



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF *Hinduism*



CONSTANCE A. JONES AND JAMES D. RYAN

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WORLD RELIGIONS

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Encyclopedia of Hinduism

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Madras University; he received a master's degree in literature from Lucknow University.

At Lucknow University he became active in campus life. In 1942 he joined the Indian independence movement, writing and distributing leaflets, organizing strikes, and giving speeches. He became quite visible in the movement and the British issued a warrant for his arrest. He went into hiding but soon after returning was caught and put in prison, where he spent several months under difficult conditions. While in prison he studied the works of major writers of contemporary Hindu thought and practice and was inspired to follow a path of inquiry.

After working as a freelance journalist, he decided to devote himself to the quest for SELF-REALIZATION. He studied VEDANTA with Swami SIVANANDA at the Divine Life Society in Rishikesh for a number of years and in 1949 was initiated into SANNYAS (renunciation) by Swami Sivananda. His name, Swami Chinmayananda Saraswati, means the "one who revels in the bliss of pure consciousness." At Sivananda's suggestion, he studied with Swami Tapovan Maharaj high in the Himalayas at Uttarkashi. He accepted Swami Tapovan as his guru and studied with him for seven years. In 1948 he made a trek to several traditional Hindu pilgrimage centers in the Himalayas, recording his account in *My Trek through Uttarkhand*.

In 1951, Chinmayananda started his mission of teaching and preaching to public audiences, a pattern that he followed until his death. He gave discourses and held meditation camps in India and abroad. In 1963 he set up his headquarters, Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, in Bombay (Mumbai). From there he established centers, ashrams, and schools in many parts of India. He organized children's clubs to teach the principles of Hindu religion and culture. The Chinmaya Mission, which has grown considerably over the years, sponsors 62 schools for elementary education, nursing, and management in India that teach normal school curriculum as well as the Vedic heritage. The mission also sponsors free clinics,

hospitals, vocational schools, orphanages, and retirement homes.

Chinmayananda was foremost a SANSKRIT pundit (scholar and teacher) and commentator on Hindu scriptures. He expounded each scripture verse by verse and then interpreted deeper levels of meaning against a backdrop of both Hindu and Western philosophy. He insisted that serious seekers find GURUS, teaching that a guru's guidance is necessary. He also taught that over time work with an external guru changes into guidance by a more pure and enlightened intellect within the student himself.

An erudite and acclaimed teacher of ADVAITA VEDANTA, Chinmayananda always stressed the importance of BHAKTI or devotion, which he defined as a consistent effort to raise the ego from its entrenchment in false values to an appreciation of selfhood. His centers contain temples and altars to several Hindu deities.

Chinmayananda was elected president of the Hindu Religion Section of the Centennial Conference of the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1993, where he was to receive recognition as a world-renowned teacher of Vedanta and selfless servant of humanity. Unfortunately, he died on August 3, 1993, before the conference took place.

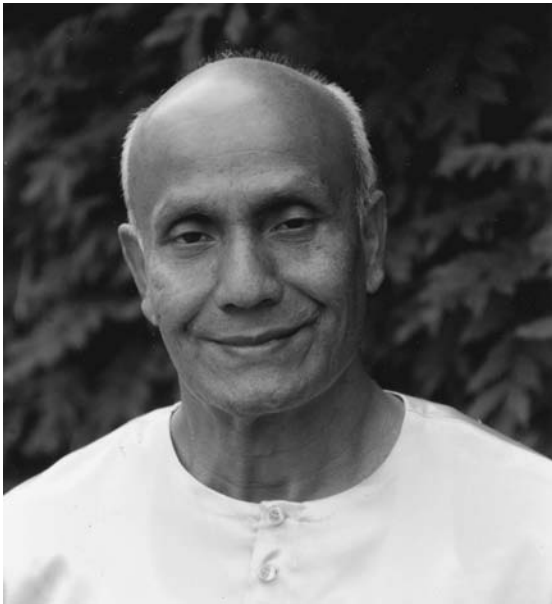
Further reading: Swami Chinmayananda, *The Holy Geeta: Commentary by Swami Chinmayananda* (Bombay: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, 1976); ———, *A Manual for Self-Unfoldment* (Bombay: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, 1985); ———, *Meditation and Life* (Madras: Chinmaya Publications Trust, 1967); ———, *Self-Unfoldment* (Piercy, Calif.: Chinmaya, 1992); Nancy Patchen, *The Journey of a Master: Swami Chinmayananda* (Berkeley, Calif.: Asian Humanities Press, 1989).

Chinmoy, Sri (1931–) *teacher of integral yoga and peace activist*

Sri Chinmoy has established centers and a following for his spiritual teachings, in the tradition

of Sri AUROBINDO, in many countries around the world. His teaching makes use of his own music and art, and of sports, as well as MEDITATION.

Chinmoy Kumar Ghose was born, the youngest of seven siblings, on August 27, 1931, to a Kshatriya family in Shakpura, a small village in the Chittagong District of East Bengal (now Bangladesh). His father, Shashi Kumar, was a supervisor for the railroad and later a banker. Both his father and his mother, Yogamaya Vishwas, died before Chinmoy was 12 years old. In 1944, the 12-year old child took residence at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, South India, where his eldest brother, a *sannyasi* (renunciant), and some elder members of the family were already living. Here he practiced meditation, wrote poetry and essays, and created songs as part of his spiritual practice. He also excelled in sports.



Sri Chinmoy (b. 1931), a popular yogi and peace activist, who has a worldwide following (Courtesy Sri Chinmoy Centre)

The young Chinmoy studied in Pondicherry for 20 years and often took the blessing of both Sri Aurobindo and the MOTHER. After achieving accomplishment in advanced states of meditation, he moved to New York City in 1964 at the age of 32 to share the spirituality of India with seekers in the West. He continues to travel widely, offering concerts, lectures, and public meditations. He does not charge a fee for his spiritual guidance or performances.

His teaching focuses on the heart's aspiration as the creative spiritual force that lies behind all great advances in religion, culture, and science. Self-transcendence and living in the heart advance fulfillment and attunement to the highest reality. His message is consistent with the basic themes of Hinduism: that God is inside each person and that God at every moment is transcending his own reality.

Sri Chinmoy has centers in various parts of the world where his students practice spiritual disciplines according to his inspiration and guidance. Each Sri Chinmoy Centre is dedicated to harmonizing the inner life of aspiration and the outer life of dedication.

Chinmoy has been creative in several fields—writing and performing songs and music, creating visual art, and engaging in sports. He sponsors many events in support of peace and international cooperation, including the Sri Chinmoy Oneness-Home Peace Run, a relay that covers more than 77 countries. His extensive Web site offers information about all of these activities.

Further reading: Sri Chinmoy, *The Garland of Nation-Souls: Complete Talks at the United Nations* (Deerfield, Fla.: Health Communications, 1995); ———, *Mother India's Lighthouse: India's Spiritual Leaders* (Blauvelt, N.Y.: R. Steiner, 1973); ———, *The Oneness of the Eastern Heart and the Western Mind*, Parts 1–3 (Jamaica, N.Y.: Agni Press, 2003–4).

chit See [SAT-CHIT-ANANDA](#).