

# Sthita Prajna



## Guru Vandana

*Yadanugrahamātreṇa śokamohau vinaśyatau  
tasmai śrī desikendrāya namo'stu paramātmāne*

I bow to the Guru who is the very embodiment of the  
Supreme Spirit by whose blessings one is released from sadness  
and desires

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**VOLUME 11**

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## FROM THE EDITORS :

*The Spring 2010 issue of Sthita Prajna marks a rebirth and revamp of the magazine in its format, layout and style. The substance of course remains the same. The magazine is intended to provide informative and insightful articles for our readers as we tread the path of spirituality together under the guidance of our gurus.*

*Each issue will carry regular features, including an uplifting message from Sad Gurudev Paramahansa Hariharananda, whose eternal wisdom steadily illuminates our journey. Prajnanavani, the sweet voice of Paramahansa Prajnanananda, brings practical and immediate relief for our struggles on the path of individual enlightenment.*

*The newly introduced feature, Practical Spirituality, will record the reflections of an everyday soul, who like most of our readers, is living and working in the world and seeking spiritual balance.*

*Rama Katha continues to bring us the story of Lord Rama, an exemplary model of how one should live one's life and fulfill one's duties even under the greatest duress. Pariprashna answers age old questions with concrete examples and pithy responses that compel us to pause and reflect. In addition, we now carry relevant excerpts from some of Paramahansa Prajnanananda's seminal works, including The Universe Within, an amazing correlation between the outer universe and the individual soul.*

*Each issue carries a short story that illustrates both the pitfalls and the pleasures that life can bring and how best to take them in one's stride. Finally, we include the faces and voices of Prajnana Mission's most priceless treasure, the growing children of Balashram. We hope you enjoy this issue and those to come.*

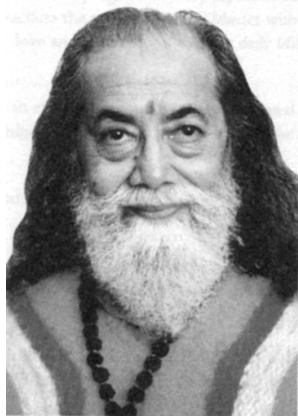
*Happenings and highlights around the world and across ashrams are covered each quarter.*

# MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

## On Yoga and Meditation

The simple meaning of yoga is union. To be with someone or something is union, and this is yoga. For example if you are hungry and want to have food, being united with food is the appeasement of hunger. If you are tired and want to relax, being united with your bed is also yoga.

Ordinarily, people think yoga means physical exercise or breathing techniques, but it is a philosophy of life. It is the art of perfect living. You are continuously united. In every breath you are united with cosmic energy. In every thought you are united with the power of thought. If you have good thoughts then you have more joy. If you have bad thoughts you feel unhappy or demoralized. In daily life we are united with both people and material objects.



The first union begins with the soul and body. If you understand your existence, you realize that you exist because of this union. Your total being is nothing but the union of body and soul; the union of soul with the mind and the union of soul with thought. This union is continuously with you.

The second level of union is the union with breath. You feel union through the breath when you are united with the outer world, whether it is with family members, friends or colleagues, in the work place in the environment, with different objects, or with material things you have accumulated in your life.

When one observes this union in daily life, one does not feel incomplete, "I do not want to be a limited person, I want to be united with an unlimited

source of life and energy.” The ultimate state of yoga is to be united with divinity, with God. That is why it is said that the real union between the individual soul and the universal self, or God, is the ultimate end of yoga. Hence, this is the first meaning of yoga as union.

The second meaning of yoga is to discipline your life, discipline your lifestyle, discipline your desires, discipline your day to day activities and discipline your thoughts. Through discipline you can develop a higher state of living and a higher state of consciousness. This art of union, starting with the body, then the outer world and with people, and ultimately God, can be easily experienced and realized if one lives a life of discipline.

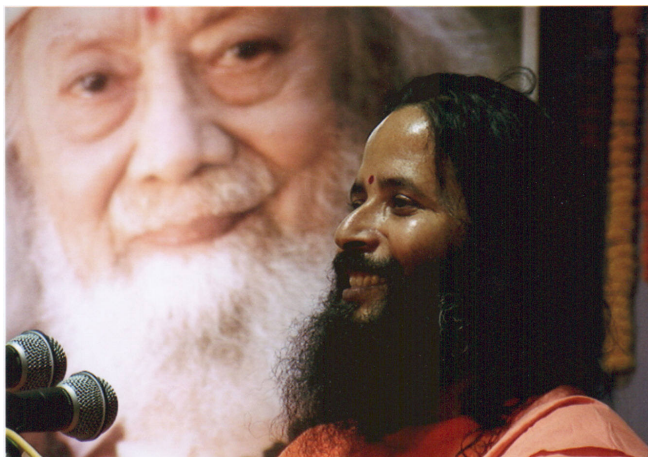
The third meaning of yoga is realization. It is said that yoga is the state of realization. Through this union you realize. First you realize that you are the soul living in the body, not the body itself. The body is changing but you are the changeless soul. You are united with the soul. You are also united with family and friends, but that is only temporary. Realize the temporariness of outer relationships and the outer world. To realize the one’s essential divinity and to be united with God is the eternal union and the ultimate state of yoga. Yoga is a philosophy of life, and its practical aspect is to do special exercises, special breathing techniques and the special art of meditation. Thus yoga has different levels of understanding.

### **Dates to Remember April to June 2010**

Swami Sriyukteshwar’s Birthday	May 10
Foundation Day of Jagatpur Ashram	May 17
Birthday of Jagadguru Shankaracharya	May 18
Birthday of Lord Buddha	May 27
Birthday of Gurudev	May 27
Devasnana Purnima	June 26

# PRAJNANAVANI – THE VOICE OF WISDOM

## The Fleeting Nature of Life



*Nalini dala gata jala mati taralam tadvat jivita matisaya capalam  
viddi vyadhi abhimana grastam lokam shoka hatam ca samastam*

**Bhaja Govindam**

To help us understand the transitory nature of life, Shankara compares it to the water on a lotus leaf. You will find this example in the Bhagavad Gita as well. *Padmapatra mivambhasa* - this simile could be interpreted to explain many things about life.

First let us look at the symbolism of the lotus itself. The lotus is a flower taken as a symbol in yogic scriptures. The lotus plant is born from mud and comes up through the water

but stays above the water. It has another unique quality. It blooms with the sunrise and folds with the sunset. Water gives support and strength but the real purpose of life is to look at the Sun or God. Let the flower of life be always directed towards God.

The lotus has its stem in the water but the leaf and the flower are above. If this world is like the pond, then our life should be like the lotus – staying in the world but rising above it. The water on the lotus leaf

stays like a pearl. The water cannot touch the leaf. The drop of water or even a dew drop only moves on the leaf.

The body is like the lotus leaf. The soul in the body is like a drop of water. Below is the water, the vast formless God. The soul in the body is vibrant with wind or breath but with a strong wind if the water drops falls into the water it goes back to the source or to the cosmic consciousness.

The same example could be used to demonstrate the fleeting nature and uncertainty of human life. The life in this body is for how long? Is there any guarantee? You may be the president of a country and a very powerful person. But no one can give you a guarantee. Like that water drop on the lotus leaf, life is very unstable and fleeting. As long as the drop of water is able to remain on the leaf, it can shine like a pearl, but with the slightest breeze it can disappear.

In another one of his works Shankara said,

“O God, forgive me for my forgetfulness. Every day we see our life span decreasing, youth is fleeting, the day gone does not come back and

everything is disappearing in the mouth of time. Material prosperity is fickle like the waves in the ocean, but we are still deluded. You are the only refuge, please save us from this” (Sivaparadha kshamapana Stotram).

It is not how long one lives, but how one lives that matters. It is with the beauty within it that life is measured, not with time. In the second half of the verse, Shankara describes the world as afflicted with the disease of ego and sorrow and everyone is overpowered with disease and ego.

The word Vyadhi is a compound word; *adhi* means mental illness and *vyadhi* means physical trouble. Physical illness could lead to mental depression and mental suffering could be the cause of physical suffering. All are suffering from *bhava roga* or the worldly disease of ignorance, infected with *abhimana* – ego, and as a consequence the entire world is in sorrow. Ego hinders one from leading a virtuous life.

There are three lokas or planes of existence - heaven, earth and hell. All these three are not free from grief and

suffering. There is suffering even in heaven. Heaven is a place of temporary pleasure only. Adi Shankara is saying even people in heaven suffer.

We all are in search of permanent happiness which drives us to find it by various actions. But permanent, unlimited happiness cannot be found in the impermanent, limited world. That joy is derived only when one has a relationship with God and one's consciousness merges in divine consciousness.

Shankara is reminding us that life is temporary. We are all afflicted with disease and ego. Ego is the biggest problem.

Ego enters us in such a nice way that we think we have no ego. If you are sad when someone scolds you, then you have a measurable ego. We have so much expectation that people should praise us, be around us and appreciate us. Adi Shankara is pointing out that the world is temporary and that people are suffering with vyadhi and abhimana. How many of us really want to be in knowledge and truth? If we sincerely want to be, how intensely should we be trying for that? We forget but let us try again and again. The root cause is ignorance and the guru removes that ignorance.



Paramahansa Prajnananadaji with the king of Puri,  
Gajapati Maharaj Sri Divyasingh Dev At the 11th IIKYS



# PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

## Tongue Rolled Up

When I was first initiated into Kriya Yoga over a decade ago, I remember being puzzled when Baba told us to keep the tongue rolled up when we meditated. He explained that the tongue was one of the most dangerous foes to spirituality and needed to constantly be kept under control if we were to stay focused. That seemed quite an accusation for a seemingly small and insignificant organ. However, the tongue is apparently part of the swathisthana center, the center of desire, and one of the hardest centers to gain control over.

Without mastery over the tongue, we are vulnerable in two significant ways. We can utter sharp and hurtful words that wound and pierce those around us, leaving scars that never quite heal. We all know people who seem to mean well but whose speech is like a knife stabbing in places where we are most fragile. The uncontrolled tongue can destroy relationships, divide families and darken the spirit. But the damage the

tongue can do doesn't simply end with speech. The tongue is also capable of destroying our health. By devouring unhealthy food or consuming any food in unhealthy quantities, the tongue can lead us into obesity, heart disease and untimely death.

It makes sense that the uncontrolled tongue tends to speak without discrimination and at the same time consume without discrimination. It has certainly proven to be so in my life. I've always prided myself on having no vices. I don't drink, I don't smoke, and I have never tried drugs. I avoid medication unless it's absolutely necessary. I don't even drink coffee. And yet, for the past thirty years, I have unfortunately been at the complete mercy of my tongue. It has controlled my life, leading me into bitter disputes, broken friendships and destroyed relationships. It has ruined my health, causing me to yield to every temptation—rich foods, decadent desserts, and innumerable second helpings. It has clogged my

arteries, increased my weight beyond healthy limits, and put a strain on my heart. It has limited the things I have been able to do. It has affected my self-esteem, and caused me to step back from many wonderful opportunities.

Over the past decade, I have made it my goal to diminish each of my character flaws, of which I have many. I have been working on lessening my ego, controlling my temper, increasing my patience, and being less judgmental. As I get older, I know the time to work on these things and strive for perfection grows shorter, as do the energy and vitality needed to make much needed progress. This year, I decided that I would finally tackle the one flaw I had given up on. I decided to tackle my uncontrolled tongue. Baba told me a long time ago that it was my tongue that got me into trouble and that once I controlled it, I would make rapid progress. Unable to gain that mastery, I had pushed it aside and focused on other things. But now it was time.

It was actually a conversation with my son that finally precipitated my decision.

We were talking about all the dreams I once had and how after much struggle, I had managed to achieve almost all of them. I wondered aloud why I could do so many things, achieve so much, and yet not be able to achieve control over my tongue. I had been able to work on the speech aspect, watching my words carefully, being careful never to hurt or attack. In that regard, I knew I had made quite a bit of progress. But when it came to the food aspect, I was still completely helpless. His response was that I should think about what that lack of mastery said about me as a person, and what message it sent to those around me.

Once those words sank in, I knew I had to achieve control. I am a control freak by nature, always wanting to be in charge, always wanting to plan ahead, and get things right. So how could I let one part of my life be so out of control? That's all it took, that realization that every part of our physical selves as well as our inner selves needs to be in our grasp in order for us to grow. That tongue of mine needed to stay rolled up if I was to truly achieve my goals.

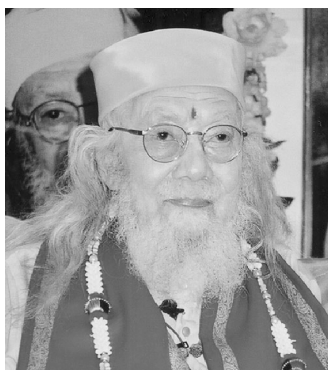
I have since taken on this final challenge and have been making rapid progress. The weight has been melting off as I train my newly mastered tongue to eat what is healthy, and in moderate portions. Food

is no longer a marvelous temptation but a fuel for this human body which in turn fuels my spiritual growth. It is a victory I am extremely proud of.

*Jyothi Bathina*

## **Gurudev Baba Hariharanandaji's 103<sup>rd</sup> Jayanti Celebrations**

**May 27, 2010**



Our beloved Baba Hariharanandaji's birthday will be celebrated in the Divine presence of Paramahansa Prajnananandaji at the Mother center Miami with a special five day seminar.

Hariharananda Gurukulam at Balighai and all other ashrams of India and around the globe will celebrate the occasion with special prayers and meditation.

On this special day, of his Jayanti let us think of him and pray to him and invoke his blessings and guidance in the path of love and devotion"

# MYTHS AND METAPHORS

## Rama Katha



*“Caritam raghunāthasya  
śatakoti pravistaram  
ekaikam akṣaram pumsām  
mahāpātaka naśanam”*

The story of Rama is known far and wide. Each letter of Ramayana has the potency to alleviate the greatest of sins.

### The Wedding

Elaborate arrangements were made for the marriage of Rama and Sita. Messengers went from Mithila to Ayodhya with the glad tidings of Rama breaking the bow and invitations for the wedding. Dasaratha was overjoyed at the news and wanted to give the messenger a necklace as a gift but the messenger refused it, saying he is from the girl's side. In India the parents of the daughter do not take food or accept gifts from the son in law's house. Then he explained that even though Sita was a princess she treated even the servants with respect and love and they all felt that she was their child. Dasaratha traveled to Mithila

with his priests, ministers and others.

The wedding took place in Margashira in the month of November. It was Rama's wish that his brothers should also be married. Along with the wedding of Sita and Rama, at the suggestion of Vasishtha and Vishvamitra, it was decided that the daughter of Janaka, Urmila would be given to Lakshmana. Similarly Mandavi and Shrutakirti, the daughters of Kusadhwaja (the brother of Janaka) would be given to Bharata and Shatrughna as their wives.

The marriages were performed in a grand manner among much merriment in Mithila. Many beautiful versions

and poetic description of incidents during the wedding are given in the Tulasī Ramayana of Tulasidas and the Bhavartha Ramayana of Ekanath. It is said that when it was time to exchange garlands, Rama was not bending his head before his wife, but Lakshmana convinced him to do it just once. When it was Lakshmana's turn, he apparently would not repeat the mantra that said, "I will accept your daughter" as he felt only Brahmins accept gifts and not the warrior class - until Rama finally made him say it.

The union of Sita and Rama took place in the kingdom of Videha. Videha means not to have body consciousness. It is only when one goes beyond the body sense that the individual atma – Sita, can merge with the paramatma – Rama.

### **Back to Ayodhya**

After the celebrations were completed, the sage

Vishvamitra took leave of all to continue his journey to the Himalayas for his penance. Thus ends the key role of the sage in the Ramayana. Having taken them from Ayodhya and trained Rama and Lakshmana to get rid of the asuras for the good of the world, and having becoming instrumental in their weddings, he returns them to Dasaratha in Mithila.

On their journey they meet with another obstacle, proving that happiness is never permanent. Parashu Rama, who heard of Rama breaking the haradhanu, was enraged about it and challenged Rama to string another bow. When Rama succeeded, the sage lost his strength and realizing that Rama was none other than the Lord, retired to the forest to continue his penance.

This completes the Bala Kanda, the first Kanda of the sacred Ramayana.

## PARI PRASHNA

*Tadviddhi prani patena pariprashnena sevaya  
Upadekshyantite jnanam jnaninah tatvadarshinah*

### **What is religion?**

The meaning of the word religion is reunion. To be united with God through your prayer, through your love, and your sincere living is the real dharma of each individual. The real religion of each person is to love God, to love God's creation, to love the parents, to love the family members, to love your neighbor, to love your country, to love humanity, and to love God's creation. This is real religion. Religion is dharma, and that which is holding you in this body is your breath. Your breath is your real religion.

### **What is the ultimate goal of human life?**

The ultimate goal of human life is to perceive peace, bliss, and joy, to perceive love, to know the purpose of coming

to this earth and to fulfill that purpose. The purpose of coming to this world is not to collect the worldly toys of money, houses and other material wealth but to increase your spiritual treasures of love, compassion and kindness; to realize God. You have come from God and you have to go back to God. You have come to this world only to realize that God is the abode from whom you have come and you have to go back to Him. For that you have to work hard. Many people forget the real goal of life and become busy with worldly things. Be careful. Do not waste your precious time. Be humble, be divine. Follow the path of the Masters, the path which is directed by the realized, and you will reach the goal of life



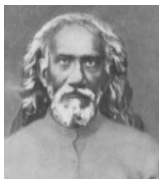
## Teachings of the Masters

*"The door of Kriya Yoga is open only to earnest seekers and sadhakas."*

Mahavatara Babaji

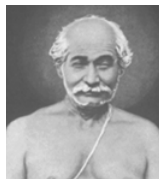
*"If the mind is not controlled and kept still in Brahman, knowledge of the Self (atma jnana) is impossible to attain.."*

Lahiri Mahasaya



*"The endless, eternal supreme Self lives equally in all, and never perishes with the body. The ignorant and unrealized allude to it as death."*

Swami Shriyukteshwar



*"When one practices breath-control through Kriya, one enjoys a blissful state and one becomes free from ego."*

Sanyal Mahasaya



*"Think and plan well before you take action, do not jump into anything at once."*

Paramahansa Yogananda



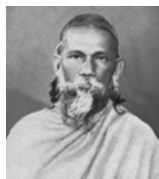
*"When one sincerely strives for inner fulfillment for a good period of time, one progresses in the path of perfection. Then one attains self-realization."*

Swami Satyananda



*"The Mind is the Lord of the senses, but breath rules the mind. So breath-control will lead you to mind control and liberation."*

Paramahansa Hariharananda



*"The wave is born in the ocean, but due to temporary delusion it thinks : "I am the wave." This 'wave consciousness' brings a sense of separation from the ocean of Divinity."*

Paramahansa Prajnanananda



## VALUABLE VOLUMES



IN THIS ISSUE WE HAVE EXCERPTS FROM  
*THE UNIVERSE WITHIN* AND *THE CHANGING  
NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS* BY  
PARAMAHAMSA PRAJNANANDA

### AN ELEMENTAL EXISTENCE (From *THE UNIVERSE WITHIN*)

#### Energy and Consciousness

Whether we acknowledge them or not, the elements are always present, surging, clashing, mingling and subsiding around us. It is from the five fundamental elements that creation began and continues to occur. The entire cosmos consists of the play of energy and consciousness. Energy is manifested in many ways, forms and names. If God is considered the formless aspect, then the elements are considered the embodiments of God's formless energy. In Hindu mythology, the form and the formless are represented by Shiva and Shakti, consciousness and energy. While Shiva is the

formless absolute, the unchanging consciousness behind creation, Shakti, his mate, is the boundless energy of creation itself, the constantly shifting and metamorphous nature of the five elements. The beauty and power of creation are represented through the dance of Shiva and Shakti, consciousness and energy.

#### God's Creation

The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)

Creation is the play of cosmic energy being manifested



in the form of matter and memory and being combined together with consciousness. Each human body, otherwise called the temple of the divine, is made of dust and returns to dust after death. Dust symbolizes the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and sky.

God created birds to fly in the sky, fish to swim and dive in the water, reptiles and other serpents to live in holes in the earth and wild animals to roam freely in the dense forests. It is only human beings whom God has created in His own image so that they have the supreme skill which no other animals possess: the power to think and create. Men can fly like birds, swim like fish, go underground into deep mines they have dug. Man has utilized this skill, but unfortunately, he has not tried hard enough to go the real source, to experience the state of inner fulfillment.

This is possible by exploring the treasure of the breath, which is the blessing of God and enables us to manifest love in life through the experience of calmness and peace. So beautiful is it to be born a human being, who can help himself and others to make

the inner and outer universe more beautiful.

### **The Elements and Their Attributes**

The Vedas, ancient Hindu scriptures considered as timeless wisdom revealed to the calm and tranquil mind of the seers, explain that first there was the Absolute. From the Soul, comes space - without space nothing can be created. Space is defined as that which has the attribute of sound, and which provides space for all things that have forms. From space comes the air. Air has two attributes, it possesses the quality of touch, as well as the quality of sound carried over from the space in which it was born. From air comes fire, which has three attributes, color as well as the touch of air and the sound of space. Fire produces water, which carries taste as well as the three other attributes of color, touch and sound. From water comes the earth, which consists of all the five attributes: smell, taste, color, touch and sound.

### **The Combination of Elements**

The five elements were first created in their subtle form. By combining among

themselves they become the gross elements that we can perceive. The process by which the subtle elements combine to become the perceptible gross elements is called panchikarana in Sanskrit. This combination takes place by a five-fold division and combination. The unit of each subtle element divides into two. One half stays intact while the other half divides itself into four parts containing  $1/8^{\text{th}}$  of the original unit. In the next step each of the half combines with an eighth of all the other four elements to form a unit of the gross element. Each element thus will be a combination of half of itself with  $1/8^{\text{th}}$  of each of the other four making up the other half. As an example a unit of air would consist of half air and an eighth each of the other four elements of ether, fire, water and earth.

Just as the Sun and its energy are one, God and these

elements are one. The Vedas go on to connect these five elements to Man. From the earth with its five attributes comes food, food is transformed into seed, which includes human seed or semen and ovum, which in turn gives rise to human birth. Thus Man too is composed of the self-same five elements which make up the external universe. These five elements constitute as well the universe within. The Vedas declare that whatever is seen in the cosmos can also be seen in the human body. The Jnana Sankalini Tantra declares that the entire universe resides within the human body.

This may seem incredible at first. How can the vast magnitude of the entire universe possibly be contained within the relatively tiny human body? The Vedic seers have a precise and scientific explanation...

*(to be continued in the next issue)*

# THE CHANGING WORLD AND THE CHANGELESS SUBJECT

(From *The Changing Nature of Relationships*)

What is this world? In the Vedic scriptures the world is described as the object we experience through the five sense organs. Since we experience through the five sense organs, with the help of the mind, this world is nothing but what we see, hear, smell, taste and touch. Our world is composed of what we discover through our senses, mind and intellect during our lifetime. This world, as we observe it, has two major qualities. The ancient teachers described it as

nama rupatmaka visva

– nama means name and rupa means form. Names and forms define the world, and anything that has a name and a form is limited. The second characteristic is that every object changes with time. The world of objects is always changing.

## **The Changeless Subject**

Among the world of objects, whatever we experience beyond the senses, the mind and intellect, is known

as the subject. It is therefore crucial to separate the subject from all the surrounding objects. To understand this fully it is important to realize that it involves three separate concepts: the object, the subject, and the relationship between the subject and the object. Since we live in the world and enjoy all it has to offer in a detached or attached manner we establish a direct relationship between the subject and the object. When we use a telescope, it becomes an instrument that helps us to see, but the telescope itself cannot see. Similarly in our life, the senses and the mind are the telescope which helps us to experience the world of objects. We remain in the changeless subject and everything outside of ourselves is a series of changing, limited objects.

Thus the subject is different from the object. The moment we perceive something, a distance is created. For example the clothes we wear might belong to us, but they are not part of us. The same

principle applies to our body. The body is something to be experienced, it has a name and form and it is constantly changing. We enjoy our body, and through it we endure pain and pleasure, but we are not limited like our body. It is a simple truth but not easy to accept if we have identified completely with the body. Essentially, we are nothing but the soul. The soul is immortal. The soul is the real, eternal subject in this world of objects.

The role of the eyes, ears, nose, mouth and tongue is to help us to enjoy life more fully. The sense organs are powerful, but they remain an object. The sense organs are just useful vehicles that enhance our passage in this world. The same principle applies to our mind. When we are submerged in ignorance, we flow with the mind: We are at times happy or miserable, at peace or in utter despair. At this point the object and the subject become one.

But once we have risen in knowledge, we are able to separate the two. We become aware of the limitations and the shifting nature of our mind. The mind slowly becomes an object. Once we know our mind we

are able to overcome its restlessness. When we fully realize that the mind itself is an object to be analyzed, we become free from its power to enslave our emotions.

If we are no longer bound by the limitations of the mind, we are not carried here and there overpowered by the force of our feelings of anxiety, joy, doubt, fear, jealousy, passion, love and hate. Through self-control we can master the mind, turn it into an obedient servant, but the mind has a permanent tendency to present us with constantly changing pictures that only add to our confusion. We must understand that this is the true nature of mind. Even the most brilliant mind loves confusion.

### **Intellect**

A good mind can be a friend, but will always remain a rather mixed up companion. Since the mind can never provide us with a completely clear picture, to take a decision we must rely on a clear cut deciding faculty known as the intellect.

The intellect is also an object. I know my intellect and the limitations of the intellect.

But the intellect is also a tool, an object that we must learn to use and exploit to its optimal capacity. Like the mind the intellect also has limitations and evolves, expands and diminishes in the course of our lifecycle.

### **Ego**

The same principle applies to our ego. Ego has a tendency to grow if we are pleased or proud of a particular achievement, and to shrink when we are upset or we have suffered a humiliating failure. It takes a great deal of self awareness to understand how the ego fluctuates from one point to another, and bring it under control. But no matter at what degree of development and self awareness we might be, the ego is still an object. Our identification with our ego must be minimal.

### **Memory**

The role of our memory is an interesting one. It carries the wealth of our experiences. But no matter how sharp the memory is, it is still an object to us. The faculty of memory travels from life to life with us, silently witnessing all our

actions, but it is no more than an extraordinary recording mechanism, an object to help us decipher our existence.

### **The Key to Success**

Once we travel on the path of knowledge and our comprehension has been enlarged, we acquire the freedom of self-awareness. The conclusion we have drawn so far is the following. The world is an object with a name and form, which changes continuously. The world is everything that lies outside the body, but as we gain self-awareness we realize that the body senses, mind, intellect, ego and memory are also part of this objective world.

At all times we remain the subject, and we are therefore beyond any constraining boundaries, we are intrinsically free. We can establish any relationship we want with the exterior world or within our own inner world, composed of the body, mind, senses, intellect, ego and memory. A great deal depends on us. We hold the key to our own success or failure.

## RINGING THE BELLS: TURNING THE MIND TO GOD

(From *Mysticism of Religious Symbols*)

People ring bells in churches and temples. There are many different types and sizes of bells. Some are large and are hung from towers and others are held in the hands. In different Hindu rituals they hold the light (candle) in the right hand and the bell in the left.

At times we hear the sound of bells from a distance. When people say some special prayers they ring a bell, although some practices use a gong. Churches often have bells on the roof top or steeple that can be heard from great distances.

What does it mean? Why do people ring bells? Ringing a bell creates a sound, and that sound creates a vibration in the environment. There are many reasons for ringing a bell. One reason is that the sound has a purifying effect on the environment, and the vibration and sound together eliminate many harmful germs and bacteria.

Another reason is that when a bell is rung it has a

particular frequency or wavelength, which touches a special brain center in the human body, so that the mind is naturally diverted or attracted towards God. When the bell rings, it reminds us that we should be careful; it is a time for prayer.

So when the church bell rings, people know that we are forgetting the reality of life. In the churches in the West, they ring the bell every hour, sometimes every fifteen minutes. In the olden times, when people did not have watches or clocks to see the time, the ringing of church bells let them know the time. The church bell also reminds us that time is passing – not to forget to pray.

When we ring a bell whether it is in the temple or in the church, it reminds us of the continuous primordial sound that yogis and meditators listen to during their meditation. This primordial sound is like the *aum* sound or *amen* sound, and this sound creates extreme

calmness and peace. In the yogic scriptures it is said: *sa layah nada masritah*, mind dissolves and restlessness disappears when one is continuously listening to this.

Listening to the internal sound compares to hearing the church bell or temple bell sound, and keeping the mind more attracted towards calmness and divinity.



Saraswati Puja at the Gurukulam



## STORIES TO LIVE BY

### Collecting Stones

By the time the picnic was over and they had to leave he had collected a good heap of colored stones.

A young boy from a village went for a picnic with his family. The place was not far from their home. They went to the banks of a small river, which was a mile away from the village. There was a lot of sand and many colorful stones on the banks of the river.

The little child was fascinated by the colorful stones. While the others were busy with cooking food and playing games, he kept collecting the stones and piling them up in one place.

Soon it was lunchtime. When he was called to come and eat, the little boy joined his family and had his food. His mind remained on the colorful stones and he went back to collecting some more.

The others started back to go home and called the little boy. He had nothing to carry the treasure he had collected. Reluctant to part with his stones he took off his T-shirt and made a bundle. Carrying this enormous bundle of stones was not an easy job for this little boy. He soon became exhausted.

His parents looked at him and said “Why are you torturing yourself? There is no need to collect every stone you see. You have to take the time to discriminate and choose only those that are especially wonderful.” The boy sat down and went through the pile, choosing just a few this time, and was able to carry them home easily.

*Message:* We are attracted to what is beautiful and easily enticed into accumulating worthless possessions that weigh us down. It is necessary to be discriminating in what we choose to treasure.



## **MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES**

### **THE NATURE OF LOVE**

LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND.  
IT DOES NOT ENVY, IT DOES NOT BOAST, IT IS NOT PROUD  
IT IS NOT RUDE, IT IS NOT SELF-SEEKING  
IT IS NOT EASILY ANGERED, IT KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONGS  
LOVE DOES NOT DELIGHT IN EVIL BUT REJOICES WITH THE TRUTH  
IT ALWAYS PROTECTS, ALWAYS TRUSTS, ALWAYS HOPES  
ALWAYS PERSEVERES. LOVE NEVER FAILS.

***1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-8***

AMONG ALL THE MEANS OF LIBERATION, LOVE IS SUPREME. TO  
HONESTLY SEEK OUR REAL NATURE IS LOVE. IN OTHER WORDS,  
LOVE CAN BE DEFINED AS THE SEARCH FOR THE REALITY OF  
THE SOUL.

***VIVEKA CHUDAMANI 31-32***

LOVE MUST BE SINCERE  
HATE WHAT IS EVIL; CLING TO WHAT IS GOOD.  
BE DEVOTED TO ONE ANOTHER IN BROTHERLY LOVE  
HONOR ONE ANOTHER ABOVE YOURSELVES.

***ROMANS 12:9-10***

THE ONLY THING THAT COUNTS  
IS FAITH EXPRESSING ITSELF THROUGH LOVE.

***GALATIANS 5:6***

HE WHO SEES ME IN ALL CAN REALLY PERCEIVE LOVE,  
UNSHAKABLE LOVE.

***BHAGAVAD GITA***

## **ATMA-VIDYA**

### **PURSUING SELF-KNOWLEDGE**

#### **Inner Conditioning**

There was a holy man. A poor man went to him and begged him to give something to help his livelihood. The holy man took pity on him and said, "In the corner of my hut there is an iron container. Please bring it here." The poor man did that. Then the holy man said, "Now, you open it and take out what is inside." The poor man took out what was inside. Wrapped up in a thick layer of cotton there was a small touchstone, a stone that can change iron into gold if it comes into contact with iron. The holy man was willing to use it to help the poor man get some gold.

The poor man was surprised and asked the holy man "If this stone really has the power to change iron into gold, how could it be kept inside an iron container and yet the container did not turn into gold?" The holy man said, "You have asked the right question. The secret is the cotton. The layer of cotton around the stone insulates it and the stone cannot

touch the iron. The cotton separates the stone from the iron."

Sometimes we create the same kind of insulation for our life. We are all potentially divine and are the children of God but we have insulated ourselves with the covering of our ego and our imagination, which separates us from being in divine contact. Divinity is blocked and cannot be manifested. This insulation is also called an inner conditioning.

At the mental level also we live with our mind and the senses. The mind is not clean as it is conditioned. To see and understand a situation in a neutral way is not possible because of this conditioning and as a result we suffer.

#### **Conditioning of Intelligence**

In my school days I had many friends who complained that they could not remember much of what they studied from the textbooks. One of them could sing hundreds of movie songs which he could

memorize and another friend could remember the history of cricket matches and meticulously quote which game was played when, and the names of the players and the score. But both of them had problems remembering when it came to lessons. This again is due to the conditioning of their mind.

### **Desire for Appreciation**

We all have a desire to be appreciated for who we think we are. We want people to say we are intelligent. If we can't live in an impartial way it is again the conditioning of the mind. A monk was lying down under a tree using a brick as a pillow. Three ladies were passing by. Looking at him, one of them remarked, "This monk doesn't seem to be a genuine monk. Though he gave up comforts and left the pillows at home his mind is still on comforts and he is using the brick as a pillow." The monk happened to listen to this remark. He thought what the lady said was true and removed the brick from under his head. After sometime the ladies were coming back the same way. This time seeing him remove the brick pillow another one of

them said to him," Sir. You seem to be easily influenced by others. One should have a strong mind and stick to what one thinks as right but should not be swayed by the words of others. People will say many things. Just by listening to others you have reacted. It is not a good trait."

### **Jealousy**

Jealousy is also an inner conditioning that lies hidden and manifests when there is a chance. There were once two great scholars who were living in a king's palace. Though each of them was intelligent they were jealous of each other. One day when the first one was away the king asked the second scholar what he thought of the first scholar. He said, "He lives like a donkey carrying a heavy load of books and scriptures." Another day the king asked the second scholar what he thought about the first one. "He lives like a bull," said the second scholar. "He has only a limited knowledge and keeps living off that just like the bull regurgitates again and again."

After sometime the king invited both of these scholars to his palace to dine with him.

They were both excited at this special honor. The king welcomed them and when it was time to eat, three different types of meals were served. The king had the king's food, the first scholar had the food fit for a donkey and the second had the food of a bull. The king said, Are you surprised looking at your food? In spite of being intelligent people you both were so jealous of each other and judged each other as a donkey and a bull, I thought this is the kind of food you should like." Both the scholars were

ashamed and admitted to being jealous of each other.

We live in this world with this inner conditioning—our own good and bad qualities and our achievements, imaginations, expectations, likes and dislikes. We live in our own little cages going from one cage to another.

How can we be free from this inner conditioning? Self knowledge or knowledge of who we are, is the way to be free. A conscious effort should be made to be constantly in touch with the divine and transform our lives.

From a talk of Paramhansa Prajnananandaji



“The story of Lord Ganesh” – a Drama by Balashram Students

## UNFOLDING BLOSSOMS

### NEWS FROM THE BALASHRAM

Balashram students are flourishing well with many opportunities for growth and all round development. Balashram was the site for several visitors from December through March. Christmas was celebrated with great joy and festivity when the children enacted a Nativity play on Christmas Day. The students faithfully told the story of the birth of Jesus and impressively mastered advanced dialogue in English along with traditional Christmas hymns and songs. It was a great opportunity for them to become familiar with the background of other religions and teachings.

For many western disciples, who were away from their home and families for Christmas, the nativity play made Christmas this year extra special for them. The Members of Hand in Hand and several others attending the International Seminar at Hariharananda Gurukulam also visited Balashram. The children of Balashram presented a cultural program of Music, Dance and Drama at the International Seminar.

#### **The Educational Tours**

Accompanied by their teachers, the children had a few educational tours to enhance their learning.



Christmas Nativity play

The Nursery and K.G. children visited the nearby Jagannath Temple at Choudakulat. A Sandalwood sapling was planted by them on the temple ground.

The students of the second and third standards were taken to Lalit Giri Mountain, 38 km from the Balashram. The place is famous for Lord Buddha's statues excavated by the Archeological Survey of India. They had a great day visiting the Museum, and had a picnic there.

The senior students of classes 3 & 4 visited the Paradip Port. There was great excitement exploring the national and international ships at the harbor and spending the day on the beach. They also saw an aquarium exhibiting different aquatic animals and fish that was of great interest.

## **The Annual Sports Event**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Sports event was held on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Jan'10. The children of different age groups participated in several individual and group sports that included running races, javelin, discus, long jump and high jump.

## **Arts and Crafts**

The children in their leisure time have had classes in toy making, needle work, and gardening. Some of the toys made by the children were also exhibited at the International Seminar and drew great applause.

The present academic session has come to an end with the annual examination conducted in March and the new academic session will begin from 1<sup>st</sup> April'10.



Annual Sports Day

## AROUND THE WORLD

### INDIA

#### **Gita Jnana Yajnas**

The Gita Jnana Yajnas by Paramahansa Prajnanananda, held at Bhubaneshwar and Cuttack, drew large audience. The unique metaphorical interpretation of the Gita and the question and answer sessions at the end of each lecture were especially enlightening. The 3 day lecture series at each of the venues also served as meditation camps with initiations and guided meditations where several people were initiated into Kriya yoga.

#### **The International Intensive Kriya Yoga Seminar**

The Annual International Intensive Kriya Yoga Seminar that was started in 2000, has completed a decade and had the 11<sup>th</sup> session from the 14<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2010. Many Kriyavans from around the world gathered at the Gurukulam to attend the annual feature that started as usual on 14<sup>th</sup> of Jan, the auspicious day

of Makara Sankranti under the loving guidance of Guruji with a fire ceremony and gurupaduka puja in the morning.

Swami Samarpananandaji in his introduction at the Inaugural function described the last ten years of the Seminar as a decade of Divinity at the Gurukulam. Many, holy personages like Swami Nischalananda Saraswati, the Shankaracharya of Puri, Gajapathi Maharaja –the king of Puri, Swami Chidananda Saraswati of the Divine life Society, Sri Gokulanandji of Ramakrishna Mission, Dandi Swami Hamsananda Saraswati, Anand Maharaj of Vrindavan, to name a few, have been our guests over the years and have given us their precious messages and blessings.

The chief guest for the Inaugural function was Baba Chaitanya Charan Das of Bhagavat Ashram, Puri, who spoke of different types of Sadhana and the role of the guru. The seven days of the Seminar were filled with guided

meditations, divine discourses and question and answer sessions by Guruji Baba Prajnananandaji. Satsangs by invited guests and a cultural program of devotional songs, dance or drama concluded each day. We were especially delighted to have Sri Rabinarayan Das Babaji with us once again this year. Rabi Baba, as he is affectionately known to us, has graced the Gurukulam with his inspiring talks on spirituality since IIKY in 2000. The highlight of the entertainment program was the dance drama on the birth of Ganesha by the children of Balashram who thrilled the audience with their extraordinary performance.

The valedictory function on the 20<sup>th</sup> coincided with Saraswati Puja making it all the more festive. In his inspiring address at the closing ceremony, Guruji said,

“In the path of spirituality from time immemorial the evolution through the teacher-student relationship of love, learning, teaching and progression has been going on and will continue to go on. We have all come together in this process of spiritual evolution.

God and the Masters have given us so much guidance and inspiration. Now it is time for sincere hard work to enhance that spiritual progress. When you go back from here live with that spirit of love and dedication to make the lamp of spiritual wisdom burning not only for you but also for others. Let us work not just for ourselves but for the community, society and humanity at large. This ashram will continue to carry the flame of spirituality forever and ever.”

### **Residential Brahmachari Training Course – Teachings at the Gurukulam.**

With the Brahmachari training Course in session, the Gurukulam was a centre for great learning. The main focus of Paramahansa Prajnananandaji's teaching was the Yoga Sutras of Sage Patanjali. This seminal work on Yoga was expounded in great detail by the Master for three hours each day, with references to Vyasa Bhashya and other great treatises on yoga such as, Tatva Vaisharadi of Vacaspati Mishra, Yoga Vartikam of Vijnana Bhiksu and Yoga Rahasyam of Brahmarshi Satyadev. Correlations were also made with the teachings



of the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads and the Holy Bible which made the course comprehensive and enlightening. In addition to the trainees, several participants from around the globe availed themselves of the opportunity of attending and learning from the teaching of the Master.

The 5<sup>th</sup> residential Brahmachari training course that started on the 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 2009, was successfully completed on Feb 25, 2010. The course included scriptural classes, meditation, prayer, chanting, discourses and

course that prepares them to live a wholesome and integrated life through the practice of discipline, meditation and moderation.

### **New Dental Clinic**

By the grace of God and Gurus, a new dental clinic was inaugurated on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009, under the auspices of Hariharananda Charitable Health Centre on the 1st floor of HCHC, Balighai, Puri.

Our revered Gururji Paramahansa Prajnananandaji Maharaj inaugurated the new Dental Clinic and dedicated it



**Brahmachari Training**

service. Students from diverse nationalities, races, religions and gender, selected from across the globe, participated in the

to the poor patients of nearby localities. Many monks, brahmacharis, doctors, disciples and people of nearby villages

were present during the inaugural function. On the very date of the inauguration, 12 dental patients were treated by the visiting dentist.

Initially it was proposed that the clinic would be held once a month. The dentist, dental assistant and pharmacist from Cuttack and Bhubaneswar will visit the clinic and organise the monthly dental camp.

In coming months we plan to operate the clinic more than once a month. Also a proposal has been created to start a general operation theatre for the poor and needy in the same building. The people of the local villages are very happy to have this new charitable health facility available to serve their needs.

## EUROPE

The following retreats are held with Paramahansa Prajnanananda along with other Swamis and Yogacharyas

**April 16-21** – Spring Retreat, Tattendorf Austria

**April 23-28** – Higher Kriya Retreat, Tattendorf Austria

**June 4-13** Sterskel, Holland

## AMERICAS

The following retreats are held with Paramahansa Prajnanananda along with other Swamis and Yogacharyas

**April 29- May 02** Midwest Retreat – Kansas City

**May 4 -9** Higher Kriya Retreat, Homestead FL

**May 26-May 31** Gurudev's Birthday Celebration Seminar, Homestead FL.



Satsang IIKYS

## **LIFE AND MESSAGE OF SRI CHAITANYA MAHAPRABU CELEBRATED**

P a r a m a h a m s a  
Prajnananandaji was an invited speaker at several celebrations organized by various ashrams and spiritual organizations of Puri through the months of Jan – Feb 2010, to commemorate the 500 years of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's monastic initiation and his arrival in Puri.

Several hundred monks from all over the country congregated to participate in the events and pay homage to this great God-intoxicated saint. In the true spirit and divine footsteps of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabu, Prajnananandaji led a procession of over 500 bhaktas through the streets of Puri, singing and glorifying the name of God. It was a great blessing and a rare privilege for the trainees, participants and residents at our Gurukulam to join the procession and attend some of these programs.

Formerly known as Nimai pandit, Sri Chaitanya renounced his worldly life and accepted sannayasa in Feb. of 1510, receiving the name Sri

Krishna Chaitanya. Thereafter he came to the Purushottam kshetra of Puri in Orissa. Believed to be a divine incarnation, this great saint of the 15th century was a personification of love, devotion, humility and compassion. He distributed prema bhakti or pure love for God through his sankirtan movement which influenced thousands of people. After travelling for six years all over the country, spreading the message of prema bhakti, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu returned to Puri Dham where he spent the last eighteen years of his life. During his stay in Puri he would go to Jagannath temple every day and spend hours adoring the beautiful form of Lord Jagannath in deep devotion. During the Chariot festival Sri Chaitanya, along with his followers, would dance, chant and sing the mahamantra, revelling in the ecstatic presence of God.

His simple teaching was to sing the glory of God which cleanses the mind of all impurity

and extinguishes the flame of desires which cause the cycle of birth and death. The singing of God's name increases the

ocean of transcendental bliss and enables us to fully taste the nectar of divine love.



Baba in Sankirtan

### **BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS**

**For available Books on Yoga, Philosophy, and Spirituality,  
please visit our websites.**

**For India**

[www.prajnanamission.org](http://www.prajnanamission.org)

**For USA**

[www.kriya.org](http://www.kriya.org)

**For Europe**

[www.kriyayoga-europe.org](http://www.kriyayoga-europe.org)

***Visit our web site:***

***[www.prajnanamission.org](http://www.prajnanamission.org)***

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