

E-Vichara

Year 6

Learning to see with more than our eyes...

1 - Namah Te Everyone!

i hope this message finds everyone well...

Hinduism is a religion...err a philosophy...err a way of life...?

If we do not know what a subject is how can reflect on the same?

If we do not reflect on a subject how can we practice the same?

If we do not practice a subject how can we be transformed by the same?

For the sake of knowing (shravanam), for the sake of reflecting (mananam), for the sake of practicing (nidhidhasanam) we **commence our 6th year of seeking together through the patience of the E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (May 5, 2014) --- The Vision, The Expression, The Achievement: SD X 3

- *Sanatana Dharma* (advaita) - the vision of Sanatana Dharma is perpetual betterment for being Divine is not a lifestyle rather is Life - what vision could possibly be more comprehensive, universal and beneficial than aspiring to evolve to Oneness with each and every experience
- Just as one with sight can see the path in front of them so too one with vision can see the purpose in front of them - if our actions do not create purity and/or peace our actions are a waste
- *Self Development* (yoga) - the expression of perpetual betterment is self development or making who we believe we are, stronger - though we listen/read that we are Infinite we feel like the body, mind, intellect, ego and so the more we raise these equipments the more we realize our Infinite potential
- Driving and development are comparable in that when the tires (body), the steering wheel (mind) and the driver (intellect) are aligned there is efficiency and effectiveness - when there is no separation within there is no separation without
- *Studied Discipline* (sadhana) - the achievement of self development is studied discipline for without outer guidance and inner effort one simply does not grow - study of the scriptures directs us on how to change and changing directs us to sincerer study of the scriptures
- Whether with science, sports or stocks, every worldly achiever embraced studied discipline in their field - if one is honest one will be sensitive to the greatest need for a Guru to encourage us with this greatest challenge of Enlightenment

"To attain God is the end and aim of human life. Therefore, everything that helps man to reach his goal is 'dharma' and whatever hinders him from reaching it is 'adharma'." ~ Swami Tapovanam

Inspire-Love-Be

2 - Namah Te from Cranbury!

i hope this message finds everyone well...

One of the original and authoritative scriptures on contemplation is Shrimad Bhagavad Gita.

Throughout the 18 chapters Bhagavan Krishna shares insights into the preparation and process, problems and Peace that are involved with contemplation.

Now, 'everyone' is a writer and teacher on contemplation. And this illusion is dangerous.

Contemplation is not a casual affair rather is the end of evolution. To encourage us to not succumb to a diluted interpretation of contemplation, to encourage us to be vigilant to embrace the fullest practice of contemplation, we explore what meditation is not, through our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (May 19, 2014) — Myths of Meditation

- Meditation is not a *asana* - Whether a posture or a run, *exercise* is for the health of the body and one should not assign a greater or lesser value - contemplation is a discipline whereby one identifies with Brahman (Existence) and so releases identification with the body
- Meditation is not a *prana* - Whether deep inhalation or rapid exhalation, *controlled breathing* is relaxation for the body-mind complex and one should not assign a greater or lesser value - contemplation is a discipline whereby one establishes themselves in balance and so relaxation is redundant
- Meditation is not a *karma* - Whether a good person or a great person, *action* is to purify the mind and one should not assign a greater or lesser value -contemplation is a discipline whereby one transcends incompleteness and naturally then, the desire to experience any secular or sacred success
- Meditation is not a *kriya* - Whether chanting a Godly name or inquiring into a Godly virtue, *directed thinking* is to strengthen the mind-intellect complex and one should not assign a greater or lesser value - contemplation is a discipline whereby one realizes there is only the Infinite and so chanter, chanting, chanted to, etc. all merge to One
- Meditation is not a *bhava* - Whether changing to be nobility or an Acharya, *becoming* is for the growth of the intellect and one should not assign a greater or lesser value - contemplation is a discipline whereby one tunes into Being curing themselves of the relentless disease of becoming
- Meditation is *svabhava* - Meditation is a noun encapsulating one's infinite, constant, unconditional *nature* that is Joy - contemplation is a verb that is the means (*sadhana*) to the ends (*sadhya*)

A Cup of Coffee on the Wall

I sat with a friend in a high-class coffee shop in a small town near Venice, Italy. As we enjoyed our coffee a man entered and sat at an empty table beside us. He called the waiter and placed his order saying, "Two cups of coffee, one of them for me and one on the wall." We heard this order with some interest and observed that he was served with his cup yet paid for two. As soon as he left the waiter pasted a piece of paper on the wall with the words 'A Cup of Coffee.'

While we were still there two other men entered and ordered three cups of coffee, "Two on the table and one on the wall." They had only two cups of coffee yet paid for three and left. This time too the waiter pasted a piece of paper on the wall with the words 'A Cup of Coffee.'

This gesture seemed to be a norm at this place. However, this was unique and perplexing for us. Since we had nothing to do with the matter we finished our coffee, paid the bill and left.

After a few days we happened to visit the coffee shop again. While we were enjoying our coffee a 'different' looking man entered. The way this man was dressed did not match the standard nor the atmosphere of the coffee shop. Poverty was evident from the look on his face and his attire. As he seated himself, he looked at the wall and said, "A cup of coffee from the wall please." The waiter served a coffee to this man with customary respect. The man drank his coffee and left without paying. We were amazed to watch this when we also noticed the waiter took off a piece of paper from the wall and disposed of this. Then we realized what this custom was all about. The mindful respect for the needy shown by the inhabitants of this town filled our eyes with tears.

Coffee is not a need of our society nor a necessity of life. The point to note is when we take pleasure in any blessing perhaps we also need to remember those who would appreciate the same blessing as much as we do yet cannot afford to do so...

"Prayer is the spring-field for all devotion. Thoughts constantly flowing in love towards the supreme is devotion." ~ Swami Chinmayananda

3 - Namah Te from San Jose!

i hope this message finds everyone well...

In 1990 the world famous band *Depeche Mode* released the world famous song *Enjoy the Silence*. **What is even more famous than this band or song is people's fear of silence.**

Whether leaving the television on while going to sleep or making fun of awkward silences we do not know what to do with quietude! Instead of escaping this experience let us embrace this experience. So be quiet, we are beginning our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (June 2, 2014) --- Engage the Silence

- One of the sadhana-s (disciplines) encouraged in Sanatana Dharma (the vision of perpetual betterment) to reach the sadhya (Perfection) is mauna (silence) - when our mouth is quiet this evolves to be a catalyst for our mind to be quiet and in such an environment thoughts of the Self arise
- **Be** - the highest engagement of silence is when we release ourselves of any dependency to move, to change, to exert and we just naturally Be - Sat (Existence) is ever being, Chit (Awareness) is ever being and so when we return to our ever being Nature we rediscover ever being Ananda (Joy)
- **Observe** - the next highest engagement of silence is when we observe external movement, change, effort for this trains us to observe internal movement, change, effort - through this practice we become fully aware that what we observe is different than us and this includes each and every limit we see
- **Ask** - the next highest engagement of silence is when we ask ourselves fundamental questions on Life and living (i.e. *What is the purpose of all of this? Am I happy? Etc.*) - everyone is so busy in execution that research is lost and such a strategy keeps one an enquirer, keeps one from maturing to an inquirer
- **Chant** - the next highest engagement of silence is when we direct our thoughts towards the soothing/protecting/inspiring by chanting a Divine name - as we think so we become and by thinking of the Peaceful we invoke peace
- **Experience** - the next highest engagement of silence is when we are sensitive to the experiences of our senses (i.e. the sound of our footsteps, the colours of a fire, etc.) - by paying attention to the interaction of the senses with objects we feel more complete and our wants for objects is quietened

"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen." ~ Winston Churchill

Inspire-Love-Be

4 - Namah Te from Flint!

i hope this message finds everyone well...

Visualize the past time you went to a Mandira (Temple)...you saw the illuminated sign from a distance; drove onto the semi-paved property; parked the car at a distance; walked towards the building; pushed the glass doors open; smelled the combination of incense and flowers and sweets; placed your shoes on the white wooden self; walked onto the soft red carpet; slowly moved towards the sanctum; folded your hands; looked at the icon from the feet to the eyes; **studied the prabhavali...prabhavali? What in the world is a prabhavali?**

Hence our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (June 16, 2014) --- What is a Prabhavali?

- Physically a prabhavali is the arch surrounding an icon of the Creator - a halo is similar to a prabhavali in drawing one's attention to the peace radiating from the Divine
- A prabhavali (*prabha* [glory] + *avali* [rows]) is in the shape of a 'circle' conveying the endless greatness of the Infinite - that which cannot be conveyed cannot be understood and so the Infinite is indicated by ornate carvings (i.e. a conch is the Creator 'calling' one to look within, a fire is the Creator 'encouraging' one to burn ignorance, etc.)
- From the perspective of karma (action) the fearsome face at the top of the prabhavali is that of the administrator/deity/god of Time reminding one to go beyond change (the relative) to reach the Changeless (the Absolute) - this symbol also teaches one that karma directed towards pleasures, possessions and powers will be 'consumed' by time yet karma yoga (dedicated actions) directed towards Peace will be 'carried' with one
- From the perspective of bhakti (devotion) the beautiful face at the top of the prabhavali is that of a bhakta (disciple) reminding one that Bhagavan (Divine) places a bhakta even higher than Himself/Herself - this symbol also teaches one that to mature from a devotee to a disciple one has to surrender to the truth that the only support is the Divine and not any combination/permutation of articles, beings, circumstances
- From the perspective of jnana (knowledge) the repulsive face at the top of the prabhavali is that of the ego reminding one how the ego is dependent on God and God is dependent on none - this symbol also teaches that one has to 'undress' oneself of all masks, labels, identifications to know thy Self
- From the perspective of mukti (Freedom) the kirtimukham (*kirti* [shining] + *mukham* [face]) at the top of the prabhavali is that of one who is Awakened reminding one that our Nature is Joy - this symbol also teaches that one who has Realized their potential can reveal the same in others

"What we really need is free and what we do not need is really costly." ~ Swami Tejomayananda

Inspire-Love-Be

5 - Namah Te from Houston!

i hope this message finds everyone well...

At the beginning of many Bollywood movies there is a disclaimer: *This work is fiction, no resemblance is intended to any persons living, dead or yet to be conceived, etc.*

Visualize me stating such a disclaimer for the following work:

Recently i was invited to a city where they had arranged **6 bhiksha-s in 1 day...SIX! Breakfast, a post-breakfast meal, Lunch, a pre-pre-dinner meal, a pre-dinner meal and finally Dinner. Imagine how such a day would play out...**

To help everyone understand and appreciate the **humorous happenings that at times manifests when being offered bhiksha, a JUST FOR FUN lens is focused on this unique circumstance and displayed through our E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (June 30, 2014) --- Bhiksha-thon

- *What should happen:* the host family is calm and collected prepared to receive the invited Acharya with purnakumbha (symbol of Fullness) and aarti (symbol of Awareness) - *What does happen:* no one hears the knocking at the door so the Acharya lets himself in, the child sees him in the doorway and informs the mother, the mother shouts at the father to stop watching the news and greet him while she begins her frantic search for matches, and after some minutes of waiting in the doorway the Acharya is welcomed by a panting and gathered host family
- *What should happen:* the whole family is holding the plates and chanting the reverential mantra-s (hymns) - *What does happen:* the parents are too proud to hold the plates so they delegate this

'task' to the shaky hands of their children and are too intellectual to chant the mantra-s so they delegate this 'task' to the Acharya herself

- *What should happen:* a clean area of the home is readied for the Acharya to meet family/friends who are quietly receptive - *What does happen:* the Acharya sits in the living room all by himself, the mother is still cooking, and the rest of the family/friends are talking about how they do not want to be there
- *What should happen:* the food, table, etc. is already set allowing the host and family/friends to engage in meaningful dialogue on Life and living - *What does happen:* the food, table, etc. is not set, thus occupying the mother, thus family/friends stare uncomfortably at the Acharya, and thus she is forced into the responsibility of entertaining everyone
- *What should happen:* a simple meal, both in quantity and quality, is cooked for the Acharya whose focus is not food rather is on studying scriptures and serving society - *What does happen:* a complex meal, both in quantity and quality, is cooked primarily for the tastes of family/friends and when the Acharya explicitly shares he does not want/need more food the host continues to fill his plate being offended that more was not asked for (*serving legend: yes=2 servings / no=1 serving / covering of plate=0 servings*)
- *What should happen:* after the meal a clean envelope with dakshina (thoughtful donation) is offered to the Acharya to support the fundamental, comprehensive, proactive work she is returning to humanity - *What does happen:* after the meal a few dollars (sometimes even nothing!) is handed over to the Acharya and the offerer feels generous for providing a single meal forgetting to offer provisions for future meals to ensure strength for future work

End disclaimer.

My gratitude to all those individuals/families who offer bhiksha. Without your care and concern many would go physically hungry and even more, mentally hungry.

"Alas, men with a sense of humour die late!" ~ Swami Chinmayananda

Inspire-Love-Be

6 - Namah Te from Orlando!

i hope this message finds everyone well...

One of the greatest thinkers in history, one of the happiest teachers in history, Adi Shankaracharya has shared: "May one contemplate on Vedanta all day until one goes to sleep, and all of life until one goes to death."

Whether one wants to evolve to be a thinker or a teacher or simply wants to **be better, reflection is THE sadhana (means) to growing up. And so we reflect on reflecting with electronic reflections or our E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (July 14, 2014) --- Are you RAD? Or are you MAD?

- Thinking is the nature of the mind - the mind is an equipment to the Spirit, ignorant of which we believe the Spirit is an equipment to the mind
- As we think so we become - when thinking is guided to the meaningful, selfless, Divine mindfulness emerges and when thinking is unguided thus drifting to the mundane, indisciplined, complacent mindlessness submerges us
- Everyday we bathe, eat and sleep for the body, everyday we earn, spend and invest for the house, yet everyday do we reflect on the purpose of the body, the purpose of the house - purpose evokes peace, purpose is evoked by reflection

- Living is an opportunity cost (i.e. we can awaken early to read and exercise OR we can sleep late to talk and eat) and so in the business spectrum to make informed decisions we use a *PEST Analysis*, *SWOT Analysis*, *Cost-Benefit Analysis*, etc. yet these are all secular expressions of reflection - if we engage the same analyses towards succumbing to anger versus embracing acceptance or chasing articles/beings/circumstances versus pursuing Divinity, every individual would be more joyous causing every family, community, society, humanity to be the same
- To be empowered to empathize (reflection directed towards another) we must first identify with ourselves and inquiry (reflection directed towards oneself) empowers this - by developing the habit of going for morning and evening walks, building creative time into our schedules, or simply pausing we steadily and sincerely come to understand and appreciate who we are
- A *Reflection Assignment of the Day* (or RAD as I share daily on *Facebook*, *LinkedIn* and *Twitter*) is for us to integrate integration (dharma) into every event, every action, every moment of our day - if we are not engaged in our RAD then naturally we must be engaged in our *Mindless Assignment of the Day* (MAD) for which we need no guidance in fact we may even be consultants in this field

Continuing with the message that we **must learn to reflect on ourselves to be able to reflect past ourselves, in my opinion one of the greatest musicians, artists, leaders alive today is Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam. He recently shared some reflections on the chaos existing within us, the chaos manifesting without us:**

Imagine that — I'm still anti-war. Most of us have heard John Lennon sing, "You may say I'm a dreamer...but I'm not the only one."

And some of us, after another morning dose of news coverage full of death and destruction, feel the need to reach out to others to see if we are not alone in our outrage. With about a dozen assorted ongoing conflicts in the news everyday, and with the stories becoming more horrific, the level of sadness becomes unbearable. And what becomes of our planet when that sadness becomes apathy? Because we feel helpless. And we turn our heads and turn the page.

Currently, I'm full of hope. That hope springs from the multitudes of people that our band has been fortunate enough to play for night after night here in Europe. To see flags of so many different nations, and to have these huge crowds gathered peacefully and joyfully is the exact inspiration behind the words I felt the need to emphatically relay. When attempting to make a plea for more peace in the world at a rock concert, we are reflecting the feelings of all those we have come in contact with so we may all have a better understanding of each other.

That's not something I'm going to stop anytime soon. Call me naïve. I'd rather be naïve, heartfelt and hopeful than resigned to say nothing for fear of misinterpretation and retribution.

The majority of humans on this planet are more consumed by the pursuit of love, health, family, food and shelter than any kind of war. War hurts. It hurts no matter which sides the bombs are falling on. With all the global achievements in modern technology, enhanced communication and information devices, cracking the human genome, land rovers on Mars etc., do we really have to resign ourselves to the devastating reality that conflict will be resolved with bombs, murder and acts of barbarism?

We are such a remarkable species. Capable of creating beauty. Capable of awe-inspiring advancements. We must be capable of resolving conflicts without bloodshed. I don't know how to reconcile the peaceful rainbow of flags we see each night at our concerts with the daily news of a dozen global conflicts and their horrific

consequences. I don't know how to process the feeling of guilt and complicity when I hear about the deaths of a civilian family from a U.S. drone strike. But I know that we can't let the sadness turn into apathy. And I do know we are better off when we reach out to each other.

"I hope someday you'll join us..." Won't you listen to what the man said.

"You must understand the whole of life, not just one little part of it. That is why you must read, that is why you must look at the skies, that is why you must sing and dance, and write poems, and suffer, and understand, for all that is life." ~ Jiddu Krishnamurti

Inspire-Love-Be

7 - Namah Te from Trinidad!

i hope this message finds everyone well...

As i walk through the airport i observe people looking at my white dhoti. As i eat at a restaurant i observe people looking at my yellow tilak. As i teach in a camp i observe people looking at my black shikha. **What is everyone looking at?**

i am not different than anyone looking at my appearance. i am not different than anyone reflecting on my words. And i will prove this to you through our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (July 28, 2014) --- Peel Back the Skin

- Generally, does anyone choose their gender - logically then, if we judge anyone on their gender we are actually judging the Creator who gifted them with that gender
- Generally, does anyone choose their colour - logically then, if we judge anyone on their colour we are actually judging the Creator who gifted them with that colour
- Generally, does anyone choose their race - logically then, if we judge anyone on their race we are actually judging the Creator who gifted them with that race
- The Creator is perfect, logically then, every expression of the Creator (i.e. creation) must be of the same nature, perfect - from the highest vision there is no creation (individual forms and names), there is no Creator (total forms and names), there is only Infinity (endless, constant, unconditional Existence)
- We only fear that which is different from an absolute perspective (i.e. our nature is Existence-Awareness-Joy and so we fear death-unknown-sorrow) - we only fear that which is different from a relative perspective (i.e. we believe our individuality, our family and our community is who we are and so we fear other individuals, other families, other communities)
- All of our secular education initiatives and many of our sacred education initiatives are planning on ending discrimination externally, completely missing the truth that if one has inner enemies (i.e. anger, jealousy, etc.) one will have outer enemies - the true educators are those who are guiding themselves and others to see not with the eyes of their body which only focuses on gender, colour, race, not with the 'eyes' of their mind which only focuses on duality, rather with the 'eyes' of their intellect which only focuses on the ideal of Infinity absorbing every gender, colour, race, nay every form of duality

From listening to Pujya Swami Tejomayananda share how the more noble one is the more responsibilities one has, to playing football with the locals in the rain, to caressing a 1,000 pound turtle nesting on the beach, the past 10 days have taught me the more one reflects the more one realizes we are all sisters and brothers.

Please read *On Children*, a **powerful message by Khalil Gibran on how each and every one of us is special...**

*Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
and though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.*

*You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
for they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
for their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
but seek not to make them like you,
for life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.*

*You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the Infinite,
and He bends you with his might that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
for even as He loves the arrow that flies,
so He loves also the bow that is stable.*

"The Self pervades all just as butter pervades milk." ~ Shri Saumyakashisha Stotram

Inspire-Love-Be

8 - Namah Te from Boston!

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

A bucket of bones, a bucket of flesh, a bucket of blood, a bucket of skin, a bucket of hair...what actually separates us? Such questions 50 young Hindu women gathered to engage in to bring clarity to subjects of responsibility, expectations, purpose, etc. The success of the 1st ever *Devika Retreat* has already instigated planning for next year's *Devika Retreat* to be hosted by Chinmaya Mission Pittsburgh.

Questioning leads to answers. Answers lead to meaning. Meanings leads to inspiration. Inspiration leads to efficiency. Efficiency leads to joy. Seeking Joy we seek out our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (August 11, 2014) --- The Most Important Questions

- Q: *What is the highest good for all beings?* - A: Unconditional Love for the Divine by listening, reflecting and contemplating on all associated with the Divine.
- Q: *What is the essence of all Scriptures?* - A: Learning how to serve, worship and become the Divine.
- Q: *Why does the Divine manifest?* - A: To comprehensively guide beings 'back' to the Divine.
- Q: *What is the distinct manifestation of the Divine?* - A: Shri Krishna is the Infinite having assumed a form and name yet never limited by any form and name.
- Q: *How does the Divine express?* - A: Through Infinite forms and names to release the noble and to rehabilitate the ignorant.
- Q: *Where did religion live after the Divine became unmanifest?* - A: The philosophy and practice of Oneness was shifted from Shri Krishna to *Bhagavata Mahapurana*.

These most important questions are asked by the pure hearted sages of Naimisharanya to the even more pure hearted sage Sutaji as shared in *Shrimad Bhagavatam*. **We too can gauge the purity of our hearts by the questions we ask...**

"Unprofitable talking is a great drain upon one's energy." ~ Swami Chinmayananda

Inspire-Love-Be

9 - Namah Te from Washington DC!

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

As Sheela and i were flying back from Trinidad a few weeks ago, i was reflecting on the 50 or so countries the Creator has guided me to. Reflecting then led to reminiscing on a few of the precious experiences the Creator has graced me with: from hustling for tickets to the MTV Music Awards in Bangkok to being invited to speak at the Pentagon in Washington DC; from being elected as a Valedictorian (and funnily Prom King!) in Niagara Falls to being in confined solitude for 168 hours in Surat; from protesting at anti-capitalism summits in Prague to managing a multi-million dollar business while perpetually moving between centres and cities and countries...

In the little more than 3 decades i have been alive **every moment the hand of God has been directing me to grow from being an immature seeker working for completion from the world to a less immature seeker working for completion from within...**

Throughout all the adventures i have 'seen' the Creator throughout His creation. And all these creatures have been teaching me about Him. This too is the purpose of our E-Vichara-s...

E-Vichara (August 25, 2014) --- Where the Wild Things Are

- *Sitting in a small boat i was gently pulling myself along with a rope on a silent river in the Waitomo Caves of New Zealand when i looked up and saw endless rows of bright, beautiful glowworms... -* These glowworms live for a extremely short period of time and while living convert almost all of their energy to light - from these glowworms i learned **clarity** and that all of our resources, time and efforts should be utilized to rediscover our Divine Light enabling us to radiate the same
- *Returning to the lodge after a long day of riding in a jeep through the rolling hills of the Nagarhole National Park in India, i looked ahead and saw a leopard calmly walking through the fringes of the jungle... -* These leopards have access to unrestricted amounts of food in the form of deer everywhere yet they are ever seen relaxing in the trees without creating a stir - from this leopard i learned **contentment** and that we all have what we need so why make so much noise in the form of accumulating, talking, vacationing, etc. for noise only perpetuates forgetfulness of our Joyous Self
- *Jogging in the early morning along a secluded boardwalk parallel to the Tolomato River in America i looked beside me and stopped to admire two dolphins swimming wholly in sync... -* These dolphins are far far far more intelligent and thoughtful than we understand and appreciating their evolution we must appreciate that the tendency to compete is a sign of the less evolved - from these dolphins i learned **confidence** and that we are all special in special ways and that hard work unleashes the expression of these blessings
- *Balancing myself on the sands of Matura Beach in Trinidad, the shining moon illumined the dark sands when i looked in front and saw a 1,000 pound turtle dig a perfect hole, patiently lay dozens of eggs, completely hide the hole and swim away independently... -* These turtles swim unreal distances, eat unreal amounts, face unreal threats only to give birth to hatchlings they will never ever see - from this turtle i learned **concentration** and that our potential is immeasurably more than what we believe, than what we live and only if we align ourselves with an ideal can we shock ourselves at who we can be

- *Skiing all day all over Whistler-Blackcomb Mountain in Canada the next morning i was taking garbage from the lodge when i looked in front and a few feet away was a bear wandering around the driveway just as i was...* - These bears have historically been living all over the country and as we became more 'civilized' we stole their homes and now have the audacity to proclaim they are infestations, they are intruders, they are invaders - from this bear i learned **cheer** and that regardless of pain and/or pleasure, failure and/or fortune, criticism and/or commendation there is no point in being hurt, dejected, sad actually we should ask ourselves if there is any point in shrinking to any negativity
- *Listening to the guide share details on the development of the Chiang Mai farm in Thailand i looked behind me only to watch a baby elephant use it's trunk to lift me several feet off the ground...* - These elephants can move trees, these elephants can play football, these elephants can paint with fine tipped brushes - from this elephant i learned **competence** and that the more responsibilities we embrace the more we purify our mind and the more pure our mind the more responsibilities we can support

Thanks to the Creator for giving all of us the opportunity to live, learn and love. A special thanks to Bhagavan Ganesha on His special day for showing us how Divine diversity can be.

On this note, this year in Niagara and Pittsburgh we did Camps for our kids/youth entitled *The Awesome of the Awesome*. The content of the Camps were extracted from Shrimad Bhagavad Gita's Chapter 10 where Bhagavan Krishna shares with Prince Arjuna that EVERY facet of the universe is awesome. For all those thinking of themes for self development Camps, this one is awesome.

"You can judge a man's true character by the way he treats his fellow animals." ~ Paul McCartney

Inspire-Love-Be

10 - Namah Te from Alpharetta!

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

Chapter 1

Once upon a time, 50 JCHYKs from all over the North-Eastern United States gathered in Washington DC for a unique Camp on exploring *Heroes*. And there they learned that a hero:

Experiences the world...they pursue secular education, engage in various relationships, etc.

Trains from the world...they develop physical stamina, learn about family, etc.

Works for the world...they inspire people, smile unconditionally, etc.

As these inquisitive young minds deepened their exploration they came to understand and appreciate the commonalities between the heroes of Scriptures with those of Comics. And equally important, they came to understand and appreciate that **Pujya Swami Chinmayananda is a hero...**

Gurudev had grown from an attorney to a renunciate to a hero. **His vision was not to lead for a moment rather to lead for EVERY moment. And he accomplished this through Study Groups, for the evolution of a discourse is a discussion.**

Chapter 2

How is a Study Group created? Well this was answered by the E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (September 8, 2014) --- An Event to a Movement

- *Purpose* - When one grows in their sensitivity that articles, beings and circumstances are completely powerless to complete us, one seeks direction on where to turn to truly find contentment - our Scriptures are the 'Users Manual', the 'Map', the 'FAQs', developed by the Creator on how to make the best use of living

- *People* - As long as a single person is aligned with the purpose of a Study Group there is enough cause to initiate one - all around us, whether in our centres or colleges or cities, there are countless seekers like us and the most transformative service one could offer to these seekers is to reach out to them and engage them in a forum to further their seeking
- *Period* - Though the best day for a sattvic study is everyday and the best time for a sattvic study is a sattvic period (03.00a-09.00a) our responsibilities play our schedules to a different beat - a day that is consistent (Monday - Thursday) and a time that is free (07.30p-09.00p) is best for practicality
- *Place* - The glory of the Scriptures is the capacity to make one's content so strong that context becomes irrelevant - until we grow into Invincibility, just as one's altar should be CSI (clean, simple, inspiring), one's study room should be CSI and the advantage of meeting at a seeker's residence rather than a public area is control of CSI
- *Publication* - What one studies is not as important as how one studies and all one ever needs to know from our Scriptures is succinctly captured in Tattva Bodha, an apparently introductory Advaita Vedanta text - to bring in universality yet focus, all the *Mananam* issues can effectively reach out to different backgrounds on a specific dimension of living (i.e. *Compassion, Truth, etc.*)
- *Patience* - to resist initiating a Study Group is an expression of fear of letting others in one's comfort zone, to resist participating in a Study Group is an expression of fear of entering in another comfort zone - being steady and sincere with purpose, people, period, place and publication will produce creativity which in turn will produce a rise in quality of the Study Group and so a rise in the quantity of seekers participating in Study Groups, facilitating Study Groups, creating Study Groups

On the first day of Spring this year, i began sharing *Reflection Assignments of the Day (RADs)* through different social media. Unclear of what to expect from this idea, 6 months later i am clearly overwhelmed by the response of aspirants all over the world! **People are using these RADs for activities in their Retreats, are using these RADs for material in the Study Groups, are using these RADs for discussion at their workplaces (imagine...on the career networking site *LinkedIn*, the RADs receive more than 100 views a day!).** With this in mind, as Autumn commences i am introducing *Reflection Assignments of the Week (RAWs)* through our *E-Vichara*. These RAWs are tangible, hands on, objective practices to supplement the philosophy shared through the *E-Vichara*. **i encourage all readers to engage in the RAWs and to pass the same to friends/family/seekers. And though i pray you consider me a relative/friend/seeker you need not share your reflections with me on account of limited time from my end. And so we begin...**

Reflection Assignment of the Week (RAW): Listen (and study) carefully to *God Gave Me Everything* by Mick Jagger **and add 7 of your own experiences that highlight how God Gave US Everything.**

"It is in vain to waste one's time considering which God to worship. Worship Him in any form. It is the sincerity of devotion which matters." ~ Swami Tapovanam

Inspire-Love-Be

11 - Namah Te from Peoria!

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

As you are reading this collection of characters on an electronic screen, **how do you know you are not dreaming? How do you know there is not a different reality than what you believe is real? How do you know if you are as happy as Life has planned for you to be?**

In 1999 a revolution manifested in theatres across the world. Some claimed this revolution was initiated by an action movie. Some claimed by a science fiction movie. We of course know this revolution was initiated by a Vedantic movie.

THE MATRIX...THE E-VICHARA...

- What we believe determines our perspective - initially *Neo* (short for neophyte or shishya) does not believe in freedom nor himself and so he is stuck in outer and inner limitations unlike *Morpheus* (Guru)
- What we believe is facilitated by the belief system of those around us (satsanga or dussanga) - *Trinity* (the one who has balanced the guna-s and so is free from the guna-s) encourages *Neo* physically, mentally and intellectually to believe in the Higher
- *Maya* expresses through the guna-s and all these 'ropes' are constantly around us to bind us to *maya* - *Agent Smith* (sattva guna) appreciates what Freedom (moksha) is intellectually yet not comprehensively and so strives to prevent *Neo* from seeking anything more
- If one does not release themselves from the grip of *maya* one physically dies, one metaphysically dies - if one enters the *matrix* (samsara) after having escaped, the pull of the illusory condition on the mind is so strong that death in the illusion causes death in reality
- The Creator knows all about all of us and uses creation (i.e. nature, Guru, etc.) to guide us to Him in the best way - while in the *matrix* *Neo* receives many messages from *Morpheus* in overt and covert ways
- A sincere seeker will be directed to a sincere guide and a sincere guide will direct this deserving seeker to sincere answers - when *Neo* follows *Morpheus*'s directions fully he is safe and as soon as he doubts *Morpheus*'s directions he is trapped
- Following the message of the shastra-s/sadhu-s is risky for once we change accordingly we find unparalleled meaning in every moment and such a transformation to our personality, to our lives, cannot be undone - *Morpheus* is described as the most dangerous entity in the *matrix*
- Deep in our awareness we know we are living two lives: one filled with masks as we sell ourselves as someone we are not and one filled with truth as we strengthen ourselves being who we are - before *Neo* meets *Morpheus*, *Trinity* advises him to be honest for *Morpheus* too has experienced the same inner conflict
- Intellectually we all know *maya* cannot complete us yet we keep trying different combinations/permutations of *maya* hoping for completion - *Morpheus* shares with *Neo* that we cannot explain what the problem with the world is
- One who is ignorant does not know they are ignorant, extended further, one who is born into bondage does not know they are bound - *Morpheus*, or one who changed and so can cause change, willingly returns to the *matrix* to offer *Neo* knowledge, extended further, to offer *Neo* release
- All that is objective can be described (i.e. the colour of a flower, the taste of honey, etc.), all that is subjective can only be experienced (i.e. Love, Enlightenment, etc.) - *Morpheus* offers *Neo* only the Truth, in other words *Morpheus* is offering the Infinite Subject compared to finite objects
- Within Sanatana Dharma the upanayana samskar (tradition of being led to the Guru) highlights how one's parents give one a physical birth and one's Guru gives one a metaphysical birth which if fulfilled will free one from ever having another physical birth - when *Neo* is freed from the *matrix* he is freed from the confinement of an indefinite womb, he has his second birth (he has no hair, he cannot see, etc.)
- The body only perceives while the mind actually interprets which should cause one to think if perception is even real (i.e. the sun rising) - the *neural interactive simulation* in the *matrix* like the mind in *maya*, makes our experiences 'real'
- The sadhana-s (disciplines) to the Sadhya (Freedom) are simple yet not easy and the longer one is immersed in *maya* the more complicated and challenging sadhana becomes - *Neo* is guided to understand and appreciate that if one is not pursuing the Truth than one is pursuing an illusion and even if he could back to the *matrix* would he want to
- A shishya never has as much faith as the Guru and so fear limits their potential - *Morpheus* encourages *Neo* to not believe he is stronger rather to know he is stronger
- Only when a shishya is readied with a balanced, focused, refined mind does the Guru guide them to Bhagavan - when *Neo* is ready to be fully unplugged *Morpheus* guides him to the *Oracle* (Omniscient)
- Ignorance is bliss is a lie ignorant people say to themselves and others to validate their vices (i.e. laziness, aggression, etc.) - *Cypher* (expression of *tamas*) believes he is trapping *Morpheus* when he is the one being trapped, forever

- If we value non-essentials as non-essentials we conserve enough physical/mental energy to reach for the Essentials - outside the *matrix* the seekers eat only what the body needs not what the body wants
- Bhagavan Krishna teaches Prince Arjuna they are the same yet Prince Arjuna has forgotten this, so too there is only Existence yet we have forgotten this and are lost in apparent separation - a young seeker tells *Neo* that there is no spoon to bend and *Neo* eventually realizes this Truth for in his final fight with the *Agents* he simply sees 'code' in the form of the *Agents*, the wall, the bullets, his hands, etc.
- Articles, beings and circumstances within the multiverse are not intrinsically Joyous and pursuing these keeps one incomplete - whenever in the *matrix*, the colour is tinged green, the colour of jealousy (incompleteness) and such an environment can never teach us where Joy is
- If we do not believe we will reach Enlightenment in this lifetime surely we will have to wait for the next lifetime - *Neo* is taught that time is always against them
- Believing we are in control of ourselves causes us to believe we are in control of others and such egotism is a invitation for suffering - *Agent Smith* shares how humans define themselves by sorrow
- Humans will always be more advanced than computers - *Neo* is dejected that he falls off the roof not realizing that he is beyond the roof, he is beyond air, he is beyond death
- The Guru will do anything for the shishya, the Guru will give everything to the shishya - *Morpheus* unhesitatingly sacrifices his life to facilitate *Neo's* experience that he is the One (*Neo* rearranged)

Reflection Assignment of the Week (RAW): Watch *The Matrix*, whether for the first time or for the fiftieth time, alongside this map.

"If you want to awaken all of humanity, then awaken all of yourself. If you want to eliminate the suffering in the world, then eliminate all that is dark and negative in yourself. Truly, the greatest gift you have to give is that of your own self transformation." ~ Lao Tzu

Inspire-Love-Be

12 - Namah Te from Detroit!

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

Actually my body is in Pittsburgh yet my mind is still in Detroit. Why? A few nights ago i was fortunate enough to again witness *honour* come to life...i was fortunate enough again to experience...PEARL JAM! This is perhaps the 11th show in perhaps 6 cities i have adventured to and a unique part of this show was **Eddie Vedder sharing that though John Lennon recently celebrated his birthday he left us his present...Peace.** And then he sang an acoustic solo of *Imagine* --- [song](#) i hope you all synced in to the 10 days of profound *Pearl Jam* lyrics i shared as *RADs* leading up to the concert...

P O W E R F U L. This is one, this is the only word to describe the inner and outer environment realized by the 75 devi-s who united from all over North America for *DIVYA SHAKTI: Reaching our Potential.* And what is the potential of a devi? Why the same as Bhagavan of course! And what is the potential of Bhagavan? Why let us ask the E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (October 6, 2014) --- Who is Bhagavan?

- *Aishvarya* is traditionally translated as prosperity yet more meaningfully can be understood as joy - outer prosperity is futile if not encouraging of inner prosperity
- *Dharma* is traditionally translated as duty yet more meaningfully can be understood as responsibility - following and fulfilling one's responsibilities is following and fulfilling integration of one's personality
- *Yasha* is traditionally translated as fame yet more meaningfully can be understood as reverence - just as peer pressure can be negative and positive so too fame can be negative and positive hence the

confluence of respect and love transforms into reverence with no space for a counter interpretation, with no space for a counter invocation

- *Shriya* is traditionally translated as auspicious yet more meaningfully can be understood as virtue - one who is developing even a single virtue, carries all around goodness with them and no one can ask for anything more from another than such goodness
- *Vairagya* is traditionally translated as detachment yet more meaningfully can be understood as independence - only when one has nothing to gain does one have nothing to lose hence one grows to be a confidently unconditional giver not a secretly expectant receiver
- *Jnana* is traditionally translated as knowledge yet more meaningfully can be understood as wisdom - all of us have read so much, listened so much, discoursed so much yet have not changed so much which is a message to ourselves that we do not know so much

Reflection Assignment of the Week (RAW): Write letters (emails do not count!) to all the significant women in your life sharing how they exemplify the nature of Bhagavan.

Want to know the power of the grace of God? In September of 2013 Chinmaya Mission Pittsburgh's Bala Vihar enrollment was 175. In September of 2014 Chinmaya Mission Pittsburgh's Bala Vihar enrollment was 575. **Imagine a moderately sized city with a metro population of only 2,500,000 serving this many families!**

We are now invoking God's grace to build a new Religious Centre with bhakta Hanuman, professional classrooms, nature trails, etc. As soon as this is complete we are going to invoke God's grace further to build a new Retreat Centre with simple lodging, challenge courses, training modules, etc. **My dream is to bring together students, volunteers, executives, etc. to learn to lead themselves, to learn to lead others. i want to create a *Chinmaya Leadership Foundation*...**

Please stay tuned on being part of these special developments by us, for us.

"Mighty mountains may crumble; the limitless ocean may dry up; the earth may get submerged. In this ever-changing world, what is there that is eternal and unborn? Take refuge in that Shiva, the Lord of Parvati." ~ Swami Tapovanam

Inspire-Love-Be

13 - Namah Te from Kansas City!

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

My parents have been studying at the Vedanta Course in Sidhabari for almost 8 months now. They are doing well. And in their absence i am trying to tend to their business and personal affairs.

Recently i needed to analyze how many days they would be outside of Canada for insurance purposes. This work triggered me to find out how many days i would be outside of Canada this year...

2 5 2...i am not even sure if i qualify as a citizen of Canada anymore hahaha!

Anyways, think of how many bhiksha-s at homes, centres, mandir-s, etc. i would be part of during this relentless travel schedule...sometimes 6/day (refer to E-Vichara [June 30, 2014] --- Bhiksha-thon)! And at so so so many bhiksha-s i am **forced to eat/drink from materials that jeopardize my future. Other times i am given safe materials but everyone else at the bhiksha is given the harmful materials.**

When will i say no? We will we say no? i am saying no today with the help of the E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (October 20, 2014) --- E N O U G H

- *E N O U G H plastic bags* - Back in the day diapers were made of cloth which required more work to clean yet when has more work harmed anyone - today every company is giving away cloth bags so be vigilant and keep some (at least 3 so there are no excuses) in your car to bring food to/from bhiksha
- *E N O U G H plastic bottles of water* - In the developed parts of the world, a typical city's water supply is purer (and definitely cheaper!) than bottled water and in cities that have a questionable water supply a simple filtration system or boiling can remedy this problem - keep a quality metal bottle for water with you all the time and use this everyday to improve your health, your pocket's health, your environment's health and to use for bhiksha
- *E N O U G H plastic/styrofoam plates* - Remember when we were not dependent on the conveniences of GPS, disposable razors, fast food, etc. - though we believe using plastic/styrofoam plates is most convenient, this apathetic thinking is simply preyas (the path of least resistance or the path of pleasure) for there are many alternatives that are more convenient in the present and future and aligned with bhiksha culture such as paper plates which are relatively biodegradable, glass and metals plates which can be cleaned by a dishwasher or imagine, by hand
- *E N O U G H plastic/styrofoam bowls* - Before we eat there are different foods in different vessels and when we eat there is one food aka a bolus and one vessel aka a stomach - why not make the whole assimilation process more efficient by not demanding bowls which will encourage us to be alright if foods gets mixed up which will encourage bhiksha-s to become more efficient in set up and clean up
- *E N O U G H plastic cutlery* - In the beginning was the word and the word was God created us with fingers to use to eat instead of shovels aka spoons and pitchforks aka forks and axes aka knives - by using our hands to eat we are quieter for we do not scrape our plates, we are more creative for flavours are continuously being blended, etc. and this all contributes to developing a connection with our food which is the same reason why we pray before eating bhiksha
- *E N O U G H plastic/styrofoam carrying containers* - Throughout our oceans there are 'islands' forming that are made just out of plastic goods which then break down into pellets which then are consumed by animals which then are consumed by humans - based on the portion sizes restaurants use and the portion amounts bhiksha-s entertain, finishing one's meal is impossible, being sensitive to this fact, keeping glass carrying vessels in one's car to bring excess food home or to the homeless is humane

i only shared this message in the context of bhiksha to make this message obvious. This **message is for every family party, every community celebration, every societal gathering. i pray you will say no today for every human, animal and plant...**

Reflection Assignment of the Week (RAW): Sift through your entire home, business, centre, etc. and take out all the hazardous materials aka plastic/styrofoam related to eating/drinking. Set these aside in one area and put tape around the area with the words *E N O U G H*. Finish using these *hazmat* and ensure that no more come into your facility. During this process ask everyone for a few more 'dollars' to buy compostable materials, to buy a safe future...

"A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers, but borrowed from his children." ~ unknown

Inspire-Love-Be

14 - Namah Te from Minneapolis!

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

A few weeks ago i was invited to speak to the business students/professors at Indiana University on the subject of *Modern Management through Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*.

A few days ago i was invited to speak to several hundred high school students/teachers at The Ellis School's Diversity Conference on the subject of *Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover*.

As i reflected on these subjects i came to understand and appreciate even more clearly that the **most difficult part of living is...working with people**. People are negative! People gossip!! People do not want to change!!! People are just...PEOPLE!!!! And so the **most important division of any corporation, of any school, is Human Resources**.

Sadly, teachers, coaches, trainers, etc., think that 'happy' hour, sky-diving, building toilets, etc., will make people understand people. These are typical outward-bound courses that require money yet no meaning. Anyone can do these courses which is why everyone does these courses.

With this in mind, how to deal with negativity, how to deal with gossip, how to deal with stagnation and **all other people problems is the subject of our study through a special verse from each chapter of *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*. We look within by looking to our E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (November 3, 2014) --- Inward-bound Courses - Part 1

- *Chapter 1, verse 12 (be engaging)* - Subjectively, people waste themselves in incalculable ways by allowing the doubting mind to confuse, intimidate, discourage the deciding intellect - objectively, when a leader observes this depletion in a group, by making a decision the group's resources, time and effort get aligned in that direction encouraging growth irrespective of the decision being right, wrong or both
- *Chapter 2, verse 38 (be equipoised)* - Being a human, elemental 'gifts' the universe distributes to us are challenges, miscommunication, judgment, etc. - all of these gifts have the potential to shake a group, however a leader embraces and absorbs these gifts whether pain, gain or fame without being moved from what is right
- *Chapter 3, verse 21 (be exemplary)* - Almost every circumstance creates a natural separation where 5% emerge as leaders and 95% convert to followers - a follower's focus is on how a leader thinks, speaks, walks, etc. and so the leader has to be vigilant to practice all they want to nurture in themselves and others
- *Chapter 4, verse 39 (be entrusting)* - In a world where people are more and more unpredictable, trusting others is becoming more and more precarious - if faith can move mountains certainly having faith in the intrinsic goodness of people will be the most powerful force to release that goodness while not having faith is simply not functional nor fun
- *Chapter 5, verse 8 (be empowering)* - As much as we try to dedicate ourselves completely to a task, a cause, an ideal we still fall short in our dedication for we still seek recognition - a leader is one who awakens a group to be their best, to reach the best and makes them feel the best without needing to be recognized externally nor internally as the catalyst
- *Chapter 6, verse 9 (be empathetic)* - Every single person is different and so every single person's perspective is different making understanding every single person impossible - a leader adapts, adapts and then adapts more to try to understand as many groups as possible to try to radiate as much understanding as possible

We shall continue with human resources verses from THE human resources guidebook in the future. **i envision a Course on *Human Resources through Gita* to be offered at our *Chinmaya Leadership Foundation* in Pittsburgh...**

Reflection Adventure of the Week (RAW): Continue to study the comprehensive nature and benefit of inward-bound courses by checking out the short article, [Philosophers Guiding Executives](#) from *The Economist* on a different type of training.

"In spite of diligent practices, success ultimately depends upon the element of Grace." ~ Swami Chinmayananda

Inspire-Love-Be

15 - Namah Te from Corsicana (i am writing to you from **Chinmaya Mission West's new 140 acre Vision Centre**)!

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

All around the world people are growing moustaches. You will notice this funky fashion on the faces of intense athletes we see at games, on the faces of bold adults we see on Facebook, on the faces of concerned Acharya-s we see through email.

All around the world people are growing moustaches for *Movember*: a movement to create awareness of health issues men face. Issues such as heart disease, prostate cancer and mental illnesses.

My uncle suffers from schizophrenia. My friend suffers from depression. i suffer from stigmatizing mental illness and then others do to whether mentally ill or not.

We all know men and women who suffer from mental illness. And the only way we will **not be afraid of this medical condition is to question our present perspective through our E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (November 17, 2014) --- Let's Talk About...

- The body, including the brain, is made of matter and all matter, regardless of how powerful, is subject to imbalance - though the brain and the mind have a strong connection the brain is not the more subtle mind
- If the body is imbalanced one needs physical help and if the brain is imbalanced one needs physical/mental help - we occasionally hesitate to seek physical help out of fear of 'doom' yet we always hesitate to seek mental help out of fear of judgement
- If we were diagnosed with lung cancer we may or may not have catalyzed this disease by our lifestyle hence blaming oneself would be immature - if we were diagnosed with bipolar disorder despite the exact same rational applying we would invoke and evoke blame
- In Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavan Krishna shares how typical people worship devata-s (senses) over Him (Spirit) for the senses are quick/easy to understand - with medical advances a cardiologist understands the heart like never before just as a psychiatrist understands the brain/mind like never before so why do we project so much 'unknown' on mental illness
- All of us are always learning that labels restrict the flow of a personality - strangely, all of us are always labelling others and ourselves for this is 'comfortable', yet does this actually create comfort for ourselves and others
- An enemy is one who incessantly torments us hence the mind's power is often described as inimical - considering a mentally well person suffers from misdirected thoughts, imagine how much a mentally unwell person suffers from misdirected thoughts hence apathy is wasteful and empathy is productive

Reflection Adventure of the Week (RAW): Have a meal with a relative/friend who is mentally ill to try to understand them and their perspective more.

"Accept sorrows yourself and rain down happiness on others." ~ Swami Tapovanam

Inspire-Love-Be

16 - Namah Te from Udaipur!

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

The nature of the work i do is to share thoughts on self development. i do this through envisioning projects, i do this through speaking at celebrations, i do this through building teams.

i also do this through social media. This forum alone enables me to share knowledge with ~ 250,000 minds every year. And so many of these minds do not like what i share! People tell me i am complicated, i am boring, i am unauthentic, etc. i can **write a whole E-Vichara on the harsh comments people have 'thoughtfully' shared with me through social media!!!**

What do i think about all this? i, **"Do what you value and value what you do"** (~ Swami Tejomayananda). And so i will keep on sharing. And i also know (insert message title here) hahaha! How should we think, speak and act towards haters? Let's E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (December 1, 2014) --- Haters Gonna Hate, Hate Hate, Hate, Hate

- Creation is neither good nor bad nor any label for the Creator is beyond such finitude - what creates good, bad, etc. is the perspective of those who feel they are separate from Creation
- Knowledge facilitates our perspective - a knowledgeable personality will have the perspective to learn from any experience while an ignorant personality will have the perspective to not learn from any experience
- The logic of why we take criticism seriously is we take compliments seriously - each and every one of us have received countless criticisms/compliments and we will continue to receive the same so why make the normal special
- If we receive accurate criticism we should be grateful for such guidance and change accordingly - if we receive inaccurate criticism we should be grateful we are different than the judgement delivered
- The ego makes us focus on our strengths and others' weaknesses causing us to feel we are the standard of comparison - when our weaknesses come to focus we should not retaliate by focussing on the same in others/ourselves rather we should focus on the uniqueness, contribution, effort of the hater and hated
- By externalizing our validation we enter a game which cannot be won and since we only lose we come to hate ourselves and then others - our ONLY judge is ourself, our ONLY jury is the Creator

Reflection Adventure of the Week (RAW): Before thinking/speaking any negativity about another person/persons think/speak two positives.

"He is a mahatma who keeps the tongue, the word and the mind perfectly under control and patiently withstands all provocations." ~ Swami Tapovanam

Inspire-Love-Be

17 - Namah Te from Kolwan!

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

Sheela and i have been wandering in Bharat for 2 weeks now. We still have some weeks here...actually we may decide to stay in the Motherland forever...

Not just us. We now have 31 CHYKs from 17 cities across North America who are exploring, observing, understanding Bharat alongside us for 20 days (attached is our photograph). **With this yatra, 70 unique CHYKs will have had a most unique experience in connecting with the spirit of the Motherland.**

And how is this manifesting? Through ashram living. **Yatra-s are not about visiting far off, hard to reach, material heavy places. Rather yatra-s are about interacting with sadhu-s (noble people) in their own 'homes'.**

Join us on our yatra through our *E-Vichara*...

- A yatra is an outward expression of an inward journey - Pujya Swami Chinmayananda had/has a uniform vision for every facet of *Chinmaya Mission* whether *Bala Vihar* or *Upanishad Ganga* or *Naada Bindu*, enlightenment
- *Sandeepany Sadhanalaya (the brain)* - Pujya Swami Chinmayananda was exceptional in appreciating that an organization should be built on teachings not a teacher - our yatri-s have learned to give self development the highest priority in their lives to be able to lead themselves and others
- *Chinmaya Vibhooti (the eyes)* - Pujya Swami Chinmayananda was efficient in appreciating that an organization should plan decades in advance to give direction to present resources, time and efforts - our yatri-s are learning about what their purpose is and how to realize this purpose through planning
- *Chinmaya Organization for Rural Development (the hands)* - Pujya Swami Chinmayananda was empathetic in appreciating that an organization is supported by countless aspects of the universe - our yatri-s will learn to be grateful for their countless opportunities by working with villagers, encouraging the 'big' and 'small' to grow together
- *Adi Shankara Nilayam (the feet)* - Pujya Swami Chinmayananda was educated in appreciating that an organization is created, sustained and furthered by what balances an organization, knowledge - our yatri-s will learn all that is important in their lives is rooted in Sanatana Dharma and to cultivate and plant the same seeds
- The difference between motivation and inspiration is the former is forced, temporary, unsubstantiated while the latter is felt, lasting, internal - by steadily and sincerely expanding our comfort zone to include every article, being and circumstance we shrink our ego, we reach Enlightenment

Reflection Adventure of the Week (RAW): Everyday engage in an activity which makes you feel uncomfortable.

Our next E-Vichara will be Incredible - a message how each one of us is special. And though i will try to share this before the new year, in case my travels prevent me from doing so, **i pray to Bhagavan and the Guru-shishya-parampara that every reader and non-reader of the E-Vichara has a joyous completion to 2014 and an even more joyous commencement to 2015!**

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

Signing off for 2014...

Inspire-Love-Be

18 - Namah Te from...

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

Every direction we turn to someone is trying to make us feel small:

-clothing communicate we will look better if we wear their products

-competitions communicate we will be more worthy if we win their contests

-religions communicate we will be 'saved' if we convert others to their dogma

Anyone who makes us feel small is a bully. All of us are constantly being bullied. How do i know? The countless discussions, conversations, crying-sessions i have with people who do not believe in themselves...

We need to address and arrest bullying, at all levels, by believing in who we are today and who we can become tomorrow. This is the tale of an ordinary animated family encouraging us to be extraordinary, the same tale of every E-Vichara...

Special E-Vichara (December 29, 2014) --- The Incredibles

- Super powers do not make one super they simply make one powerful - understanding and appreciating every being is specially crafted by the original Artist makes one super
- Labels limit potential - physical evolution and mental evolution are not equatable and thus incomparable
- Being loyal to an ideal (i.e. to one's spouse, to one's nation, etc.) is more super than any power - the loyal are not afraid of confrontation for they are aware conflict often brings the best out
- When one's potential is not utilized the same potential creates frustration - as long as we do not realize our Nature is Infinite-Existence-Awareness we will struggle, suffer and sob
- If we ever feel we have to lower our best to fit in we should question how low we have already fallen - 'luck' favours those who are prepared
- Respect is commanded not demanded - the respectful are respected while the disrespectful are disrespected
- Those with nothing to lose are also those with nothing to gain - when one engages without the agenda of gaining, such a dynamo is capable of caring the most
- If we reflect vigilantly, our most valuable possession is our sense of individuality - imagine how worthy we would feel if we realized there are no individuals there is only Infinity
- Doubt is a luxury none can afford - belief evolves into faith through reflection and faith evolves into knowledge through experience
- In a zero-sum game, characteristic of a secular society, when everyone is super this equates to no one being super - in a positive-sum game, characteristic of a sacred society, when everyone is Infinite this equates to no one being separate
- Being an integral part of a family is the greatest adventure - one's family brings out the best and worst in us
- One cannot fake being super - journeying within is the most painful pilgrimage for we discover all our lies

i pray to the Artist to inspire every sculpture to understand and appreciate how incredible He/She/we all are...

Reflection Adventure of the Week (RAW): Practice complimenting someone twice before criticizing them once.

"To a sincere devotee, nothing is impossible." ~ Swami Chinmayananda

Inspire-Love-Be

19 - Namah Te Everyone,

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

The past 6 weeks Sheela, i and our 20 kg of luggage (total!) have found ourselves in 9 different airports in Bharat (India). **And airports means airplanes. And airplanes mean 'interesting' fellow travellers.**

Have you ever observed how strangely we behave getting on/off airplanes? If not you should. **And to encourage observation of others, of ourselves, of living we observe our E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (January 12, 2015) --- Leaving on a Jetplane

- *(Rushing the Lines) The Reactor:* when the airline personnel announce which rows are to board, you fight forward as if you are going to get a better seat - *The Responder:* follows the announced instructions which promote all round efficiency and if others still rush, relaxes and waits until the end of the boarding period to join the line
- *(Impatience in the Aisle) The Reactor:* as travellers find their seats and make themselves comfortable, you get flustered and express frustration as if the 30 second delay is a personal act against you - *The*

Responder: understands some travellers are nervous, inexperienced, needy and gives them their time to make themselves comfortable and so everyone else

- *(Owning the Overhead Cabins) The Reactor:* you feel you have paid for a ticket hence are entitled to as much space as you like - *The Responder:* remembers everyone has luggage hence condenses theirs in the overhead cabin and cheerfully does the same for others
- *(What Indoor Voice) The Reactor:* you speak to others in an outdoor voice ignoring others talking or being quiet and listen to music in the same way - *The Responder:* knows everyone has different preferences on how to fly and so adapts to all by minding their own business through planning, thinking and resting
- *(Exiting the Plane Early) The Reactor:* you aggressively place your bags in the aisle taking up 'people space' and push forward like you are the most important person on the airplane - *The Responder:* appreciates there is an etiquette of row by row exiting regardless of what kind of state of mind anyone is in
- *(Mosh Pit at Baggage Claim) The Reactor:* you find a place at the baggage carousel and then set up a perimeter which no one can enter and if they do, you make snide remarks just audible enough for them to hear - *The Responder:* empathizes that personal space is a 'subjective concept' thus finds their bags efficiently while allowing others to do the same

The next time we meet at the airport we will observe these interesting behaviours and smile together.

Reflection Adventure of the Week (RAW): For the next 2 weeks, consciously count/record how many times you laugh each day.

"Smile at life and life smiles at you; frown at life and life frowns at you." ~ Swami Chinmayananda

Inspire-Love-Be

20 - Namah Te dear Everyone,

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

When one goes to a traditional Sanatana Dharma Mandir and engages the priest for a service, the priest will ask one for their gotra...

Gotra? Is this a password? Is this a position? Is this a history? Well a gotra is all of these. A gotra is the lineage, the source, the origin of who you are.

So where do you begin? Where is your family now? A teacher will ask about the names and forms. **A guru will ask about the virtues and vices. How did your virtues begin? What vices do you have now? Perhaps a 'family tree' will help...here's the E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (January 26, 2015) --- A Vicious Family Tree

- *Original Parent (God)* - the One who was not given birth to, the Presence ever looking at us from within and ever looking after us from without, the One who will never be subject to death, is God - our Creator is of the nature of all virtues in infinite measure, in other-words God is virtues and virtues are God
- *Grandparent (ignorance)* - a sin is that which makes us forget who we are and this phantom relative has not only made us forget our roots, it has coerced us to believe that limitation, weakness and sadness runs in our blood - the original sin then is not women nor wealth as some religions propagate rather is ignorance which is their cause
- *Parent (desire)* - as long as one is not identified with their Infinite nature one will feel incomplete forever and so one will give birth to plans for completeness forever - the honest will realize articles-beings-circumstances cannot make us feel full they can only make us feel more dependent

- *Children (anger, greed, delusion, arrogance, jealousy)* - as we 'grow' in insecurity we express our frustrations, confusions, exhaustion by giving birth to more wrong thinking - in our apparitions we have strategized that to deal with anger we need to procure more, to deal with greed we need to distract ourselves, etc.
- *Grandchildren (vices)* - when our plan is to control vices by vices, these children breed among themselves giving birth to endless mental detractors - what is draining our physical and mental strength right now: fear, anxiety, envy, bitterness, boredom, procrastination, etc., etc., etc.,
- *Truth* - ignorance can never be an independent entity hence this proves the existence of a prior entity - the corollary of knowing ignorance is not real is we are NOT born as sinners we are born as God...

vidya danam maha danam (giving knowledge is the greatest giving)...as i complete this E-Vichara i remember **Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda whose 'Mission' (sharing) was/is 'Chinmaya' (knowledge) for this is the ONLY antidote to the disease of ignorance.**

Reflection Adventure of the Week (RAW): Express to your Guru how grateful you are for the life saving and life making knowledge he/she has unconditionally given to you.

"Sin is not in the action in itself, but in the tendency to live and think negatively, which is left over in our mind as a result of our own wrong actions." ~ Swami Chinmayananda

Inspire-Love-Be

21 - Namah Te dear Seekers,

i hope this email finds you unconditionally well...

Last week i facilitated a 4 day training program on **FEAR** (*Face Everything and Rise*). Following this i facilitated a 4 day training program on **LOVE** (*Thy-self, Thy-neighbour, Thy-mother*).

Though fear and love fully oppose each other, the registrants of both programs were united in believing that sadhana is chanting, sadhana is going to a course, **sadhana is changing your identity. Fascinating. Any sadhana that is confined to such a box is enslaving.**

Sadhana is a vision to know God. And so this should be engaged in while bathing, while driving, while negotiating, while studying, while cooking, while entertaining, while sleeping...to know God every moment has to be directed to God. Same message different words - to know God every moment we have to engage in sadhana.

Starting at home. Remember, charity begins at home. Remember, home is where the heart is. Remember, home is sadhana. Let's repair home with our E-Vichara...

E-Vichara (February 9, 2015) --- Home-Schooling

- *Renouncing the Snooze-button* - the nature of the intellect is to decide (i.e. what time to wake up in the morning) and the nature of the mind is to doubt (i.e. what time to wake up in the morning) - by being honest, not ambitious, about what time we need to wake up, and by being clear, not emotional, about what we need to do during the day, we will weaken the minds pull towards laziness
- *Making the Bed* - a bed is a sacred place where one returns to the 'lap of God' when sleeping and so a bed should be treated as an altar - everyone wants to rest in a fresh place and when pillows, sheets, blankets are properly arranged each morning we create that fresh place for us to feel refreshed
- *Functional Grooming* - the mind has tricked us into believing we are not Brahman we are the body and in our hypnosis we treat the 'vehicle' as the 'owner' - reduce the resources, time and effort directed to the body (i.e. less expensive clothing, less bathroom time, more simple meals, etc.) to guide one to redirect the saved resources, time and effort to knowing/being Brahman

- *Putting away Clothes* - we are all expressions of our Creator, interdependent on each other, hence the condition of our appearance affects everyone around us - by folding our clothes when clean, by collecting our clothes when dirty, we develop a discipline to complete what we commence
- *Doing the Dishes* - procrastination is a choice to defeat oneself by oneself, instead make a clean sink one's responsibility to soften one's moodiness - the path of least resistance (preyas) is to wash today's dishes tomorrow and tomorrow's dishes 'never' while the path of most resistance (shreyas) is to never let dirty dishes see tomorrow
- *Purposeful Communication* - as technology grows in capability we grow in incapability sans technology thus we should only use communication devices for essential reasons - to begin the detoxification treatment, 'silence' all these devices during meals enabling us to communicate with each other without a 'mask'

Keep exploring different 'classrooms' in your own home, keep discovering different 'lessons' in your own life.

Reflection Adventure of the Week (RAW): Discuss the above ideas with your family and collectively implement one without any lapses.

Many times i have read - the average child laughs 300 times a day while the average adult laughs 15 times a day. This evolving of the body and concurrent devolving of the mind is not a laughing matter. Henceforth, in an **attempt to realign the body-mind, we are going to introduce a new LAW! A simple joke to be visualized in your own mind, a simple joke to be shared with others, for the simple reason of not taking oneself so seriously.**

Laughing Adventure of the Week (LAW):

Boy: Do you know that man over there? He's the meanest man I ever met!

Girl: Do you know who I am? I'm that man's daughter.

Boy: Do you know who I am?

Girl: No.

Boy: Thank goodness!!!

"Moderation in conversation is a great sadhana. As far as possible, talk of God. Don't pollute your mind with petty talk of love and hate." ~ Swami Tapovanam

Inspire-Love-Be

22 - Namah Te dear Everyone,

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

The literal translation of Sanatana Dharma is 'everlasting integration'. **How has Sanatana Dharma remained everlasting...revolutionaries.**

In the far past our revolutionaries were 'preachers' like Adi Shankaracharya.
In the near past our revolutionaries were 'politicians' like Chhatrapati Shivaji.
In the present our revolutionaries will be 'professors' like...

Today, the fight for what is right will not be in our religious institutions nor in our governmental institutions. Today, the fight for what is right will take place in our academic institutions. Today, Sanatana Dharma is being abused by intelligent yet shallow, charismatic yet mean, attentive yet corrupt,

frauds posing as 'scholars' of this divine vision. Through their **well packaged misinterpretations they spread their message of hate using classrooms, conferences and compositions. And we buy it up...**

The result: individually we feel small, collectively we feel smaller. Sanatana means Infinity! There is no room for smallness!! *Yo vai bhuma tat sukham nalpe sukham asti* (that which is Limitless is Happiness, there is no happiness in limitations)!!!

This is a call. **A call to all courageous seekers to follow Bhagavan Krishna's message of active resistance to evil. Mohandas Gandhi answered the call and transformed to a Mahatma.** Let us follow the lead of our perennial revolutionaries by following our E-Vichara....

E-Vichara (February 23, 2015) --- Preachers, Politicians and Professors

- *Observe* - open your ears and eyes to what is being shared in the name of Sanatana Dharma - try to feel the intention of those promoting such thoughts and try to feel the sentiments of those exposed to such thoughts
- *Think* - reflect on the long-term effect of such thoughts being shared and whether this demands correction/resistance - religion is the most intimate science one can embrace hence investigation of the purity of purpose of religious thoughts is most vital
- *Research* - if you observe/think misinterpretation is manifesting, examine the relevant thoughts to verify whether your feeling is more than just a feeling - study the talks/writing of the suspect 'scholar', compare this to the talks/writing of a genuine scholar and engage Guru-s and God for further clarity
- *Live* - hypocrisy eschews any authority one may have hence live by your newfound convictions - humbly 'show' the world what you believe in and assertively show the world that the posing 'scholar' does not live and so does not believe in Sanatana Dharma
- *Discuss* - the typical person is too busy yet too lazy to engage in matters beyond their routine affairs - for such people, communicate your observations, thinking, research and living in a simple way to encourage them to not take in religious thoughts sans analysis
- *Organize* - just as systematic exercise is more effective than indisciplined exercise, just as systematic study is more effective than cramming, so too systematic sharing of knowledge is more effective than an emotional outpouring - figure out the source of the dissemination of wrong knowledge and develop a team with a plan to disarm their offence

Imagine 1% of our Bala Vihar Students in North America became genuine professors of Sanatana Dharma...150 recognized protectors of the Truth spread throughout the continent invoking and evoking everlasting integration.

Reflection Adventure of the Week (RAW): Think of 5 ways you have actively protected Sanatana Dharma in the past decade. Think of 3 ways you have actively protected Sanatana Dharma in the past year. Think of 1 way you will actively protect Sanatana Dharma in the present week.

Laughing Adventure of the Week (LAW):

Little Boy: Grandpa, were you in the ark?

Grandpa: No.

Little Boy: Then why didn't you drown?

"Post a portion of your attention as a sentry on the high watch-tower of the within - the intellect." ~ Swami Chinmayananda

Inspire-Love-Be

23 - Namah Te dear Seekers,

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

Think of the last time you were late for a meeting, a party, a discourse. How did you feel? **We feel uncomfortable (i hope hahaha!) for we know what we did was wrong** (excluding emergencies). If we all promise ourselves to no longer accept tardiness as a lifestyle we will all feel more comfortable (i know you are not going to make this promise, still i need to develop a thoughtful introduction to our primary subject hahaha!).

Sociologists share the two greatest fears humans have are: death and public speaking. **Vedantins agree that death is one of the greatest fears, not only for humans but all creatures. As for public speaking, we have deeper fears than this.**

Nonetheless, public speaking does cause most of us a degree of discomfort. **What should we do to make ourselves more comfortable? Get prepped. Get E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (March 9, 2015) --- Are You PREPed?

- If we are unconcerned about the success and/or failure related to public speaking would we still fear this experience - more accurately, we do not fear public speaking rather we fear the potential for negative judgement associated with this experience
- Prepare - knowledge is power and by immersing oneself in the knowledge of the subject to be spoken on one becomes more powerful - by steadily reading, writing and reviewing the 'path' one wants to take listeners on, the possibility of the visualization becoming a reality steadily grows
- Reflect - Bhagavan Govinda, Bhagavati Sarasvati, Bhagavan Hanuman are all guides of speech and by remembering Them we remember what the purpose of speech is, prayer - when we invoke the ever present, ever potent, ever present Silence we become quiet and such a mind's trajectory is success
- Engage - being clear that the public speaking engagement is one's responsibility one insulates the mind from wandering - being clear that the public speaking engagement is one's responsibility one feels that people have come to listen to one's words thereby bringing out the best in one
- Practice - while speaking, practice awareness to tune in to people's reactions (i.e. interested, bored, etc.) and adapt accordingly - after speaking, objectively listen to your reactions and quietly listen to other's reactions to identify what was done well and what could be done better
- When we conscientiously grow in our effectiveness as speakers while growing even more in humility as seekers we empower ourselves to face greater fears - if we can lift our dying-buying-crying selves to our Existent-Aware-Joyous Self we drop all fears

Reflection Adventure of the Week (RAW): Write a formal 15 minute speech on what the *E-Vichara* has provided you and record yourself delivering the same in front of a mirror.

Laughing Adventure of the Week (LAW):

Mother: Why are you crying?

Son: Dad hit his hand with a hammer.

Mother: You should be laughing.

Son: I did.

"Work should be done to attain the workless abode of divine silence and peace. This is the secret doctrine of all our Vedas and ancient scriptures." ~ Swami Tapovanam

Inspire-Love-Be

24 - Namah Te dear Seekers,

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

Meditation and mathematics, asana and astronomy, dharmic religions and most languages...the foundation, nay the source of all these fundamental aspects of the world is Bharat (India). And more specifically, Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism).

Almost every university i speak at i hear of a course that teaches Hinduism as a polytheistic religion.

Almost every mall i eat at i read of a class that propagates yoga as a non-religious exercise.

Almost every home i teach at i hear of parents who encourage their children to study how to be on a stage instead of studying how to be selfless.

Almost every mind i connect with i 'read' a belief that someone else will protect THEIR foundation...

What i keep hearing and reading is passivity. i'm going to do my part to be active by sharing my heart, guided by my head and expressed through my hands.

The world is going to continue to misinterpret, mishandle, and mistake Sanatana Dharma. **Thus we need to stand up and step up to stop this. And one way to do so is to interpret, handle and take Sanatana Dharma along the path of Truth. The Truth invokes well being for all beings. Our prayer is our E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (March 23, 2015) --- Universal Prayers

- saha navavatu - *May we be safe* - though this prayer is chanted by all teachers and students present, the prayer is a dialogue between each teacher and each student to keep each other safe for only then can one think of higher matters
- saha nau bhunaktu - *May we enjoy* - boredom is a choice, naturally then so is enjoyment and when the teacher-student choose to believe their satsanga (connecting to the Truth) is important their plan transcends the intellectual to the experiential
- saha viryam karavavahai - *May we exert* - to change one's body is hard, to change one's mind is harder, to change one's ego is the hardest and only when a teacher-student perpetually intensify their work ethic do they perpetually intensify their evolution
- tejasvinavadhitamastu - *May we shine* - the sincere teacher-student come together not to become 'professors' rather to become practitioners
- ma vidvishavahai - *May we understand* - just as we leave our shoes outside of our homes to encourage us to grow from outward looking to inward looking so too when a teacher-student gather for knowledge they leave that which is the most stubborn inhibitor of knowledge, the ego
- aum shantih shantih shantih - *May there be peace away from us, may there be peace around us, may there be peace within us* - the sole dharma, responsibility, purpose of living is to realize Life which is of the nature of Infinite, Unconditional, Constant Peace...

The Truthful is he/she who SEES-UP.

Reflection Adventure of the Week (RAW): For all the students, before EVERY Class individually chant this prayer (in Samskrit and/or English). For all the workers, before EVERY Meeting collectively chant this prayer (in Samskrit and/or English).

Laughing Adventure of the Week (LAW):

Stranger: Look at that bunch of cows.

Cowboy: Not bunch, herd.

Stranger: Heard what?

Cowboy: Of cows.

Stranger: Sure, I've heard of cows.

Cowboy: No, I mean a cow heard.

Stranger: What do I care? I have no secrets from them.

Remember a few weeks ago i shared how the young adults from *The Chinmaya Inspiration Yatra III* were coming together to raise funds for the villagers in Siruvani, Tamil Nadu? **Remember i shared their aspiration was to raise \$25,000? Well they raised \$25,120! Now our 70 Yatri-s have offered nearly \$70,000 (over INR 4,000,000) to the needy in a remote corner of the world, enabling them to be more peaceful.**

"That by the sight of which the mind becomes peaceful and turns towards Parameshvara is called the best darshanam." ~ Swami Tapovanam

Inspire-Love-Be

25 - Namah Te dear Seekers,

i hope this message finds everyone unconditionally well...

The last 200 hours, my entire immediate family and i have been together at a resort in the Caribbean. And each person, from my 6 year old nephew to my 63 year old father, is fascinatingly 'different' (hahaha!). Naturally this means **i need to adapt to them. However adapting becomes frustratingly difficult on account of my attachment to them and their attachment to me.** Family can bring out the worst in us when we *start* vices and *stop* virtues. What if we **change our vision to stop vices and start virtues, then family will bring out the best in us. Let's change our vision with our familial E-Vichara...**

E-Vichara (April 6, 2015) --- Fighting Cs

- STOP complaining - a mind that is distracted from dharma (responsibilities) is one that concentrates on creating reasons to be irresponsible (i.e. feeling bored, feeling mistreated, etc.) - reflecting on the truth that all people are always complaining means no one will even be listening to our complaints encourages us to quietly accept our responsibilities
- STOP criticizing - a mind that is not checked at the complaint stage devolves to a mind that criticizes - reflecting on the truth that all people are always making mistakes means no circumstance is significant enough to encourage even more mistakes by hurting oneself/others with meanness
- STOP crying - a mind that is not checked at the criticism stage devolves to a mind that cries - reflecting on the truth that all people are always facing challenges means we are not an exception and we should keep striving to live as the wise who do not weep for the living (what is happening) nor the dead (what can happen)
- START being careful - a mind that concentrates on dharma (responsibilities) is one that practices awareness outside and inside - reflecting on the truth that all people play special roles with special responsibilities, we engage in our part more carefully allowing others to do the same
- START being compassionate - a mind that practices being careful is one that evolves to being compassionate - reflecting on the truth that all people are not intrinsically bad rather that all people understand their Divine nature more or less according to the Creator's lila (play)

- START being content - a mind that practices being compassionate is one that evolves to being content
- reflecting on the truth that all people have no power over our joy/sorrow we change our strategy
from being extrovert to being introvert

Having worked in the **for-profit sector and now serving in the not-for-profit sector, i often reflect on how the latter is more challenging than the former.** Observing myself over the past 200 hours i feel the same can be shared between **not living with family and living with family...the latter demands more than the former.**

Reflection Adventure of the Week (RAW): Send a card to each person in your immediate family conveying why they are special.

Laughing Adventure of the Week (LAW): Sign in antique store: Come in and buy what your grandmother threw out.

"Depend on none for anything. Be happy with what is given. What comes to you unasked is what comes from Him." ~ Swami Chinmayananda

Inspire-Love-Be

26 - Namah Te dear Seekers,

i hope this message finds all of you unconditionally well...

All i have to say is Dr. Seuss...

His words have inspired poems. His poems have inspired books. His books have inspired movies.

When one is inspired one is open to learn regardless of how young or how old, how green or how orange. His movies have inspired a special E-Vichara...

Special E-Vichara (April 20, 2015) --- Horton Hears a Who

- Those who are sour always think they know better than the rest - a sensitive person listens more and so hears more and so understands more
- Size is a relative phenomenon - when we take the relative seriously we forget how to laugh
- When we are dreaming we feel the dream world is the only reality, when we are awake we feel the waking world is the only reality - accepting our inconsistent understanding of reality why are we insistent our perspective is right
- If we thoughtlessly succumb to external pressure we assume the limitations of those pressures, forgetting our Infinite potential - suppressing the truth does not change the truth
- *A person's a person, no matter how small* - when we focus on the 'smallness' of a person we are engaged in aviveka (indiscriminate living)
- Imagining without a purpose leads to waste while imagining with a purpose leads to creativity - the nobler a purpose, lesser the fatigue
- *I meant what I said and I said what I meant* - why do we entertain small-talk, white-lies, cancelling-thoughts
- Just as an immense number is not an Infinite number so too 99% of the truth is not the truth - when we nourish the courage to ask for the truth we will nourish the courage to speak the truth
- Ignorance is only ignorance - naturally, ignorant people are the ones who think, speak and act by the outlook of ignorance is bliss
- The more we know ourselves the more we know others - empathy, starting with oneself, brings out the best in one and all

- For the shaky, questioning creates anarchy - for the intelligent, questioning creates change, clarity and cohesion
- We believe not forgiving someone will hurt them sufficiently to force change - conversely by forgiving someone we love them sufficiently to facilitate change

Reflection Adventure of the Week (RAW): Go to your local library, find the book *The Lorax* (by Dr. Seuss), sit near a window and just read the thoughtful words in your hands.

Laughing Adventure of the Week (LAW): Last night I dreamt I died and went to heaven. But the light at the end of the tunnel was turned off due to budget cuts.

With this *E-Vichara* we celebrate the completion of 6 years of *E-Vichara*-s! 6 years of reflecting together!! 6 years of realizing together!!! In Vedantic tradition teachings are given freely. No price can be tagged to the guidance an Acharya offers to seekers to live more thoughtfully, to kids to try their best, to workers with materials for their classes, offices, etc. Still, out of gratitude and fulfillment the student seeks to give back. **This offering – dakshina – is to express understanding and appreciation of the Acharya's dedication and sacrifice and is used to further the sharing of Spiritual Knowledge.** Already *Chinmaya Mission London (Canada)* has contributed over \$5,000 to make my sankalpa of a *Debt-Free-Dhara* by Pujya Gurudev's Mahasamadhi Anniversary next year, come true. If every reader of the *E-Vichara* gave as little as \$21 (or \$0.75 per *E-Vichara* this year) right now, this work would be accomplished today. How can you give...

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

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

MY gratitude for YOUR support.

"Life is as light as a feather to one who has renounced his over-exaggerated pride." ~ Swami Chinmayananda

Inspire-Love-Be,

AV

I Aum Tat Sat I
I Peace is the Truth I