**#chinmaya100**

99 years ago, a child was born, a life began, an adventure set off and it went on and on and on and on. Today, in the year 2015 - 2016, we are celebrating that life, that vision, that magnificence called Swami Chinmayananda for a whole year…

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Thousands of people across the world are dedicating Unto Him Our Best. Minds are being metamorphosed. Movies are being produced. Monuments are being conceptualised. Movements are being multiplied. Mega-events are being planned. Millions are being transformed - silently, lovingly, dedicatedly, inspiringly and surprisingly!

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For the Chinmaya-ites, there is as if a magic quietly stirred into every breath this year. We are on a rage to reach out, to inspire, to make a difference, to sacrifice, to serve, to be the transformation. Students are taking academic breaks, professionals are taking sabbaticals from their jobs, housewives are “taking 1-year offs” from their homes, businessmen are pledging their annual profits, the rich-at-heart are donating their spare properties, volunteers are re-dedicating themselves entirely, new members are joining the movement, old-members are re-joining the movement….all this - just to be a part of this very special celebration - Chinmaya Birth Centenary Celebration.

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But why celebrate the life of a man born a 100 years ago for a whole year? What is the point spending resources, time, man-power for a whole year just to celebrate someone’s 100th birthday? Not worth it at all, if you ask me. Yes, if all this was being done for the sake of celebrating someone’s 100 years, it is simply unworthy.

But to understand why 100 years of the birth of Swami Chinmayananda is a milestone event of a scale so massive, we need to understand “Swami Chinmayananda”.

“Swami Chinmayananda” is a **mindset** of infinitude and limitlessness. It is that factor in us which is beyond even the vast unknown horizons of our thoughts. It is the Highest Truth wrapped in the form of an orange-robed Swami. It is the Divinity that throbs in each of us. It is a factor beyond organizations, religions, personality and beliefs. It is the complete silence of the Truth within. It is the very essence of the sound of **“OM”. His signature always began with an “OM”**. His life was a reverberating expression of that universal mantra **“OM”**. And that is what we are celebrating.

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“Swami Chinmayananda” is a **phenomena** of auspiciousness, of strength, of power, of brilliance. He not only manifested his own brilliance, but kindled brilliance in every one. His brilliance is not in his hundreds of books, thousands of articles, innumerable talks. His brilliance is in the fact that the luster of His work continues to touch and transform millions across the world even almost 2 decades after Him. He propagated nothing new. His was the Vedic way of living. And it became the Chinmaya Way of Life. Even today, hundreds of Acharyas and Sevaks are constantly reaching out with the same touch of brilliance that He lived and taught all His life. **That glow of His vision which did not end with Him, is called in our culture as “SHREE”.** And that is what we are celebrating.

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“Swami Chinmayananda” is **awareness**. It is knowledge itself. It is the life-spark within each of us. It is also the knowledge of That Consciousness. It is the path and goal of meditation. It is essence of all spiritual practices. It is the technique and peak of evolution. It is the crux of the Geeta, the sum of the Upanishads, the hero of the Puranas. It is That, knowing which, nothing remains to be known. It is the Self within. **Gurudev often started His letters with “Priya Atman” or “Blessed Self” and signed off as “Thy Own Self”.** He lived as the inner consciousness, He was knowledge personified, He was **“CHINMAYA”.** And that is what we are celebrating.

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“Swami Chinmayananda” is the **principle** of Truth that manifests as the Teacher. It is a school of thought. It is a lineage of millions of renowned spiritual heroes and unknown spiritual giants. It is that power of Knowledge, devotion and service, which dispels all ignorance. It is the spirit of happy renunciation combined with causeless compassion, because of which the Highest Truth expresses in flesh and bone, and transforms our lives. It is what happens to a seeker when he is ready to receive the knowledge. **It is the Teacher who teaches the Truth to us** - **Sadguru**. That is why we lovingly we called Him Pujya Gurudev! And that is what we are celebrating.

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“Swami Chinmayananda” is a **spirit** of surrender in each of us that makes us lift ourselves up to the Truth by bending down to the Master. It is the love and gratitude that swells up in the heart of a seeker who receives knowledge and transforms himself / herself. It is the appreciation that a noble heart has for the spirit of selfless sacrifice of a spiritual teacher. It is the practice of explicit obedience of the instructions of a Teacher, which makes the disciple a towering spiritual champion. **It is the final letting go of one’s ego and selfishness at the altar of the feet of the Guru.** And one small word which represents this spirit of absolute surrender is **“NAMAH” -** complete prostrations unto Him**.** And that is what we are celebrating.

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This mindset, this phenomena, this awareness, this principle, this spirt - is Swami Chinmayananda. And this year is a celebration of Infinity and brilliance. It is a celebration of life and knowledge. It is a celebration of love and surrender. It is a celebration of you and me. It is a celebration of Him who epitomised all these and more for us.

Describing a realised Master, Pujya Gurudev said: “His life itself is a Scripture, His words are Hymns, His actions a blessing upon the earth. In such an accomplished man, we see God and His play.”

This is what we mean by “Swami Chinmayananda”. Swami Chinmayananda is not the name of a person, it is not the identity of the child who was born on 8th May 1916, it is perhaps not the even that man who lived amidst us as a beacon light of inspiration and who was revered and loved and admired by millions…

“Swami Chinmayananda” is a term much vaster, much deeper, much much much more glorious than all of this. And in celebrating His Birth Centenary Year, we are celebrating the glory of that glory.

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**OM SHREE CHINMAYA SADGURAVE NAMAH.**

* Brni. Nidhi Chaitanya