved mind - to be able to listen, reflect and meditate amidst the 'movement' of an organization demands an even more evolved mind
- Being involved in an organization is like being involved in a marriage where one is consistently exposed to different perspectives, different tastes, different differences - the lessons to be learned in an organization are the same as marriage (i.e. sacrifice and service infused with silence encouraging egolessness), yet this is instilled not by one partner and family of in-laws but numerous 'partners' and 'families of in-laws'
- When we volunteer with an organization we need to be more punctual, more positive and more potent for we are the ones who made the choice to serve - with the right attitude, development of life skills (i.e. time management, creative writing, public speaking, etc.) is a blessing an organization can offer if we are ready to receive
- Many of the greatest thinkers have created and encouraged organizations (i.e. Adi Shankaracharya and the Amnaya Maths, Pujya Swami Chinmayananda and the Chinmaya Mission, Greg Mortenson and Pennies for Peace) not for their own benefit, rather for our benefit - the problem with organized religion, spirituality and learning is in the vision of the organization and the vision of the participant, not the vision of religion, spirituality and learning so let us serve a noble organization and develop a noble vision

"Whenever you want to know how rich you are, never count your currency. Just shed a tear and count how many hands reach out to wipe that tear. That is true richness." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

30 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

HEROES...when you read this word what comes to mind? For most, names like **Swami Vivekananda, Terry Fox, Batman, etc. will arise. Yet, without us being heroic enough to want to grow, we will not have heroes. The first, original, fundamental hero has to be ourselves. Only then can an external hero have any impact on us and so relevance to us.** With this in mind, the meaning and means of being H.E.R.O.E.S is the plot of our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (January 10, 2011) --- How to be a Hero

- (Be) **H**onest about the quality of one's personality with the focus being on one's weaknesses - most of us believe we are noble yet we live ignobly and this dishonesty with ourselves paralyzes the inclination to grow
- **E**xplore wholesome means to addressing our weaknesses - Vedanta accepts the need for some to examine the world (pariksha lokan) before turning within, in the same way we need to try different strategies to 'grow beyond' our weaknesses even if we fall, even if we fail
- **R**eflect on what the Scriptures, Masters, the wise in general, advise in dealing with weaknesses - these are precious sources of knowledge whose authority is based on successful experience a.k.a. what we want
- **O**rchestrate one's resources, time and efforts to ceaselessly raise oneself - knowing the solutions to one's weaknesses is 1/2 the battle and the other 1/2 is executing the solutions thereby executing the weaknesses
- **E**ndure the felicitations and insults from society that are inevitable when one decides to change leave alone actually changes - offer the honour to the Masters whose grace alone enables any growth and offer the dishonour into the 'fire of self development' providing more fuel to grow
- **S**erve all in all ways empowering others to be heroes as well - a true gauge of a true hero is how united with humanity he/she is, radiating light all around and inspiring the same, leading to the illumination of the whole universe

"To do for the world more than the world does for you, that is success." --- Henry Ford

Inspire-Love-Be

31 - Hari Om from Chicago!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Whenever we interact with a great teacher, listen to a great discourse, read a great scripture, etc. we encourage others to share in the same experience. The same applies to vacations, recipes, movies, every experience. This **instinct is a natural expression of our Oneness. We, you, me are all transactional words we have come to believe are fundamental.** We have sacrificed being Limitless by attaching to the limited. This **ultimate tragedy needs to be acknowledged, needs to be addressed, needs to be annihilated. How? Reflecting on a noble song (The Fixer) from a noble album (Backspacer) from a noble band (Pearl Jam).** Let us fix our fixed vision through our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (January 17, 2010) --- The Fixer

- *When something's dark, lemme shed a little light on it* - when we embrace the Light of Knowledge the darkness of ignorance is banished forever and fascinatingly we rediscover there was always only Light
- *When something's low, I wanna put a little high on it* - when our vehicles are empty we fill them with gas, when our stomachs are empty we fill them with food, when our minds are empty we have to fill them with satsanga, the only 'high'

- *When something's lost, I wanna fight to get it back again* - we suffer not because of lost objects, beings or situations, rather a lost identification with the Self and so we have one and one responsibility only, to know thyself
- *If there's no love, I'm gonna try to love again* - Real Love demands no external support nor internal reciprocation only endless opportunities to give, Give, GIVE
- *I'll say your prayers, I'll take your side, I'll find us a way to make light* - a family that prays together stays together, a family that learns together grows together, a family that empathizes together Realizes together
- *I'll dig your grave, we'll dance and sing. Who knows, could be our last lifetime!* - to understand death is to understand life is to understand we are beyond both is to understand we are FREE

As we continue to be exposed to death, we need to reflect on how to live life. Please read the following short story on Oneness where there is no real death...

The Egg

By: Andy Weir

You were on your way home when you died. It was a car accident. Nothing particularly remarkable, but fatal nonetheless. You left behind a wife and two children. It was a painless death. The EMTs tried their best to save you, but to no avail. Your body was so utterly shattered you were better off, trust me. And that's when you met me.

"What... what happened?" You asked. "Where am I?"

"You died," I said, matter-of-factly. No point in mincing words.

"There was a... a truck and it was skidding..."

"Yup," I said.

"I... I died?"

"Yup. But don't feel bad about it. Everyone dies," I said.

You looked around. There was nothingness. Just you and me. "What is this place?" You asked. "Is this the afterlife?"

"More or less," I said.

"Are you god?" You asked.

"Yup," I replied. "I'm God."

"My kids... my wife," you said.

"What about them?"

"Will they be all right?"

"That's what I like to see," I said. "You just died and your main concern is for your family. That's good stuff right there." You looked at me with fascination. To you, I didn't look like God. I just looked like some man. Or possibly a woman. Some vague authority figure, maybe. More of a grammar school teacher than the Almighty. "Don't worry," I said. "They'll be fine. Your kids will remember you as perfect in every way. They didn't have time to grow contempt for you. Your wife will cry on the outside, but will be secretly relieved. To be fair, your marriage was falling apart. If it's any consolation, she'll feel very guilty for feeling relieved."

"Oh," you said. "So what happens now? Do I go to heaven or hell or something?"

“Neither,” I said. “You’ll be reincarnated.”

“Ah,” you said. “So the Hindus were right.”

“All religions are right in their own way,” I said. “Walk with me.” You followed along as we strode through the void.

“Where are we going?”

“Nowhere in particular,” I said. “It’s just nice to walk while we talk.”

“So what’s the point, then?” You asked. “When I get reborn, I’ll just be a blank slate, right? A baby. So all my experiences and everything I did in this life won’t matter.”

“Not so!” I said. “You have within you all the knowledge and experiences of all your past lives. You just don’t remember them right now.” I stopped walking and took you by the shoulders. “Your soul is more magnificent, beautiful, and gigantic than you can possibly imagine. A human mind can only contain a tiny fraction of what you are. It’s like sticking your finger in a glass of water to see if it’s hot or cold. You put a tiny part of yourself into the vessel, and when you bring it back out, you’ve gained all the experiences it had. “You’ve been in a human form the last 48 years, so you haven’t stretched out yet and felt the rest of your immense consciousness. If we hung out here for long enough, you’d start remembering everything. But there’s no point to doing that between each life.”

“How many times have I been reincarnated, then?”

“Oh lots. Lots and lots. And in to lots of different lives.” I said. “This time around, you’ll be a Chinese peasant girl in 540 AD.”

“Wait, what?” You stammered. “You’re sending me back in time?”

“Well, I guess technically. Time, as you know it, only exists in your universe. Things are different where I come from.”

“Where you come from?” You said.

“Oh sure,” I explained. “I come from somewhere. Somewhere else. And there are others like me. I know you’ll want to know what it’s like there, but honestly you wouldn’t understand.”

“Oh,” you said, a little let down. “But wait. If I get reincarnated to other places in time, I could have interacted with myself at some point.”

“Sure. Happens all the time. And with both lives only aware of their own lifespan you don’t even know it’s happening.”

“So what’s the point of it all?”

“Seriously?” I asked. “Seriously? You’re asking me for the meaning of life? Isn’t that a little stereotypical?”

“Well it’s a reasonable question,” you persisted.

I looked you in the eye. “The meaning of life, the reason I made this whole universe, is for you to mature.”

“You mean mankind? You want us to mature?”

“No, just you. I made this whole universe for you. With each new life you grow and mature and become a larger and greater intellect.”

“Just me? What about everyone else?”

"There is no one else," I said. "In this universe, there's just you and me."

You stared blankly at me. "But all the people on earth..."

"All you. Different incarnations of you."

"Wait. I'm everyone!?"

"Now you're getting it," I said, with a congratulatory slap on the back.

"I'm every human being who ever lived?"

"Or who will ever live, yes."

"I'm Abraham Lincoln?"

"And you're John Wilkes Booth, too," I added.

"I'm Hitler?" You said, appalled.

"And you're the millions he killed."

"I'm Jesus?"

"And you're everyone who followed him." You fell silent. "Every time you victimized someone," I said, "You were victimizing yourself. Every act of kindness you've done, you've done to yourself. Every happy and sad moment ever experienced by any human was, or will be, experienced by you." You thought for a long time.

"Why?" You asked me. "Why do all this?"

"Because someday, you will become like me. Because that's what you are. You're one of my kind. You're my child."

"Whoa," you said, incredulous. "You mean I'm a god?"

"No. Not yet. You're a fetus. You're still growing. Once you've lived every human life throughout all time, you will have grown enough to be born."

"So the whole universe," you said, "it's just..."

"An egg." I answered. "Now it's time for you to move on to your next life."

And I sent you on your way.

*"By ecstatic meditation he can then rise above all bodily limitations to infinite bliss - a far better outcome for man than is an indefinitely prolonged ride on the dangerous Ferris wheel of births and deaths." ---
Paramahansa Yogananda*

Inspire-Love-Be

32 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Everyday i read more and more about how **society is more and more unhealthy. Why? A variety of**

reasons (i.e. confusion of priorities, etc.) at a variety of levels (i.e. social, etc.). One of the most fundamental reasons at one of the most fundamental levels is eating for the body. In all the Retreats and Camps i am actively involved with organizing, i **push for 1 hour of *Exercise & Elevation for the well being of the body & mind.*** **Being unable to reach all through such Retreats & Camps, we aspire to create awareness on the ruinous repercussions of eating for the body** through our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (January 24, 2011) --- Eating for Enlightenment

- Most animals have their brain, heart, stomach and genital organ at the same level compared to humans who have one above the other - our physical structure is an indication of what our priorities should be in life otherwise we are as evolved as the next animal
- Sarira madhyamam khalu dharmasadhanam (the body is the medium to practice righteousness) - poor eating/drinking habits are a disservice to oneself and to society for one cannot serve then, rather need to be served
- Only through the assistance of the body are we able to exhaust vasanas (innate tendencies) which blind us to our Joyous Nature - by indulging in eating and drinking we not only fail to use this embodiment but also succeed in crystallizing our spiritual ignorance
- By consuming foods/drinks that are tamasic (base) our personalities reflect the same, likewise with foods/drinks that are rajasic (aggressive) and sattvic (noble) - experiment with these ideas by changing one's diet to consume a majority of foods/drinks that are tamasic (i.e. meat and alcohol), rajasic (i.e. oily and sodas), sattvic (i.e. vegetables and milk) for a week each and observe whether we are what we eat
- We should eat many light meals rather than a couple of heavy meals as the former encourages a balanced circulation of blood whereas the latter encourages a skewed circulation of blood to the stomach - to be able to engage in sravanam (listening), mananam (reflection) and nidhidhyasanam (meditation) proper blood flow to the brain is vital
- Whenever ill, we consume only as much medicine as we need, never more, never less - Adi Shankaracharya teaches us to adopt the attitude of hunger and thirst being a daily disease which needs to be treated with some food and some drink not licentious eating/drinking

Week after week after week, **positive thoughts are shared through our E-Vichara. If these thoughts do not translate into actions the E-Vichara is just as good as junk mail. Try! Explore!! Practice!!! The E-Vichara is by us, for us.** On this note, i have shed 7 pounds over the last 4 months by abiding in my year long fast from chocolate, month long practice of veganism and experimenting with the ideas shared every Monday. With this in mind, **please read the following short story on how 'putting oneself on the line' is a catalyst to one 'transcending the line' ...**

Once, a Persian King received a gift of two magnificent falcons from Arabia. They were peregrine falcons, the most beautiful birds he had ever seen. He gave the precious birds to his head falconer to be trained.

Months passed and one day the head falconer informed the king that though one of the falcons was flying majestically, soaring high in the sky, the other bird had not moved from its branch since the day it had arrived.

The king summoned healers and sorcerers from all the land to tend to the falcon, but no one could make the bird fly. He presented the task to the members of his court. Yet the next day, the king saw through the palace window that the bird had still not moved from its perch. Having tried everything else, the king thought to himself, "Maybe I need someone more familiar with the countryside to understand the nature of this problem." So he cried out to his court, "Go and get a farmer."

In the morning the king was thrilled to see the falcon soaring high above the palace gardens. He said to his court, "Bring me the doer of this miracle." The court quickly located the farmer, who came and stood before the king. The king asked him, "How did you make the falcon fly?"

With his head bowed, the farmer said to the king, "It was very easy, your highness. I simply cut the branch where the bird was sitting."

"If you want your dreams to come true, you mustn't oversleep." --- Unknown

33 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

"To be angry is to revenge the faults of others on ourselves," shared our Pujya Swami Chinmayananda. Considering how utterly universal this message is, more of an introduction would be distracting and so we focus on our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (January 31, 2011) --- Art of Forgiving

- Though anger and almost all weaknesses are thrown outwards (i.e. to our car, to our sibling, to our weather, etc.), like a boomerang, this negativity returns to us - our preoccupation with masochism is frightening
- Developing relations requires time, effort, understanding whereas destroying relations requires a fraction of time, effort, understanding - let us reflect on how much we have invested in relationships only to dissolve these for we were not willing to invite 'the mediator of forgiveness'
- To believe we can commit mistakes yet others cannot is an expression of great egotism - whenever faced with a situation involving offence let us empathize with the other person/s and then think and feel from that perspective
- Forgiving is not about forgetting, rather is about learning from the past and valuing a person more than an incident/situation - a healthy way to value a person is to engage in dialogue (i.e. talk about what is the matter) and appreciation (i.e. be grateful for the person and quite often for the criticism they offered for they had the courage to share how we can be better)
- If the Divine remunerated us for what we deserve we would all be miserable - the Divine is generous in looking at our selflessness and overlooking our selfishness and we can be Divinely peaceful by practicing the same
- The highest forgiveness is to not take offence - just as the tongue is not offended when the teeth bite it because both are part of the same body, so too the only way to practice the highest forgiveness is to embrace Oneness

Continuing with the idea of **how preparation of mind is needed to forgive, needed to meditate, well this is needed to be happy as well.** Please read the following excerpt from The Road to Happiness by Mac Anderson & BJ Gallagher...

On one trip about ten years ago, I was making conversation with the taxi driver, asking him my usual questions about how he came to live where he lived. Then I asked him a hypothetical question: "If you could live anywhere in the world and if money was no object, where would you live?"

Without hesitating even for a second, he replied, "I live in my heart. So it really doesn't matter where my body lives. If I am happy inside, then I live in paradise, no matter where my residence is."

I felt humbled and a little foolish for my question. Of course he was right, happiness is an inside job. He had reminded me of something I already knew, but had forgotten. If you can't find happiness inside yourself, you'll never find it in the outside world, no matter where you move. Wherever you go, there you are. You take yourself with you.

"The satisfaction of getting revenge lasts only for a moment. The glory of forgiveness lasts forever." --- Tirukural verse 156

i hope this email finds everyone well...

The E-Vichara is a weekly email envisioned...*the Super Bowl commercials were so flashy...to provide spiritual thoughts for seekers...the weather is going to be harsh tonight...to reflect upon and instill a peaceful perspective. Distracted? If yes, read on. If no, stop lying hahaha! Focusing on distractions is the...come on, pay attention...the concentration of our E-Vichara...*

E-Vichara (February 7, 2011) --- Distracted? Desist!

- We waste endless amounts of resources, time and effort by allowing ourselves to be hypnotized by the dialogue between the mind and senses - experiences had and experiences to be had are enemies of the present experience
- The more we align ourselves with Awareness the more we will know when we are distracted - having become alert of when we are not focusing we need to continue being alert to guide ourselves back to focusing
- The cure to a vice is to practice the opposite virtue (i.e. contentment for desire, patience for anger, appreciation for greed, etc.) - to remedy the ever growing disease of distraction we have to participate in the medicine of concentration
- We do not lack the ability to concentrate, rather we lack interest in what we do (i.e. reading a report vs. watching a movie) – if we learn that all we do has a purpose we will develop a greater liking for all we do
- A simple and effective way to develop concentration is to keep our minds where our hands are - by appreciating the sheer rise in efficiency applicable to each and every facet of living (i.e. exercising, writing emails, making decisions, etc.) if we are able to pay attention, we will take this subject more seriously
- When we are distracted from the task at hand we tend to get frustrated and this only distracts us further - one should always be honest about one's present capabilities, that being we are human, yet never forget our potential, that being we are Divine

When we are **distracted from our goal we engage in compromising the noble for the selfish.**
When we are focused on our goal we engage in sacrificing the selfish for the noble.
Compromise leads to failure and sacrifice to success. Please read the following **short story of how compromise and sacrifice in the workplace** leads to such different scenes...

A successful business man was growing old and knew it was time to choose a successor to take over his business. Instead of choosing one of his directors or children, he decided to do something different. He called all the young executives in his company together.

He said, "It is time for me to step down and choose the next CEO. I have decided to choose one of you." The young executives were shocked but the boss continued. "I am going to give each one of you a seed. I want you to plant the seed, tend to the seed and we will meet 1 year from today with what has become of the seed I have given you. I will then judge what you bring and will choose a CEO accordingly."

One man named Jim was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly narrated to his wife the background to the seed. Together they planted the seed and everyday they would water the seed and watch to see if it had grown. After about 3 weeks some of the other executives began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow.

Jim kept checking his seed yet nothing ever grew. Week after week passed, still he had nothing. By now others were talking about their plants. Yet Jim had no plant and felt like a failure. Half the year went by and Jim had nothing to show. He just knew he had killed his seed. Everyone else had tall plants now and he, nothing. Jim did not say anything to his colleagues. He just continued to water and fertilize the soil. Finally a year passed and all the young executives of the company brought their plants to the CEO for inspection.

Jim had told his wife that he wasn't going to take an empty pot. But she asked him to be honest about what happened. Jim felt sick to his stomach for this was going to be the most embarrassing moment of his life. Still he knew his wife was right. He took his empty pot to the board room.

When Jim arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by the other executives. They were beautiful in all shapes and sizes. Jim put his empty pot on the floor and many of his colleagues laughed! A few even felt sorry for him.

When the CEO arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted his young executives. "My, what great plants, flowers and trees you have grown," said the CEO. "Today one of you will be appointed the next CEO!"

All of a sudden, the CEO spotted Jim at the back of the room beside his empty pot. He asked Jim to come to the front. Terrified, he thought, "The CEO knows I'm a failure! Maybe he will have me fired!" When Jim got to the front, the CEO asked him what had happened to his seed and so Jim explained his situation. The CEO asked everyone to sit down except Jim. He looked at him and then announced to the young executives, "Behold your next Chief Executive Officer! His name is Jim!"

Jim couldn't believe it. He couldn't even grow his seed.

"How could he be the new CEO?" the others said.

Then the CEO said, "One year ago today, I gave everyone in this room a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds; they were dead. Growing them was not possible. All of you, except Jim, have brought me plants and flowers and trees. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Jim was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new Chief Executive Officer!"

"I wrote on the door of my heart, 'Please do not enter'. Love came smiling and said: 'Sorry, I am an illiterate.'" --- Michael Paul

Inspire-Love-Be

35 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

100,000...the number of kilometres (62,500 miles for our 'unique' friends who do not believe in a universal measurement system) i have **driven the Kartavyaha (the name i have given the Honda Civic i drive which means duty in Sanskrit) over the last 2 1/2 years of seva (since Pujya Swami Tejomayananda has blessed me as an Acharya)**. Seeing this number evolve in the odometer lead me to **think of the evolution of numbers on the spiritual path. Naturally these are shared through our 87th E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (February 14, 2011) --- Countdown to Reality

- **Six** enemies of the mind in the form of desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy torture us incessantly - through cultivating awareness we learn to Love ourselves and others leaving these enemies no 'fuel to burn'
- **Five** debts we owe to nature, beings, society, ancestors and sages for incessantly blessing us with all we have and all we are - through appreciation, harmony and giving one is 'freed of these debts'
- **Four** aims of living which are to invoke morality, prosperity, enjoyment and culminating in Freedom which if not achieved all else were a waste - living fundamentally has only one purpose and that is Freedom, Realizing which all the other aims are realized and made redundant

- **Three** innate qualities of dullness, aggression and peace which are the fabric of every object, being and situation binding one to finitude - through surrendering more and more to peace, in time all these 'ropes are broken'
- **Two** perspectives being that of the object and that of the subject which forever leave one and all afflicted with the 'fear virus' - through regular and sincere reflection we realize that the object is dependent on the subject and so only the subject has an independent reality
- **One** Teacher, Body, Family, World, God, Love, Existence, Awareness, Joy - whether labelled or not, whether acknowledged or not, whether appreciated or not, if we meditate on One, Oneness will leave us no choice but to smile and smile and smile (smiling as i write this...)

"Thought is the most powerful form of creation in the world. With one thought, you can experience pain, misery or absolute terror. Without that thought, you experience wholeness, peace and divine connection. Allow your thoughts to be your best friends and together we will create heaven on earth." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

36 - Hari Om from Columbus!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

A blessing that comes with traveling is meeting different types of people. And in my travels i am coming across **quite a different type of people...a minor inclination for spirituality...a major inclination for marketing...combined to become self proclaimed gurus, life coaches, personality consultants, etc.** Well for this E-Vichara, i am going to play the same game! i am going to **set aside the endless evidence, logic and guidance 'authority' (our Scriptures/Masters) has taught me on the Nature of Oneness. Instead, i am going to go 'new age' styles and share unsupported observations on how we are all One,** through our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (February 21, 2011) --- Observations on One

- Whenever we have an enjoyable experience we encourage others to as well (i.e. eating at a tasty restaurant and then telling a friend to do the same) - if we are all not connected why would we put in such efforts
- Appreciating one's abundance, we are naturally inclined to create the same abundance (i.e. knowing how much one has in their bank account, knowing how much one needs to live, one then gives some of the excess away) - if we are truly separate why would another's joy bring us joy
- Seeing smiles, seeing tears, etc. becomes a catalyst for us to become smiley, teary, whatever - how can we be independent of each other when we are perpetually and utterly influenced by each other
- Each and every living entity in the Universe is 'looking in the same direction', towards greater peace - we may move in different directions (i.e. some seek peace through intoxication and others inspiration) yet these are divergent actions, not divergent attitudes
- Princes and paupers are united in their experience of sleep the 'great equalizer' - our differences are apparent (thinking based) not fundamental (energy based)
- We are all born with our hands closed (a-yoga or wanting nothing) and we will all die with our hands open (a-kshema or keeping nothing) - knowing we are One at birth and death, we have to reflect and realize we are One while living too

"The guru, for the purposes of meditation, is one who has guided you to detect and experience your divinity. He need not be a priest or a monk; he can be a friend, a leader in society, or an insignificant person in your neighbourhood. He who has through his life and work unveiled a greater vision, provided you with a thirst to aspire, or kindled in you a greater hunger to live and to face your problems courageously - he is your guru. The teacher may be a book, it may be a passing statement, it may be an experience in life itself. The teacher is the one whose remembrance helps you to become a critic of yourself. He is a guide who, at all moments of moral and ethical compromises, rises up somewhere in your memory to warn you not to fall

prey to temptations, and lends you courage to come away from the fascination of the moment and walk heroically the rugged path of righteousness." --- Swami Chinmayananda

Inspire-Love-Be

37 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Every year i go skiing at least once. The past couple of years i have skied Whistler Blackcomb in British Columbia. This year however, i am unable to on account of going to Piercy to teach instead of Vancouver. Awesomely, this past Saturday i was invited to go skiing and so could not resist such an opportunity! **While i was skiing i was thinking about nature, children, the body, the mind, you, and me. What connected with me, i am now connecting with all of you through our E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (February 28, 2011) --- Skiing is Believing!

- The ultimate purpose of Nature is to Be, the ultimate purpose of ours is to Be - knowing Nature and us to be One, we should Be with Nature and let Nature Be
- Children are a universal and understandable embodiment of purity - there is minimal identification with the body in regards to getting injured, there is minimal fear in the mind in regards to getting insulted
- Hunger, cold, fatigue, etc. limit the body when the body is not engaged - when we engage the body in an entertaining (ordinary) or enlightening (extraordinary) pursuit even pain becomes trivial
- There is nothing to fear but fear - when we think negatively we bind ourselves and when we think positively we liberate ourselves
- A true test of understanding an idea is to be able to make another understand the same - writing and sharing writings is a powerful sadhana (spiritual discipline)
- Applying all i learned above, i skied faster, sharper and free-er than ever before - Vedanta is the most practical, potent, peaceful Knowledge if one lives this

"I am thankful to all those who said no to me. Its because of them I did it myself." --- Einstein

Inspire-Love-Be

38 - Hari Om from Merrillville!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

In the business field there is a revenue model known as a pyramid scheme. The basics of this scheme is those on a higher level of the pyramid earn on the sales of those on a lower level on the pyramid. This revenue model is considered to be quite shady on account of the types of businesses utilizing this strategy (though at the end of the day almost all businesses operate within the framework of a **pyramid scheme**). **However, the idea is ingenious. Instead of linear growth, exponential growth!** Countless facets of nature adhere to this behaviour, unfortunately including cancer. Appreciating how powerful a pyramid scheme is, **why not employ this strategy to serve society? Race! RACE!! R A C E!!! Random Acts of Care, Engaged!, a cooler version of 'random acts of kindness',** is the inspiration for our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (March 7, 2011) --- Random Acts of Care, Engaged! (RACE!)

- Why is our kindness random - ideally our kindness should be unbiased and unending, though to evolve to this noble mindedness, being randomly kind is a start

- The more one gives to 'Life' the more one receives from 'Life' and so the belief that random acts of kindness only benefits others is myopic for the greater beneficiary is oneself - again, why should we randomly strive to benefit ourselves when every moment is an opportunity to benefit ourselves
- Whenever serving others, in whatever way, the only reciprocity we should ask or aspire for is that they too offer service, in whatever way - our Guru Parampara (Tradition of Teachers) is the epitome of gaining and giving
- As Mahatma Gandhi has taught us, "*There is not a single moment when man cannot serve,*" we should reflect on how we can contribute to society - all of us are extraordinary in at least one way and if we share this than our ordinary will be extraordinary
- We can be kind in infinite ways (i.e. holding doors, picking up litter, shovelling a neighbour's driveway, replying to emails, not sending emails, being on time, donating clothing, donating food, donating funds, teaching, etc.) - kindness can be expressed at the level of thought, word and deed and the most potent kindness at these levels are smiling (positive thinking), silence (accepting others) and serving (renouncing selfishness) respectively
- This E-Vichara will be sent by 1 recipient (me) to 1,354 recipients (you) and if these recipients send these thoughts to only 3 people then 4,062 will be privy to RACE! and if these recipients send this message to only 3 people then in a matter of a few minutes over 12,000 people can begin to RACE! - i have sent these thoughts so what are you waiting for...unlike the disproportionate benefit of a material pyramid scheme, a spiritual pyramid scheme is built on all benefiting sans anyone being expensed

We often receive 'emotional' emails, stories, presentations, etc. about how we have a **choice to forward the same on if you are friend and blah blah blah. A more pertinent choice is the choice we make every morning...to smile or succumb. Please read the following short story on the choice** of a wise old man...

Once, an old man was about to move into a retirement home. His wife recently passed away and so he chose to donate his home to be an orphanage. As he waited in the retirement home lobby for several hours, when he was told his room is ready he smiled. The lady that was taking him to his room was describing the small room to him, including the sheet that hung over the window which acted as a curtain. He reacted by saying, "I like it very much!"

"Sir, you haven't even seen the room yet", the lady replied.

"That has nothing to do with it", he gently responded. "Happiness is something I choose in advance. Whether or not I like the room does not depend on the furniture or the decor. Rather, depends on how I decide to see it. I have already decided in my mind that I like my room. I make such a decision every morning. I decide. I can spend my day in bed enumerating all the difficulties that I have with the parts of my body that no longer work very well or I can get up and give thanks for those parts that are still in working order. Everyday is a gift" ...he concluded.

"If the most positive and enthusiastic person you know is not yourself, something needs adjusting." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

39 - Hari Om from Portland!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

On March 11, 2011 our family in Japan suffered from an unimaginable natural disaster. **On March 14, 2011 the suffering continues. Such adversity teaches humanity in ways that prosperity never can. Reporting these truths is the 'call of duty'** of our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (March 14, 2011) --- Teachings through Tragedy

- Mother Nature's strength is unparalleled - humanity can never ever create what Mother Nature can (i.e. Niagara Falls, Great Barrier Reef, Mount Everest, etc.)
- Again, Mother Nature's strength is unparalleled - humanity can never ever destroy what Mother Nature can (i.e. through earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, etc.)
- Regardless of how we might try to prevent and prepare our creations (i.e. buildings, roads, ports, etc.) from Her strength, if Mother Nature wishes creation/destruction, we can do nothing - let us acknowledge, accept and appreciate the forces of Nature
- When one is thirsty, cold, tired, how trivial do matters of the world become (i.e. Dow Jones Industrial Average, Libyan political struggles, E-Vicharas, etc.) - knowing this, we should do whatever it takes to feed, shelter, comfort our struggling family for sympathy does not serve the world, empathy does
- For those unable to physically serve our aching brothers and sisters, sincerely support those able to provide fundamental necessities (i.e. governments, service organizations, empowered and expert citizens, etc.) - for those unable to physically serve our aching brothers and sisters, pray passionately to the One who can truly provide
- In times of great despair, people tend to forget their differences and help without question - sad how tragedy is needed before unity is wanted

As we think about those in need during emergency situations, let us also think about ourselves during daily affairs. Have you taken the Triple Filter Test?

In ancient Greece, Socrates was widely lauded for his wisdom. One day a friend ran up to him excitedly and said, "Socrates, do you know what I just heard about Diogenes?"

"Wait a moment," Socrates replied. "Before you tell me I'd like you to pass a little test. It's called the Triple Filter Test."

"Triple filter?" asked the friend.

*"That's right," Socrates continued. "Before you talk to me about Diogenes, let's take a moment to filter what you're going to say. The first filter is **Truth**. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?"*

"No," the man said. "Actually I just heard about it."

*"All right," said Socrates. "So you don't really know if it's true or not. Now let's try the second filter, the filter of **Goodness**. Is what you are about to tell me about Diogenes something good?"*

"No, on the contrary..."

"So," Socrates continued, "You want to tell me something about Diogenes that may be bad, even though you're not certain it's true?"

*The man became embarrassed. Socrates continued, "You may still pass the test though, because there is a third filter, the filter of **Usefulness**. Is what you want to tell me about Diogenes going to be useful to me?"*

"No, not really."

"Well," concluded Socrates, "If what you want to tell me is neither true nor good nor even useful, why tell it to me or anyone at all?"

The man was confused and ashamed.

*"Follow effective action with quiet reflection. From the quiet reflection will come even more effective action."
--- Peter F. Drucker*

Inspire-Love-Be

40 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

The past 2 weeks i have been touring NW Indiana and Portland. In NW Indiana i had the honour of speaking at the **Community Healthcare System's Cardiovascular Research Symposium on *Health is Wealth; Peace is Prosperity***. In Portland i had the honour of speaking at **Intel's Jones Farm Convention Center Auditorium on *Essential Gita***. The audience in the former was primarily patients. The audience in the latter was primarily parents. **Regardless of city, topic and audience, the message was singular, was simple. We have 2 choices and only 2 choices: to be peace-full OR peace-less. All else is details.** Choosing to reflect on choices, our choice E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (March 21, 2011) --- Only Two Choices

- The health of the mind has an unimaginable and unappreciated influence on the health of the body - scientists have studied how thoughts affect the formation of water crystals (positive thinking) or lack thereof (negative thinking) so imagine what such thinking does to an entity whose body is approximately 2/3 water
- No one wants to listen to someone who judges, who stresses, who nags, yet a great deal of our direct/indirect communication is engaging in this - a bond is developed, a relationship is sustained when one can be open with another and judging, stressing, nagging inhibits this
- Physicians are discovering more and more how patients that are connected to their families, prayer, the Divine heal more efficiently and effectively than those who are 'disconnected' - even if one's family is insincere, even if prayer is to an artificial entity, even if the Divine is a placebo, the effect of being connected is the all same
- We cannot live the life of another nor can anyone live our life - reflecting on this simple fact, we need to be aware of the difference between instructing (filled with subjective expectations) and guiding (filled with objective welfare)
- When we are ill, naturally there is associated pain - yet pain is a subjective phenomenon interpreted by the mind and if we engage the mind in a field greater than the pain, the pain fades to a indiscernible 'background music'
- By losing one's balance with a family member/s how can we ever be support for them - true concern demands true independence for only the strong are able to Love, not the ones who are swayed with each passing situation

"The two thieves of life are regret and fear. If we regret the past and fear the future, we crucify ourselves between them." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

41 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

***Yeh zindagi hai, ek juaa. Kabhi jeet bhi, kabhi har bhi* (This life is, a game. Sometimes there is victory. Sometimes there is defeat.)**. Knowing this, why do we brag when we win? Knowing this, why do we become bitter when we lose? **Developing dignity as a winner, is the lesson plan for our next E-Vichara. Developing dignity as a loser, is the lesson plan for our E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (March 28, 2011) --- Dignified Losing is Winning

- We explore losing first because throughout our lives we have all lost more than we have won and this trend will not change - appreciating that in a typical secular scenario (i.e. playing Monopoly, competing

for Valedictorian, seeking a significant other, etc.) there can only be one 'winner', why do we think we are so special that we should always win

- We explore losing first because our ego reacts exponentially more when losing than when winning - losing is an opportunity to deprive the ego of what it feeds on, superiority, inferiority, difference
- The glory of losing is invoking the motivation to be better, to keep on trying - no doubt we learn more in adversity than in prosperity
- Just as shaking hands before and after a game is encouraged in sports, just as bowing down before and after a fight is encouraged in martial arts, so too before and after any 'challenge' we should mentally appreciate, respect and identify with all those involved in the challenge - by openly praising the one who 'beat' us we dissolve jealousy, unforgiving and bitterness
- Repulsively, each one of us has made each one of us a competitor of each one of us (i.e. whose house is most expensive, whose spouse is most obedient, whose email address is most prominent, etc.) - as we reflect on the message of Vedanta we begin to 'look within' and evolve to understand that our only competitor is our lesser self
- We should elevate our thinking beyond traditional victory and defeat (i.e. of rewards) and engage in fundamental victory and defeat (i.e. of Joy) - living this, we free ourselves of the dependency on the world to inspire and become independently inspired for we are the ONLY Source of Joy

"A sharp tongue can cut your own throat." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

42 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Through our past E-Vichara we thought about being **dignified while losing for with such an attitude we can never lose.** Through this E-Vichara we will explore being dignified while winning. **Our Indian Cricket Team exemplified the right attitude while losing and winning at the 2011 International Cricket Council World Cup and so our tribute to the World Champions is our E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (April 4, 2011) --- Dignified Winning has no Losers

- Whenever we prevail as the winners of a competition we should appreciate the contribution of luck towards our victory (i.e. the coin toss, direction of the wind, changing surface of the playing field, etc.) - the implication is we will not take our victory so seriously and we will encourage our competitor/s to not take their defeat so seriously
- Whenever we prevail as the winners of a competition we should silently offer our gratitude to all parties who enabled us to be victorious (i.e. our parents who nourished us, our friends who tested us, our role models who inspired us, etc.) - just as true knowledge brings humility (vidya dadati vinayam) so too, true victory brings humility (jo jeeta wohi sikander)
- Our base ego thrives on winning for this is an opportunity to assert difference between the superior and inferior - naturally the base ego of another is sensitive upon losing so we should practice empathy by exercising silence or brotherhood
- The real playing field is our minds and the real triumph is being at peace - reflecting on this truth, if we are agitated we have won nothing real and if we are at peace we have lost nothing real
- Almost all secular situations are a 'zero sum game' whereby my gain is your loss and vice versa - almost all sacred situations are not a 'zero sum game' whereby my gain is your gain (i.e. the secret to being happy is to make others happy)
- Just as Sri Krishna eternally teaches that we do not control our results, that we do control our actions, we should open our minds and hearts and live this - let us find joy in competition not the 'labels' associated with competition for then we become the masters of joy

'What you give is what you get.' This **simple yet profound proverb is beautifully woven into a story for us to think about...which beggar are we?**

Once, a philanthropist moved into a small town. Knowing this, three beggars thought of approaching the wealthy man for help.

The first beggar went to the man and said: "O Lord! I want five dollars. Please give me five dollars."

The rich man was taken aback at this beggar's impudence. "What? You demand five dollars from me as though I owe you the money! How dare you? How can I afford to give five dollars to a single beggar? Here, take two dollars and go away," he said. The man went away with the two dollars.

The next beggar went to the philanthropist and said: "O Lord! I have not taken a square meal for the past ten days. Please help me."

"How much do you want?" asked the man.

"Whatever you give me, Lord," replied the beggar.

"Here, take this ten dollar bill. You can have decent food for at least three days." The beggar walked away with the ten dollars.

Then the third beggar came. "O Lord! I have heard about your noble qualities. Hence, I have come to see you. Men of such charitable disposition are verily the manifestations of Divinity on Earth," he said.

"Please sit down," said the rich man. "You appear to be tired. Please take this food," he said and offered food to the beggar. "Now please tell me what I can do for you."

"O Lord," replied the beggar, "I merely came to meet such a noble personage that you are. You have given me this rich food already. What more can I ask for? You have already shown extraordinary kindness towards me. May the Divine bless you!"

Moved by the beggar's spirit, the philanthropist requested the beggar to remain with him, built a decent house for him in his own compound and looked after him for the rest of his life...

In this story, the Divine is the philanthropist and we are the beggars.

The selfish person is full of vanity, full of arrogance, full of desires. He/she demands only worldly objects from the Divine. Since such a person has the good sense to approach the Divine, he/she is blessed with some part of the desired objects. Though even these very soon pass away, just as the two dollars the first beggar received were spent before nightfall.

The average person approaches the Divine for relief from the sufferings of the world. Such a person is better than the first for he/she is willing to accept the plans of the Divine. To such a person the Divine grants full relief from suffering and much prosperity.

The selfless person just remembers the Divine. Such a person does not ask. Filled with the spirit of independence, contentment and acceptance the Divine blesses such a person with the Divine...Infinite Peace

See you all next week!

"Nothing is more revolting than the majority; for it consists of few vigorous predecessors, of knaves who accommodate themselves, of weak people who assimilate themselves, and the mass that toddles after them without knowing the least what it wants." --- Goethe

Inspire-Love-Be

43 - Hari Om from Flint!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Around 4 months ago, we explored the eternal niyamas (active commitments or do's) of the **eternal Yoga Sutras of the eternal Patanjali**. Now, we complete this exploration by embracing the eternal yamas (passive commitments or don'ts) from the same Scripture, Master, E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (April 11, 2011) --- Passive Commitments

- **Ahimsa** (non-harming) is the practice of not violating any entity, from objects to ourselves, in any form, from financial to mental - ahimsa should not be limited to non-hurting for often we need to cause hurt to help (i.e. cancelling a credit card, cleaning a wound, correcting a thesis, etc.)
- **Satya** (non-lying) is the practice of not misinterpreting an object, being or situation with the colour of one's ego - tuning into an entity, we are enabled to be honest and naturally this begins with oneself
- **Asteya** (non-stealing) is the practice of not claiming ownership where ownership is already known - where appreciation is, especially of other's efforts, asteya cannot be
- **Brahmacharya** (non-wasting) is the practice of not weakening oneself in the pursuit of pleasures (i.e. dependency on the senses) - to engage in the pursuit of Peace we need unparalleled physical, emotional and intellectual stamina and losing oneself in the mundane is a total, toxic, tragic waste
- **Aparigraha** (non-collecting) is the practice of not having what is not needed - initially this may be a harsh message, yet if we sincerely reflect on the billions who do not even have what they need, we will come to realize that aparigraha makes our lives simpler and the lives of the needy liveable
- When we invoke Self Knowledge, self ignorance is dissolved, Oneness prevails and duality becomes impotent - then one does not practice yamas, rather these become the fabric of one

"The diminutive chains of habit are seldom heavy enough to be felt until they are too strong to be broken" --- Samuel Johnson

Inspire-Love-Be

44 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

The religiously unaware often claim that Hindus are cow worshipers. **Such an understanding is limited and limiting. Within Sanatana Dharma (Eternal Be-ing), the true name and spirit of 'Hinduism', all beings, animals, plants and stones are worshiped. All are an expression of the One, of the Infinite. Appreciating all as Divine, all become a source of learning.** From the sun above to the ants below. Especially the ants below! Especially the ants below? How we can learn from ants is how we can learn from our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (April 18, 2011) --- Ant's Philosophy

- Motivational teacher Jim Rohn is the original thinker of Ant's Philosophy conveying his open mindedness - an open mind is a receptive mind is a motivated mind
- Whenever an obstacle is put before ants, ants either go around the obstacle or over the obstacle - we are never blessed with a challenge without being blessed with the capabilities to face the challenge so **never give up**
- All summer ants think winter, preparing physically - appreciating good times do not last rather good people do, we should **look ahead** by investing in what we need not what we want
- All winter ants think summer, preparing mentally - appreciating tough times do not last rather tough people do, we should **stay positive** by investing in ideals not impressions
- Ants do not entertain confining attitudes based on comparisons and quotas to govern their lives - we should **do all we can** for this attitude becomes a catalyst to prosperity and peace

- By treating living as lessons to know Life we become the most sincere of students - only the sincere discover Life, discover solace

"Ideas won't work unless 'you' do." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

45 - Hari Om from Piercy!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Krishnalaya is the 1st Chinmaya Mission ashram our Pujya Swami Chinmayananda established outside of Bharat. Krishnalaya is 1 of a few ashrams our Pujya Swami Tejomayananda teaches at for more than a week a year. Krishnalaya is where i am reflecting on these Masters more and writing to you, sharing insights into the subtlety of imparting Vedanta (Science of Life), manifested through our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (April 25, 2011) --- Knowing the Knower

- Each and every science teaches about expressions of Life (i.e. physics, athletics, rituals, etc.) whereas only Vedanta teaches about Life (i.e. Existence-Awareness-Joy) - the expressions of Life are objective, tangible, malleable whereas Life is Subjective, Sublime, Being
- The sole message of Vedanta is we are Infinite, yet the sole means of knowing this is finite (i.e. our equipments) - the Truth defined is the Truth defiled
- Imagine what an unimaginable challenge a Vedantic Guru (Teacher) faces having to use the finite (i.e. Scriptures, words, thoughts, etc.) to raise a shishya (disciple) beyond the finite - imagine what an even more unimaginable achievement a Guru humbly embraces having transformed the shishya into the Guru (i.e. the Guru Parampara within Santana Dharma and especially within Chinmaya Mission)
- A student enters the forum of Vedanta with limiting preconceived notions, expectations infused with ignorance, sheer indiscipline and on and on and on, yet a Vedantic Teacher accepts all smilingly - what mettle such a visionary (the Teacher not the student hahaha!) has invoked, inculcated, internalized
- A Vedantic Acharya gives all of his/her resources, time and effort to the upliftment and unfoldment of those he/she has no relation to - in turn the Acharya is given praise and comparison, dakshina (donations) and nothing, bhikshas (meals) and more bhikshas so think about how vigilant an Acharya must be to not be swayed by the movement of maya
- Patience (no further elaboration is needed nor is relevant) - perseverance (no further elaboration is needed nor is relevant)

Narayana samarambham, Vyasa Sankara madhyamam. Asmada Acarya paryantam, vande Guru paramparam.

Salutations to the lineage of Teachers commencing with Bhagavan Narayana, with Vyasa and Sankara in the middle and continuing up to my immediate Teacher.

Why should we salute our Guru Parampara? They have taught us Yoga - Knowledge which transforms our belief of being limited to knowing we are Limitless! And from this true Yoga has come pseudo-yoga which most of us are exposed to and are attracted to. Even **such diluted yoga has physical and mental benefits.** Please read the below abstract on the **Yoga of Awareness in the Management of Fibromyalgia published by the Department of Anesthesiology and Peri-operative Medicine, Oregon Health & Science University, Portland -**

A mounting body of literature recommends that treatment for fibromyalgia (FM) encompass medications, exercise and improvement of coping skills. However, there is a significant gap in determining an effective counterpart to pharmacotherapy that incorporates both exercise and coping. The aim of this randomized controlled trial was to evaluate the effects of a comprehensive yoga intervention on FM symptoms and coping. A sample of 53 female FM patients were randomized to the 8-week Yoga of Awareness program (gentle poses, 'meditation', breathing exercises, coping instructions, group discussions) or to wait-listed

standard care. Data were analyzed by intention to treat. At post-treatment, women assigned to the yoga program showed significantly greater improvements on standardized measures of FM symptoms and functioning, including pain, fatigue, mood, pain catastrophizing, acceptance and other coping strategies. This pilot study provides promising support for the potential benefits of a yoga program for women with FM.

"If you are lost in thoughts then that is agitation. If thoughts are lost in you, then that is meditation." --- Swami Tejomayananda

Inspire-Love-Be

46 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Life is elemental: Existence-Awareness-Joy just Be-ing. Living is detailed: hearing-reflecting-meditating to know Life. Our understanding of Life and living is complex: energy, random, temporary, eating, drinking, **TRYING to be merry, etc.** **We all actually have only two options when engaging in any and every experience. Such simple framing is the framework** of our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (May 2, 2011) --- Only Two Options

- In life we either get stuff we expect or get stuff we did not expect - if we get what we expected, why sulk for we should have planned for this and if we get what we did not expect, why sulk for we could not have planned for this
- In life we can either do something about a situation or we cannot do something about a situation - if we can do something, we should and not stress and if we cannot do something, we shouldn't and not stress
- In life we can either learn to adapt to others or we cannot learn to adapt to others - if we learn to adapt, we reduce suffering for ourselves and others and if we do not learn to adapt, we raise suffering for ourselves and others
- In life we can either appreciate objects as they are or we cannot appreciate objects as they are - if we appreciate, we facilitate living and if we do not appreciate, we fabricate living
- In life we can either accept our circumstances or we cannot accept our circumstances - if we accept, living is delightful and if we do not accept, living is detestable
- In life we can either forgive beings or we cannot forgive beings - if we forgive, we free ourselves of emotional baggage and if we do not forgive, we fasten ourselves with emotional baggage

"It is only possible to live happily ever after if we choose to do so on a day-to-day basis." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

47 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

The past few weeks the universe has been teaching me to become simpler. When i was in San Jose, at one of the homes i stayed in the shower was not working and so i had to take a bucket bath. When i was in Niagara, there was a wind storm causing a power outage and so i had to read by sunlight. When i was with my nephew, as he was opening his birthday gifts he was discarding the money given and keeping the envelopes so he can draw on them. **Reflecting on these 'back to basics' lessons is the syllabus for our E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (May 9, 2011) --- The Old School

- We are often handled and even more often hypnotized into believing quantity is more valuable than quality - though a bucket bath involves far less water than a shower, one is able to clean oneself just as thoroughly for the hands become more vigorous
- We are often handled and even more often hypnotized into believing speed is more valuable than satisfaction - knowing one has a limited supply of water, one slows down and enjoys each scoop of water falling onto the body
- In traditional Vedic culture, one awoke with the rising of the sun and slept with the setting of the sun, creating a perfect tuning with the circadian rhythm - our addiction to electricity is a catalyst for apathy towards our inner nature and outer nature
- We are affected by the universe and we affect the universe - the joy of 'feeling' the sun on one's eyes and mind is more 'illuminating' than any other light
- Our understanding of utility value and perceived value is now valueless and has encouraged us to be value-less - a child only wants what can be used and nothing else
- If society believes pursuing outer growth is more worthy than pursuing inner growth, only we are to blame for this tragedy - by choosing to be straight-forward, surprised, sincere we return to innocence, return to the path of the Infinite

Continuing with the idea of what we can learn from the universe, please read the following short story on the Carrot, Egg and Coffee...

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how living was so hard. She did not know how was she was going to survive and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting, tired of struggling. As soon as one problem was solved, a new one arose.

Her mother took her to the kitchen. She then filled 3 pots with water and placed them on the stove and turned the heat on. Soon, the pots came to a boil. In the first she placed carrots. In the second she placed eggs. And in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil without saying a word.

After twenty minutes or so she turned the stove off. She took the carrots out of the pot and placed them in a bowl. She took the eggs of the pot and placed them in a bowl as well. Finally, she took the coffee out of the pot and put this in a bowl too.

Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me what you see."

"Carrots, eggs and coffee," she replied.

Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted they were soft. The mother then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the egg was hard. Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted the rich flavour. Confused, the daughter asked, "What does this all mean?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity: boiling water. Yet each reacted differently. The carrots went in strong, hard, unrelenting. However, they came out weak, soft, vulnerable. The eggs went in fragile however, came out hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique. After they were in boiling water, they changed the water.

"Which are you?" she asked the daughter. "When faced with adversity, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean? Are you the carrot that seems strong but with adversity wilts? Are you the egg that begins with a malleable heart but with adversity becomes bitter? Or are you the coffee bean which is fragrant and flavourful and with adversity becomes even more so, changing the very circumstance that brings the hardships?"

"The only true disability in life is a bad attitude." --- Scott Hamilton

Inspire-Love-Be

48 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Physical health is not determined by how much food one eats rather how much food one digests. In the same way, **spiritual health is not determined by how much knowledge one hears (information) rather how much knowledge one lives (wisdom). And the commencement, catalyst and conclusion of our Inner Journey is vichara. To celebrate our 100th E-Vichara together**, let us reflect on reflection through our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (May 16, 2011) --- Vichara, Vichara, Vichara...96 more times...Vichara!

- To engage in vichara one needs no dravya (materials such as idols, priests, foods, etc.), only an assertive intellect – to engage in vichara one needs no muhurta (timings such as stages of the moon cycle, alignment of the stars, periods of the day, etc.) only an active intellect
- Depending on dravya and muhurta to engage in vichara is an unambiguous excuse to avoid this sadhana (spiritual discipline) – ignoring sadhana one will unambiguously wait for Enlightenment forever, remaining ignorant eternally
- Wrong thinking is the disease that infects the mind with vices whereas right thinking is the medicine that infuses the mind with values - All can, all must, engage in vichara, always
- A catapult to begin vichara is mauna (suggested solitude schedule: 1 hour a day in silence sans entertainment, sans media, sans people, just oneself) – we have to make time to rediscover peace or we should prepare ourselves to face restlessness
- Instead of asking futile questions like, ‘Who said what about whom?’, we should ask fundamental questions like, ‘What is death? Am I happy? Who am I?’ – we should never be satisfied with superficial answers to these life-moving questions, rather should continue with these questions until our life is moved
- Synonyms of vichara are mananam, reflection, conscious thinking, assimilation – eligibility for vichara is being a human being and what is hilarious about this truth is that we need an email to awaken us, remind us, encourage us to be...human

Glad you could join me for the celebration of our 100th E-Vichara. You will have noted that of late i have been writing a fair amount about celebrating (i.e. serving at 20 of our Chinmaya Mission Centers, completion of 3 years of Discussions in Buffalo/Toronto and now 100 E-Vicharas). **Now some may be thinking how can one associate satsanga, seva and/or sadhana with a celebration? A celebration is about joy and there is simply more joy in these direct means to joy. More than promotions, more than anniversaries, more than birthdays. Actually, the real way to celebrate worldly achievements is by creating satsanga, seva and sadhana. Think about it...**

"We learn more by looking for the answer to a question and not finding it than we do from learning the answer itself." --- Lloyd Alexander

Inspire-Love-Be

49 - Hari Om from Dunnville!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

Fasting is a discipline which all religions embrace, yet none as much as Sanatana Dharma (the commercial term is Hinduism). Concurrently though, there is much ambiguity, much anguish and much atrophy revolving around this practice. **Aspiring to diffuse the meaningless traditions of fasting, aspiring to infuse meaning to the traditions of fasting, our E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (May 23, 2011) --- Purposeful Fasting

- To fast means to not engage in a specific activity (i.e. eating food, speaking needlessly, etc.) - what we fast from should be an activity we regularly engage in, an activity we do not have control over (i.e. to a moderate eater, fasting from food is not demanding enough, to a moderate speaker, fasting from speaking is not demanding enough, etc.)
- We often claim we can be at peace without a specific activity (i.e. not playing golf, not buying purses, etc.) - prove this claim by 'walking away' from this activity otherwise we are simply lying to ourselves, we are simply addicts
- When fasting from a specific activity, whenever the thought of that activity arises, we should refocus on the Divine not the disturbance (i.e. if fasting from food, when hunger arises, we should not think about the hunger, rather the hunger should serve as a reminder for us to remember the Divine, etc.) - remembering the Divine in (unchallenged) an Ashram is easy, remembering the Divine while cleaning (challenged) the Ashram is real
- Ekadashi symbolizes the 5 organs of perception (i.e. hearing, etc.), the 5 organs of response (i.e. speaking, etc.) and the mind - upavas symbolizes 'sitting near the Divine'
- The key to successful fasting is to give the mind another activity, a purpose, an altar - when the mind is 'full' there is no opportunity to think about being 'empty' ("*When the heart is full, the stomach is full.*" -- *- Pujya Swami Tejomayananda*)
- One should not fast for the sake of fasting, rather to develop purity of mind (anagha) to cultivate clarity of knowledge (bharata) - fast for through fasting we rediscover how we are truly Independent

Another practice which we all participate in and **unfortunately are participating in more and more because we believe this is more and more normal, is stress. Please read the following short anecdote on the crippling effects of choosing stress...**

Once, a young lady confidently walked around a room while leading and explaining stress management to an audience with a raised glass of water. Everyone knew she was going to ask the ultimate question, 'Half empty or half full?'...

She fooled them all! "How heavy is this glass of water?" she inquired with a smile.

Answers called out ranged from 8 oz. to 20 oz.

She replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long I hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes."

She continued, "And that's the way it is with stress. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, as the burden becomes increasingly heavy, we won't be able to carry on."

"The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence." --- Ravindranath Tagore

Inspire-Love-Be

50 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

You racist! You sexist!! You materialist!!! You blah blah blah blah blah. **Society tells us not to discriminate yet we do. Seers tell us to discriminate yet we do not. And confusion ensues followed closely by conflict. Conflict inside, naturally leading to conflict outside.** Exploring the myths and magic of discrimination is our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (May 30, 2011) --- Developing Discrimination???

- Discrimination is only applicable in the construct of duality (dvaita) and never in unity (advaita) - discriminating is the intellect engaged in focusing on separation, what disconnects us not what connects us
- To truly appreciate Oneness we need to become intensely aware of how random and trivial our differences are - a newborn has zero control over their age, gender, colour, wealth, family, ethnicity, religion, etc. yet right from birth our judgements begin (i.e. he/she is dark, he/she is poor, he/she is a he or she)
- Wherever discrimination is, there is judgement - wherever judgement is, there is non-acceptance, non-appreciation, non-ananda
- Everyone is always discriminating on futile grounds (see above) and the return on investment of resources, time and effort is wasteful, is sorrowful - fascinatingly, one of the fundamental qualities of a seeker of Solace is discrimination (viveka)
- What distinguishes secular discrimination and sacred discrimination is the former is a 'game between finite teams' whereas the latter is a 'game between a finite team and a Infinite team' - the first, foremost and forte sadhana (spiritual discipline) we can embrace to cease from identifying with the limited and to commence identifying with the Limitless is to be intimately aware of change (i.e. the spinning world, the spinning society, the spinning body, all is spinning)
- When we begin to acknowledge change we begin to understand that our fundamental Nature is changeless (one has to be outside of change to know change) - the evolution of such a strategy is to then refocus (vairagya) our resources, time and effort to That which does not change for the return on this investment is perpetual Peace

"All differences in this world are of degree, and not of kind, because oneness is the secret of everything" --- Swami Vivekananda

Inspire-Love-Be

51 - Hari Om from inside my Heart!

i hope this email finds everyone well...

As i reflect on the upcoming completion of 3 1/2 years of teaching Vedanta, 2 years of writing the E-Vichara and commencement of 3 months of relentless travel, **i have understood more about the ego and Self than i could ever dream of. These insights are intimate, intense and Infinite. And since i am writing from inside my heart, i am sharing with one and all what this heart has experienced being an Acharya**, in the form of our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (June 6, 2011) --- Seeker or Servant?

- The scope and depth of service is endless and soon after making service a lifestyle the demand on one in the form of questions, administration, advice, engagements, feedback, etc. is ruthless - sheer time management is the only way to survive such a gauntlet
- When one is physically younger than 3/4 of who one is teaching and the subject matter is Life and living, one has to work significantly harder to ensure the message offered is piercing through the wall of preconceived notions that older is wiser, that biological age and spiritual age are equatable, that quantity of experiences and quality of experiences are comparable - acceptance, endurance and humour are the virtues the mind is to be infused with to 'keep serving'
- People are rattled by change, resist change, revolt against change, especially when this change involves being 'left' by one who is changing - the essence of yoga, the essence of kaizen, the essence of growth is change and the most important change one can make is from dependently happy to independently happy
- To unreservedly offer one's resources, time and efforts to encourage individual and communal peace only to have these denigrated by an individual's and/or community's self interest, levels one's whole personality - when one is hit fervently and frequently one realizes this is a blessing which transforms a servant into a seeker

- As one serves publicly, in time one receives much praise and concurrently much judgement - the ego is nourished by this ever changing feeling of superiority and inferiority and the only relief from such confusion is surrender of doership
- The Infinite is manifested through Knowledge is manifested through Scriptures is manifested through a Guru and this is simply the nature of life - the sole means to rediscovering the Infinite is invoking a Guru who can/will navigate the Scriptures, reveal Knowledge and this is simply the nature of seeking

Our next E-Vichara will commemorate the completion of 2 years of E-Vicharas! 2 years of reflecting together!! 2 years of realizing together!!! In Vedantic tradition, teachings are given free of charge. No price can be attached to the guidance a Teacher offers to live more peacefully. Still, out of gratitude and fulfillment the student seeks to give back. **This offering – Guru Dakshina – is to express appreciation for the Teacher’s sacrifice and service and is used to further the sharing of Spiritual Knowledge.** Each E-Vichara we write requires approximately 2 hours. Time is invested in thinking of content, typing emails, maintaining contact lists, etc. In a year this translates to over 100 hours just on the E-Vichara. **The greatest wealth we have is our peace of mind. And if you feel the E-Vichara has aided you in gaining and retaining this wealth amongst the endless 'thieves' we are incessantly facing then give whole heartedly...**

How?

Cheque/Check (please make out and mail to the following address)

Chinmaya Niagara
5743 Valley Way
Niagara Falls, Ontario
Canada, L2E 1X7

Chinmaya Niagara is a registered non-profit charity. Your donations are humbly accepted and in turn a tax-deductible receipt will be issued.

"We make ourselves a slave of the world because we want to take from the world." --- Swami Chinmayananda

Inspire-Love-Be

52 - Hari Om Everyone,

i hope this email finds everyone well...

This week is an auspicious time in Western New York and Southern Ontario! In Buffalo we have completed our study of 1/4 of Vivekachudamani. In Niagara we have completed our study of Srimad Bhagavad Gita's Chapter 2 and 4 as well as 1/3 of Vishnu Sahasranama. In Hamilton we have completed our study of Srimad Bhagavad Gita's Chapter 2. In Mississauga we have completed our study of Tattva Bodha. In Toronto we have completed our study of Tattva Bodha. And if one were to **summarize the teachings from all these scriptures into a single message this would be:**

**tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya
upadeksyanti te jnanam jnaninas tattvadarsinah**
Srimad Bhagavad Gita - Adhyayah 4 - Shloka 34

**Know that by long prostration, by question and service,
the wise who have realized the Truth will instruct thee in that Knowledge.**
The Celestial Song - Chapter 4 - Verse 34

Continuing to invoke and evoke auspiciousness, we **explore the role of a Guru in our pursuit to transcend the ego, through our 104th E-Vichara...**

- Traditionally, a disciple repairs to a Guru carrying dry twigs over one's head and upon reaching one's Guru offers these at His feet symbolizing that only He can burn the Self ignorance of the disciple - upon offering the dry twigs the disciple prostrates fully (sa-ashta-anga: with feet, hands, stomach, chest, head and MIND) symbolizing the openness to receive, the openness to Realize
- Almost all the Scriptures of Sanatana Dharma revolve around a dialogue, NOT A DEBATE, between Guru and disciple for a Guru was once a disciple and empathizes with the struggle of a disciple - the teachings of a Guru need to be reflected upon again and again and again before approaching the Guru with doubts, NOT sending a thoughtless email with a question and expecting a thoughtful email with an answer within apathetic time frames
- A Guru is Content and thereby independent of the need of any object, being or situation - a disciple is encouraged to serve a Guru not for the Guru's benefit rather for the welfare of the disciple for only through service does a disciple have the opportunity to tune into the Life and teachings of a Guru
- Infinity, Divinity, Knowledge, Scriptures and Guru are all synonymous, are all sacred, are all Supreme - intellectual knowledge and intimate knowledge are as different as information and wisdom, a disciple only has information, a Guru only has wisdom
- If we think deeply and carefully on all the learning/knowledge we have absorbed in our lifetime we will appreciate that all has been connected to a teacher so who do we think we are to claim and in some erroneous cases proclaim that we have walked the spiritual path or will walk the spiritual path sans a Guru - only one who truly lives the Truth can truly inspire another to do the same and all else is theatrics
- We need not entertain drama or confusion or anguish about what the purpose of living is for the sole and sweeping purpose is Enlightenment - as a disciple strives to grow within, the disciple's understanding evolves to appreciate that he/she is not the doer, rather 'all is done' and in time we will all live this Freedom, we just have to choose when

And with this E-Vichara we commemorate the completion of 2 years of E-Vicharas! 2 years of reflecting together!! 2 years of realizing together!!! In Vedantic tradition, teachings are given free of charge. No price can be attached to the guidance a Teacher offers to live more peacefully. Still, out of gratitude and fulfillment the student seeks to give back. **This offering – Guru Dakshina – is to express appreciation for the Teacher's sacrifice and service and is used to further the sharing of Spiritual Knowledge.** Each E-Vichara we write requires approximately 2 hours. Time is invested in thinking of content, typing emails, maintaining contact lists, etc. In a year this translates to over 100 hours just on the E-Vichara. **The greatest wealth we have is our peace of mind. And if you feel the E-Vichara has aided you in gaining and retaining this wealth amongst the endless 'thieves' we are incessantly facing then give whole heartedly...**

How?

Cheque/Check (please make out and mail to the following address)

Chinmaya Niagara
5743 Valley Way
Niagara Falls, Ontario
Canada, L2E 1X7

Chinmaya Niagara is a registered non-profit charity. Your donations are humbly accepted and in turn a tax-deductible receipt will be issued.

And to conclude our year of reflection together, i am sharing the Dedication for *Bleeding the Truth* (a commentary on Bhaja Govindam i wrote while studying at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya). This **Dedication applied to *Bleeding the Truth*, applies to Year 2 of the E-Vichara and will continue to apply eternally...**

The contents herein are an attempt at lending a hand to Swami Tejomayananda who is carrying the ancient Guru-Disciple tradition which carries all of humanity...

Dedicated to the Undefeatable Truth in the form of my revered Guruji...

"According to the occidental idea, the master serves as the medium for imparting knowledge or Truth which is the final goal. As Aristotle said, "Dear is Plato, but dearer still is the Truth." But in India Truth and the Guru are completely identified. There is no Truth apart from the Guru and to know and serve the latter with whole-hearted devotion is also to serve the cause of the Truth." --- Unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

