

The Lighthouse Beacon

A quarterly publication for Lighthouse Center members and friends
Lighthouse Center, Inc. is a non-profit spiritual development center founded by Chetana Catherine Florida

Gurudev Shree Chitrabhann's Message

THE WAY OF AHIMSA

Dear Friends,
Today our meditation is on *Ahimsa*. Meditation is to experience peace. Peace is possible only in the presence of *Ahimsa*. So, *Ahimsa* is the need of our journey. What is *Ahimsa*? *Ahimsa* is feeling reverence for all life.



A FOR AWARENESS

“A” stands for awareness. We need to see our own Self in the mirror of consciousness. And seeing ourselves, we draw our own portrait of what we want to become and of what we really are. If we go lovingly closer to our Self and experience our Self, we will be able to experience peace with others as with our Self. We will experience our true Self. “I am sentient energy; I am the one who is animating everything. So, why do I not animate my Self and those who come in touch with me?” Then we peacefully portray our own picture in harmony with the universe. We experience that “I am animating the body, I am animating the senses, and I am animating whatsoever I touch.”

This is the journey to self-realization. Though we often resist this, this journey has to start with ourselves. But the light of self-realization can be dazzling as even daylight to a person who has been sleeping for a long time in the dark. One has to train one’s eyes to be ready to take the light of such realization, and we do that with meditation and increased awareness.

As we become aware of our loving sentient energy, we go deeper and deeper to experience that “I am here to know my “I”-ness.” When it dawns, we realize our oneness with all life. This is *Ahimsa*.

H FOR HARMONY

Then “H” comes for harmony. “I will be a harmonious presence on this earth and will cause no harm.” This is respect for all life. That can happen with Reverence for Life. Vibrations of violence beget violence. If we focus on violence, then violence will be our habit. But if every day we think, “I am going to experience the presence of peace,” we start feeling peace. Gradually we engulf our-selves with peaceful vibrations. If we live in this way, this will become our shield. This will become our support. This will also become our protector from outside violence.

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Fall 2005





The Lighthouse Center

The Lighthouse Center, Inc., located in Whitmore Lake, Michigan, is a nondenominational meditation center founded in 1979 by Chetena Catherine Florida.

It was incorporated in 1989 as a nonprofit organization, and currently has over 300 members.

740 East Shore Drive
P.O. Box 645
Whitmore Lake, MI 48189
Phone: 734-449-0611
Fax: 734-449-5004

For More Information

Call 734-663-2218, or visit
www.lighthousecenterinc.org

Our Mission

We are committed to inner peace and peace in the world, as we practice Ahimsa (nonviolence) toward ourselves and others. We respect other points of view and strive to live in harmony with nature and all living beings. This is the greatest opportunity for spiritual growth and enlightenment.

Our Philosophy

We believe ... in the Divine Consciousness within everyone.

We believe ... in Ahimsa, nonviolence, in all of our thoughts, words, and actions, including the practice of vegetarianism.

We believe ... that the Truth has many aspects, and we respect other points of view.

We believe ... in acting as examples of humanity, as we express our love and compassion and Ahimsa.

We believe ... that in doing our meditations and spiritual practices, we begin to successfully live at peace within ourselves and in the world.

revised 2005

Everyone is Welcome

The Lighthouse Center community is a diverse group of individuals with a common goal of practicing Ahimsa (nonviolence).

Everyone is Welcome

You do not have to be a member to join us for classes and meditations.

Sponsorship

The Lighthouse Center depends on its member and friends to sustain it with their generous donations of money, time and talent.

Membership

If you do choose to become a member, pledges of \$360 a year (\$30 a month) are gratefully accepted. Volunteering of time can contribute towards your pledge (1 hour equals \$10 in pledge). See form at back of this publication

Getting Involved

The Lighthouse has various committees (open to all members and friends), a Board of Directors, and a Director of Operations to collectively develop our various goals and manage the daily operations of our center.

Assisting in running the center and helping out in different functions is a wonderful way to make a difference and develop new friendships.

Schedule of Classes and Events

Get on the electronic and/or postal mailing list by filling out the form in the back of this publication. Voluntary donations for printing/ mailing costs gratefully accepted.

Gurudev - cont.

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Vibrations of violence or vibrations of peace do not come from outside; they come from inside. In the beginning, there will be some kind of conflict, but respect your life. Say, "I am not going to create any violence to myself." And if any negative thought of hate, anger, resentment comes, say: "No, I don't want it. I am peace." Tell those violent thoughts, "Get out." Take them out just as we tell children, "Please, don't make noise; I want to sleep." In the same way, we tell our mind what to do. Sometimes it is easy to tell others, but it is much more difficult to tell our own self.

Violence percolates from negativities. Each individual has to take charge of oneself and create *harmony* in oneself. Unless we create peace inside, we won't be able to create peace outside. To tell others we use words but to tell ourselves, we have to have the experience of peace. It is easy to say words, but it is a challenge to tune into the feeling. To connect within, we meditate and experience peaceful presence of Reverence for Life. This way, the practice of *harmony* gradually permeates every cell of being.

I FOR INTEGRATION

Then the "I" in *Ahimsa* is for integration. Integrate every thing: body, mind and soul. Let us bring equanimity, equality and consideration to all races, all religions, all ethnic groups, and all life. Take out the division from your mind. Take out: "She is a Christian. He is a Jew. She is

Chinese. He is Indian." These are all walls of conditions. These walls are not outside; they are built inside our mind. These walls are separating us from others and the presence of our own life.

Integrate! Be integration! We need a heart which integrates all, a heart which understands that all want to live, all want to have peace, all want to eat; there is no difference among all of us. Love does not have time to waste on hate. Love knows how to forgive. Love knows how to forget. Love knows how to move on. This way we are working on integrations and slowly we feel integrated.

First, start with the mind, then with the words, then with the deeds. We integrate the way we think, speak and act. When we say, "Thank you," the thanks is first in our thinking, then it comes in our words, and then in our action. If a person is receptive, he does not wear "gloves," then the feelings touch him or her. But for vibrations to be sincere, they must be harmonious, integrated and whole: integration of thoughts, expressions and deeds.

N FOR NOBILITY (*)

Nobility reminds us of our magnanimous quality of the soul. It generates the feeling of generosity and compassion of all living beings. Nobility is a generous virtue of thought, word and action. It knows how to forgive. Forgiveness is

(*) *Ahimsa can also be spelled Ahinsa*

liberation – liberation from hate, revenge and animosity – which comes from conditioning. By forgiving we liberate our soul from the negativity. Nobility also knows that not to forgive is a commitment to sorrow and suffering.

Nobility is the nature of the spirit. It is never mean, it does not discriminate, it does not come from birth or wealth, post or position. It emanates from compassionate heart of amity. Its feeling of love flows towards all – small or big. It has no walls of prejudice of group, race or religion.

S FOR SERVICE

The "S" in *Ahimsa* stands for service. Serve somebody. Let your life be a service. Through service we become alive. Have you thought how many people and things serve us? We breathe air; we drink water; we eat vegetables; we wear clothes; always we are receiving the services of other living beings. And in exchange, what are we giving? We exploit people, animals and the earth. Day by day, the earth is losing its beauty, its energy. If we don't respect the earth, we will not respect life anywhere.

We need to serve and make service a part of our living. We need to live and help to let live. Some people ask, "Where can I go to serve?" I say, "Serve wherever you are. There is no need to go anywhere." You can do service in many ways. Ask, "Today, how can I serve other living beings?" In this way, we

contribute. One more person serving is a blessing to the earth.

A FOR ABSTINENCE

The last "A" of *Ahimsa* stands for abstinence. Abstinence from those things which pollute our vibrations. Abstinence from products which cause pain and suffering. Abstinence from liquor which confuses our thinking. Abstinence from foods which do not give health. Unhealthy foods may taste good but they hurt our body, thinking and life. Our cells are created from the foods we eat, and according to the foods we eat, our vibrations are created. It influences our thinking, our reasoning, our sensing. To promote vibrations of peace and harmony, therefore, we need to abstain from harmful products and the foods which come from violence and suffering. The senses are a gateway to all kinds of vibrations.

So, my friends, as we meditate, we realize that "I am a living presence in this body. I am sentient, conscious energy. I am love. I am Peace. I am compassion. I am animating body. I am these senses, these brain cells, and all my existence, as I feel myself. I am *Ahimsa*." This is the way we can live with Reverence for Life and Be A Blessing To This World.

NAMO ARIHANTANAM
Love and Blessings,

Chitrabhanu

Description of Lighthouse Events

WEEKLY

◆**Sunday Candlelight Meditation and Healing**
6:00pm-7:00pm. All are welcome for a candlelight meditation. Healers available for anyone who wants healing during meditation.

BI-WEEKLY

◆**Friday Intensive Meditation**
7:30pm-10:00pm the first and third Friday of the month. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. Meditation lasts approximately 2 ½ hours, during which time individuals may quietly enter and exit the sanctuary. It is suggested, because of past experiences, that one already be a mantra meditator.

◆Sunday School / Youth Group

10:00am-11:00am the first and third Sunday of the month for children ages 2-18 and their parents. Meditation at 10am., snack at 10:30am, lesson at 10:45am.

BI-MONTHLY

Sunday Board Meeting

9:00am-12:00pm the fourth Sunday of the month.
NOTE: Occasionally, due to holidays and travel commitments, the Board meets earlier in the month, so please call **Prachi Patricia Thiel** (734) 449-4381 to verify exact date and time.

"Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man."

Mohandas Gandhi

Upcoming Events

All classes, events and meetings are held at the Lighthouse Center (740 East Shore Drive, Whitmore Lake) unless otherwise noted. Check the e-mail listing for changes to published date or contact Prachi at (734) 449-4381 or thielp17@yahoo.com.

Fall 2005

November

Visioning Process: Third half-day meeting on Sunday, November 6, meditate at 9:45 a.m., meet 10:05 a.m.-noon, facilitated by Devendra Don Levitt. We will continue the Lighthouse community discussion of plans for the future, exploring further strengths and weaknesses, as well as taking a look at the current membership and pledges. All are welcome! Come help plan our future!

Dimensions In Light Festival:

Holistic Living: Saturday, November 12, 11:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., at Washtenaw Community College. Dennis Chernin, M.D., keynote speaker. \$5.00 admission or volunteer and get in free (call Priti: 734-761-7804). More information: Nirmala 734-663-2218.

Thanksgiving Eve Meditation:

Wednesday, November 23, 7:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m., with veggie potluck to follow.

New Meditation Lecture:

Friday, November 25, 7:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m., given by Nirmala. Cost: \$35.00 or \$10.00 to repeat. Register with Prachi: 734-449-4381.

December

Christmas Eve Meditation:

Saturday, December 24, 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

All Students Holiday Party:

Friday, December 30. Gather 7:00 pm, begin 7:30 pm. Open to all meditation students. Veggie potluck.

New Year's Eve Meditation:

Saturday, December 31, 11:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m.

New Spiritual Names

During Gurudevji's July visit, two of our young people received spiritual names:

Sharda Lauren March (SHAR-DAH)
Goddess of Wisdom

Vira Melissa Schmitt-Heatlie (VEER-AH)
Bravely moving in the direction of Consciousness

Any Lighthouse member can be initiated with a spiritual name by committing to the following: 1) meditation, 2) Ahimsa (nonviolence), and 3) becoming a vegetarian. Every time we speak to someone using their spiritual name, we are speaking to their Higher Self, in a higher vibration.

Congratulations to Sharda and Vira!

GURUDEV CHITRABHANUJI VISITS LIGHTHOUSE CENTER

On the weekend of May 13-15th, Gurudev Chitrabhanuji traveled to Michigan to join in the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Jain Society of Greater Detroit. While he was there, he also came to the Lighthouse Center in Whitmore Lake for a two-day seminar. We at the Lighthouse Center were honored to have him with us again, and over 75 students from all walks of life came to listen to his talks. He spoke about our purpose in life, and asked each of us to look inside our hearts for the answer. A purpose guided by *Ahimsa* and Reverence for Life, a purpose that follows *Anekantavada*, seeing all points of view in coming to the Truth. He inspired each of us to find our own purpose through our daily practice of meditation, and through our other spiritual practices of vegetarianism and service to others.

In addition to being with Gurudevji at the Lighthouse Center, we were also happy to be with him at

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Lighthouse Center Calendar

November 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 7:30pm - 9:30pm Chakra Class	4 7:30pm - 10:10pm Intensive Meditation	5
6 9am Visioning Process 6pm - 7pm Candlelight	7	8	9	10 7:30pm - 9:30pm Chakra Class	11	12 11am - 7pm Dimensions in Light Festival
13 6pm - 7pm Candlelight	14	15	16	17 7:30pm - 9:30pm Chakra Class	18 7:30pm - 10:10pm Intensive Meditation	19
20 10:30am Sunday School 6pm - 7pm Candlelight	21	22	23 7:30pm - 8:30pm Thanksgiving Eve Meditation	24 <i>Thanksgiving</i>	25 7pm - 9:30pm New Meditation Lecture	26
27 10:30am Board Meeting 6pm - 7pm Candlelight	28	29	30			

December 2005

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 7:30pm - 10:10pm Intensive Meditation	3
4 10:30am Sunday School 6pm - 7pm Candlelight	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 6pm - 7pm Candlelight	12	13	14	15	16 7:30pm - 10:10pm Intensive Meditation	17
18 10:30am Sunday School 6pm - 7pm Candlelight	19	20	21	22	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> 6:30pm - 7:30pm X'mas Eve Meditation
25 <i>Christmas</i>	26	27	28	29	30 7:30pm All Students Holiday Party	31 11:30pm - 12:30am New Year's Eve Meditation



Board Update

We Support What We Create

The Board has moved forward in initiating a visioning process for all those interested in the Lighthouse Center. The process is open to all members to help us learn what you would like the Lighthouse to be, now and in the future. Most of us tend to support what we create; what would you like to create?

Devendra Don Levitt has kindly agreed to help organize and facilitate this process, and has received excellent feedback for his work. We are thankful to have his professional expertise in this area.

Initially, we have planned three workshops; please consider attending at least one to share your vision with us. They are open to all and are collaborative sessions. The first workshop held on September 18th had 22 members and two main questions were asked: 1. Celebrating our past: What has the Lighthouse Center meant to you? 2. Dreaming about our Future: What kind of future would be exciting to you at the Lighthouse? What kind of future would you have the energy to create?

The responses to these questions provided some themes for Gurudev to talk about in his visit the weekend of September 23-25. At the following session on October 9, the group of 20 members discussed three main themes: 1. Potential values/purpose/mission; 2. Compared the Center to another local spiritual organization/spiritual leadership; and 3. Similarities/differences in spirituality in the

East and West. We even began an analysis of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis). A third session on November 6 will have been completed by the time you read this newsletter. We hope to complete our SWOT analysis at that time. We will also cover a brief summary of financial and membership data. And then we will move on to the mission, key strategic issues, goals/objectives, strategies, and initiatives. Perhaps we will have another session after the holiday season.

* * * * *

In May, five Board Members completed their terms: *Nirmala Nancy Hanke, Aruna Olga Bachmann, Kadambary Stacy Brodock, Niana Nancy Sloan and Lakshmi Laura Smith.* This group and the five in italics listed at the end of this letter led the Lighthouse through a difficult time after the passing of Chetana Catherine Florida. Other Board Members who helped during that time were Divya Julie Hutton, Joyti Betsy Thorne, and Savita Terri Heller. We appreciate the work, dedication and commitment they provided on our behalf. Under the leadership of *Nirmala Nancy Hanke and Adinath Mark Hutton,* they did a wonderful job of reviewing and adjusting the cost structure of the

Center. As a result, we are continuing with a solid financial base. At current spending levels, the Lighthouse will continue for many years into the future. We have begun, like most not-for-profit organizations, asking folks to consider donating items that we have purchased in the past, such as water, food and supplies for the Center. So, when you run across those great sales, please keep the Center in mind, too.

Many of us continue to pledge an annual financial gift to the Center. Sometimes, one chooses a lump sum gift for the year, or to pay on a pledge gift throughout the year. We truly appreciate your gifts and continued commitment and support they provide the Center. As a gentle reminder for those of us who have pledged a gift throughout the year, please, consider keeping your pledge payments as current as possible. This is another way to help support what you create.

Thank you!
The Lighthouse Board,

Prachi Patricia Thiel, Namrata Lisa Abrams, Bharati Brenda Hieber, Jagruti Lucinda Orwoll, Priti Paula Yokum, Nirali Becky Klienschmidt, Narendra Dan Bachman, Devendra Don Levitt, Anu Radha Mary Morin, and Asmita Anna Schmitt Reichert

GURUDEV VISIT

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the Jain Temple for the 30th anniversary celebration. Arvindbei Shah, who coordinated the celebration, invited us to be a part of the Cultural Program, asking us to sing the "Maitri Bhavanu." As always, we were welcomed and made to feel at home by all the Jains. Watching the intricate and beautiful Indian dances, performed by children and adults alike, and listening to the story of how forty original families had a dream of someday having their own temple, and how that dream did come to fruition, was truly an inspiration.

We all came away from the weekend with Gurudevji and the Jain Temple renewed, reenergized, and committed anew on our spiritual journey.

With much Gratitude and Peace,
Namaste, *Nirmala Hanke*

Board Resignation

Asmita Anna Schmitt Reichert has resigned from the Lighthouse board, citing personal reasons, in a letter to the group's e-mail. Prachi Patricia Thiel will serve as Interim President until the next election in May, 2006. If you would like a copy of Asmita's resignation letter, please contact Prachi at thielp17@yahoo.com or call her at 734-449-4381.

DONATION/PLEDGE FORM

Please print

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Other Phone _____

(indicate fax, cellular, etc.)

Email address _____

Put me on the Lighthouse Center email list Yes _____ No _____

_____ Please check if this is a new address, phone, or pledge change

I want to help establish our Lighthouse Center on a firm financial base.

1. Enclosed is my **DONATION** of \$ _____.

2. My total **PLEDGE** for the calendar year of _____ is \$ _____,

to be paid in equal installments of \$ _____

Monthly _____ Quarterly _____ Semi-annually _____ Annually _____

*Note: Because we have monthly operating expenses of at least \$3200,
it is helpful if pledge payments are made on a monthly basis.*

Pledge amount included with this form \$ _____ Balance due \$ _____

_____ Please check to have pledge envelopes mailed to you

Signature _____ Date _____

We are a non-profit charitable organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code;
therefore, gifts to the Lighthouse Center, Inc. are tax deductible as provided by law.

Please make checks payable to **Lighthouse Center, Inc.** and mail to:
Treasurer, Lighthouse Center, Inc.

**Directions to:
THE LIGHTHOUSE CENTER
740 East Shore Drive
Whitmore Lake, MI**

Lighthouse Hotline (734) 449-0611

FROM I-94, US-23 AND ANN ARBOR

Exit US-23N at Exit 50 (6 Mile Road), but do not turn left or right, just go straight and follow Main Street into Whitmore Lake (past high school on left). At the red traffic light at East Shore Drive, turn right. Follow East Shore Drive approximately 1.2 miles and the Lighthouse Center will be on the right. (*Driveway is marked with sign and four vertical reflectors.*)

FROM I-96, US-23 AND BRIGHTON

Exit US-23S at Exit 53. Turn left. This street becomes southbound Main Street. Follow Main Street through Whitmore Lake. At the red traffic light at East Shore Drive, turn left. Follow East Shore Drive approximately 1.2 miles and the Lighthouse Center will be on the right. (*Driveway is marked with sign and four vertical reflectors.*)

Lighthouse Center, Inc.
P.O. Box 645
Whitmore Lake, MI 48189