

Sthita Prajna



Guru Vandana

*dhruvam devi mumuksunam nasti tattvam guroh param
guroraradhanam kuryat svajivatvam nivedayet*

O Devi! It is the firm truth that the essential nature of the guru is supreme for the seeker of freedom – nothing is greater. One should worship one's guru preceptor with complete dedication.

– Guru Gita

CONTENTS

VOLUME 11

ISSUE 1

Sub	Page No.
• GURU VANDANA	3
• EDITORIAL	5
• MESSAGE FORM THE MASTER	6
• PRAJNANAVANI	8
• CHAKRAS IN THE LALITHA SAHASRANAMA	13
• PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY	16
• DATES TO REMEMBER	19
• TEACHINGS OF THE MASTER	20
• TENTH MAHASAMADHI DAY OF GURUDEV	21
• MYTHS AND METAPHORS	22
• THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI	25
• VALUABLE VOLUMES	
• VISHUDDHA CHAKRA	30
• THE CHANGING NATURE OF....	34
• MYSTICISM OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS	37
• STORIES TO LIVE BY THE SINGING BIRD	40
• ATMA-VIDYA - PURSUING SELF KNOWLEDGE	42
• BALASHRAM HIGHLIGHTS	44
• 53 RD BIRTHDAY OF BABA PRAJNANANANDAJI	47
• AROUND THE WORLD	49
• NEW BOOK RELEASES 2012	54

Printed and Published by Swami Achalananda Giri on behalf of
Prajnana Mission, Printed at Graphic Art Offset Press,
at Nuapatna, Manglabag, Dist : Cuttack (Orissa) and published at
Prajnana Mission at Nimpur, P.O. Jagatpur, Cuttack-754021, Orissa.
Editor : Swami Achalananda Giri

FROM THE EDITORS :

“Life is a boat and love is the water. The boat of love can sail smoothly in the water of love.”

Paramahansa Prajnanananda

In this issue “Message of the Master” talks of the Marvelous power of God and realizing it by meditation. In “Prajnanavani”, Paramahansa Prajnananandaji elaborates on the question of faith.

Practical spirituality discusses a tangible way to incorporate ahimsa or nonviolence into one’s daily life through diet.

Rama Katha takes us to Sri Rama building the bridge on the ocean (Setubandhana) to cross over to Lanka and regain Sita. Paramahamsaji explains what real setubandhana is.

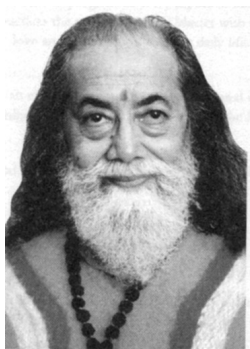
Kaivalya Upanishad our series on Self Knowledge talks of the impermanence of the body and the permanence of the soul.

Relevant excerpts from some of Paramahansa Prajnanananda’s seminal works, “The Universe Within” and the “Changing Nature of Relationships”, continue elaborating on chakras, and multiple relationships.

Yoga Sutra of Patanjali talks of the distinction between vritti nirodha and vritti laya.

We bring you news of the Birthday celebrations of Guruji, the 15th foundation day of the Mother Center USA and of the activities of Prajnana Mission worldwide. Hope you enjoy this issue and those to come.

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER THE MARVELOUS POWER OF GOD



Everywhere the marvelous power of god is remaining. According to the Bible, in Genesis (1:27), “he made man and woman in his own image.” this means that you are the image of God—he has incarnated in the material world. In your whole body, god is remaining everywhere within you from the day you are born, yet you do not feel that way because it was not taught.

Imagine a coconut. If there was no shell to cover the coconut, then there would be no coconut. The hard shell protects the coconut, and, although you might not know it, there is a technique for breaking open the coconut shell. Using the technique, you can crack

open the coconut in a single motion, as they do in India. But, you must know also that the coconut has three “eyes”: two eyes in the front and one on the top. The tree grows from the “third eye,” the one on top. If an iron rod is inserted at that location, the rod will easily penetrate in a moment’s time. Yet, if you push anywhere else, the rod will not penetrate. Once the rod has penetrated and is moved from side to side, the entire coconut will open up.

Your life is like the coconut, encased in its shell, ready to be opened from the top. Keep your attention there, at the fontanel, all the time. Whatever you are doing, it is being done by him.

Since you do not feel that the almighty father is hiding in you, you must meditate. Meditation is so nice, so beautiful, so divine, but you meditate very little. So, you should fix your attention in the fontanel and remain there.

Always make yourself ready for god-realization. At every moment, you should ask your conscience where you are, whether you are there in the fontanel or below the eyebrows. You should watch very carefully, because, if you remain below, then you cannot get god-realization. You must stay on the top—that is your life. Otherwise you are fiends (rakshasa) and demons (asura), as written in the bhagavad gita (9:12):

*Moghasha moghakarmano
moghajnana vicetasah*

*Rakshasim asurim cai 'va
prakritim mohinim shrithah*

Moghasha means extreme desire, such as for money. Moghakarmana means forgetting god and doing work, and moghajnana refers to acting according to one's own mind with false knowledge.

So you should always watch. Watch the heaviness at the top. Feel the pulsation moving from top to bottom. See the divine light and concentrate on the inner sound. Your whole body is god. You should watch it. Without that power, you are a dead body. So your everything is like god. When you forget your whole body and the entire world, then your whole meditation is complete.

*Watch him day and night in your every
thought, word and action. Constant
alertness is necessary; if you do this you
will have a positive and quick result.*

Paramahansa Hariharananda

PRAJNANAVANI - THE VOICE OF WISDOM

A QUESTION OF FAITH



Prayer is the key to establishing and building our relationship with God. Yet the question comes up: "How can I establish a relationship and feel love for someone I don't even know? How can I pray to God?" These are very legitimate questions. Truly, the only thing holding you back from this relationship is your own skepticism. So, if you are skeptical, you must keep analyzing your own questions until you have put all your doubts to rest. Then you can strongly affirm, "Yes God, I believe and trust in You." It is at this point that your relationship will begin to flourish.

For some seekers of truth other questions may arise such as, "Does God really exist? If God exists, how can I know that He exists? Where is He? Or is He a She? A few days ago someone forwarded me a very interesting e-mail, which I passed along to several people. It was a story from the life of a man who was a former president of India. He was a very prominent scientist and a wonderful man. At the top of this e-mail was written "Please read this word for word. If you miss one word, you will miss something." The content of this e-mail consisted of a lovely dialogue between a professor and a student, and this student

was none other than the scientist who later on became the president of India. The professor, who was an atheist, posted the question, "Does God exist?" Before the student gave his response, the professor had systematically justified, step by step, why God cannot possibly exist. He was stating that according to empirical, testable, demonstrable protocol, science says God doesn't exist as He cannot be seen, heard, felt, smelled, or tested by the sense organs.

With rapt attention, the other students sat silently, listening to the professor as he stated his case, all the while they were eagerly waiting to hear their classmate's rebuttal. When the professor finished presenting his position the student began his response with a counter question. Then, without offering any of his own opinions, he continued to ask question after question about concepts and things we believe exist. For example, he asked, "Is there anyone here who has ever heard the professor's brain, felt it, touched or smelled it? No one appears to have done so. So, according to the established rules of empirical,

stable, demonstrable protocol, science says that you have no brain, Sir." This went on until the professor's head began to reel. Finally the professor declared that one has to take these on faith. This ended the student's string of questions, and he simply stated, "That is it Sir... The link between man and God is faith. That is all that keeps things moving and alive." He was basically saying to the professor that if he wanted to know whether there is a God, all he could say is that it is a question of faith. It will always remain a question of faith since there is no one who can prove or disprove the existence of God,

There is another wonderful story that also makes this point. Perhaps you have heard the story of the wise man who was invited to give a talk one evening at a local hall. Because he was so renowned for his wisdom and intellect, people came to hear him speak from far and wide. The hall was soon packed, and when it was time for his talk to begin, he stood up and told the audience, "I have a question that I would like to ask all of you. Do you believe in God?"

Since they all wanted to please their esteemed speaker everyone in the audience unanimously replied, "Yes!"

Then, with a gracious smile, he folded his hands, bowed and said, "Thank you. I thank all of you for your belief. Please continue to live with that belief. I have nothing more to say." And then he left.

Soon, the hall was filled with the murmurings of the astounded audience. "O God! What just happened? He no sooner walked on stage and the next thing we know, the talk is over!" As you are aware, on most program flyers detailing a lecture schedule, a specific time is given for the talk, which is usually binding. However, no specific times had been given for this talk, so he had done nothing wrong by leaving after just five minutes.

Since the audience was so disappointed that they had missed the opportunity to hear this gentleman speak, they all vowed to come up with a plan. They decided to invite him to come and speak again, but this time, they all agreed to make one major change. If he asked them if they believed in God, they would all say no. Surely,

they thought, after hearing that answer he would have to talk a little longer to justify God's existence.

The gentleman agreed to come, and soon it was time for the program to begin once again. Just as he had done before, he walked onstage and asked, "Do you believe in God? Thinking they had surely outwitted him, they all replied "No!"

Then, after answering his question, they all settled back in their seats, anxiously waiting for his lengthy response. Unfortunately things did not go as planned, because he simply replied, "Thank you. If all of you do not believe in God, I have nothing more to say." And before the audience could comprehend what had just happened, he was gone.

Undeterred by this little setback, they became even more determined to find a way to make him speak. This time they were sure they had come up with a foolproof plan. So another invitation went out, and the gentleman again agreed to come and speak at the lecture hall. Just as had happened previously, he stepped onto the podium and asked the expected

question, "Do you believe in God?" Feeling confident that they would soon be listening to his lecture, they all happily gave him their prepared response: one half said they believed in God, while the other half said they didn't.

"Thank you for your interesting answer," he said with a smile. "However, I have just one thing to say. If you wish, those who don't believe in God can try to convince the ones who do why they are wrong, and those who believe in God can try to convert the others who don't." That being said, he walked out of the hall.

In all three cases, the wise man chose to say only very little. In the first instance, when the audience had professed their belief in God, the wise man accepted their belief, since it would have been futile to convince them otherwise. Furthermore, there was no need to try to convince them of something in which they already believed since this would have been preaching to the converted. The same applies to the second talk, where the people had stated that they did not believe in God. Again, it would have been a waste of

time trying to persuade them that God does not exist since they already held this belief, nor could anything be said to dissuade them from their belief, since it is a well-known fact that "a man convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still."

The wise man's reaction to the third response, when the audience was evenly divided in their belief about the existence of God, shows the same acceptance. Had he offered his opinion, one side would have been in agreement with him, while the other would have disagreed. Essentially, the audience would have remained divided and nothing would have been gained. His suggestion that the audience should attempt to convince each other of the rightness of their beliefs would have taught them that they had embarked on an impossible mission, since the argument cannot be resolved as it is ultimately a matter of personal faith. Since belief in God is a matter of personal faith, it cannot be determined by anyone else, which makes any argument about the existence of God pointless.

Now I will tell you about a real incident that happens many times in India. There are some states in India, even now, that are ruled by a democratically elected Communist government. The people who belong to the Communist party do not believe in God. When they have their party conference, usually about a half million people attend. Do you know where these half million people go when the conference is over? They go to the temples since the conference is held in one of the major holy cities in India. Although they belong to a party that endorses atheism, they still come into the temples and bow down to God.

In this world there are two types of people: those who say they don't believe in God and those who say they do. Those who don't believe in God feel there is no need for Him in their lives. Yet, this should not concern us, because we have the right to live with our own beliefs. Prayer is for those people who do believe in God, and live in God. It begins with believing in God, and when we pray, our belief begins to come alive. Since we all breathe, we know that our breath is real and essential to life. When we pray, God becomes just as real, vital, and clear to us as our breath. Remember: just as our breath is real, God is real. Or, in the words of Gurudev, "God is our breath."

*"The shield of faith protects against
delusion, illusion and error."*

CHAKRAS IN THE LALITHA SAHASRANAMA

Divine Mother in one of her forms as Lalitha is worshipped with the Lalitha Sahasranama or the thousand names in Her praise. Lalitha Sahasranama is a part of the Lalitopakhyana, in the latter half of the Brahmanda Purana - A dialogue between Hayagriva, (an incarnation of Lord Vishnu) and the great sage Agastya. It is believed that this hymn of Lalitha Sahasranama was composed by the goddesses of speech at the behest of the Divine Mother Lalitha herself. This worship is also known as Sri vidya. It is said that if a devotee recites this out of pure devotion to the Mother without any material desire he will be free from all bondages and attain Brahma jnana. It is customary for some people to recite these names during the worship of Navaratri

In this sacred hymn there is a section that refers to the worship of mother as the energy residing in the seven chakras or the lotuses in her different aspects which could

be of interest to one who is practicing Kriya Yoga. The goddess is addressed as *Mahashakti* and *Kundalini*. She is also addressed as *Pranada* and as one residing in fifty syllables. The devotee performs inner worship of mediating and invoking the energy in each chakra that travels through the subtle passage of *Sushumna* piercing through the brahma granthi (muladhara) ,Vishnu granthi (above the manipura) and rudra granthi (ajna chakra) .The Goddess is also addressed as Shambhavi,

Description of the chakras with the presiding deities

In the *Muladhara* or the lotus at the bottom of the spine, of four petals with the four syllables *va, sa, sha, sa* salutations are offered to the mother known as *Shakini* with five faces She presides over the bones in the body. In her hands she holds the elephant hook, lotus, book and the sign of *jnanamudra*. She is attended by four shaktis -. She is fond

of the offering of cooked rice mixed with pulse.

In the *Swadhishtana* or the lotus of six petals between the navel and the muladhara, with the letters *ba, bha, ma, ya, ra, la* representing the shaktis *bandhini, bhadrakali, mahamaya, yasasvini, raka* and *lamboshti* seated on the six petals of the lotus as her attendants, salutations are offered to the yogini named *kakini* with a golden hue, with four faces, who presides over the ingredient of Medas or fat. She holds the weapons – of trident, a noose, a skull and an elephant hook. She likes the offerings of honey and yogurt rice.

In the *Manipura*, the lotus of the ten petals at the naval with the letters *da, dha, na, ta, tha, da, dha, na, -pa, pha* for the ten shaktis *Damari, Dhankarini, narna, thamasi, sthanvi, dakshyayani, dhatri, Nari, parvati* and *phatkarani* seated on the petals, salutations are offered to the yogini *Lakini* of deep red color, with three faces, presiding over the bodily flesh. The weapons are *vajra, shakti* and *danda* in the three hands and *abhaya* pose in the fourth. She likes the

offerings of sweet preparations made with jaggery.

In the *Anahata*, the lotus of the heart, with twelve petals with the letters *ka, kha, ga, gha, nya, cha, chha, ja, jha, jnya, ta, tha* of the Sanskrit alphabet for the twelve shaktis – *Kalaratri, Khandita, Gayatri, Ghatakarshini, Ngarna, chanda, Chhaya, Jaya, Jhankarini, Jnanarupa, tankahasta* and *Thankarini* seated on the petals surrounding her, salutations are offered to yogini *Rakini* of dark complexion with two faces, who wears a rosary and weapons and who presides over the ingredient of blood in the human body. She likes food prepared in ghee such as ghee rice and blesses highly qualified devotees.

In the *Vishuddha* at the base of the throat in the luminous chakra of sixteen petals with sixteen vowels with the bindus representing *Amrita, Akarshini, Indrani, Isani, Uma, Urdhvakesi, Rudra, Rikara, Likara, Lu k a r a, E k a p a d a, Aiswaryatmika, Omkara, Aushadhi, Ambika* and *Akshara* seated on the sixteen petals in the clockwise order

surrounding her, salutations are offered to the yogini *Dakini*, of light red color who has one face, with three eyes, holding weapons of club, a bedpost, sword, trident and shield in each hand. She is the presiding deity of the skin. She is fond of the offering of rice cooked with milk. She throws into fear those brutes who do not see the true identity of the soul and God.

In the *Ajna chakra*, in the middle of the eye brows with two petals with the syllables *ham* and *ksham*, for the attendants *Hamsavati* and *Kshamavati* seated on the petals salutations are offered to the Yogini known as *Hakini* of spotless white complexion, who has six faces, who is the presiding deity of the bone marrow. She likes food flavored with turmeric or saffron.

In the *Sahasrara center* in the lotus of thousand (innumerable) petals located in the skull above the other six centers, the mother is worshipped as *Yakini*. She shines in all colors, surrounded by 50 deities or 50 mystic syllables of the alphabet known as the *matrukas* which become

100 by positions in the serial and the reverse order, and become thousand when multiplied by ten seats for each corresponding to the thousand petals. She uses every kind of weapon. She presides over the vital fluid and has faces in every direction. She is pleased with the offerings of all kinds of food and is the mother of all creatures.

The Mother divine is said to be seated on the top of the six chakras as the *Mahasakti* or *kundalini* and is said to be moving through the six chakras through the subtle passage of *sushumna* in the spine from *muladhara* at the bottom of the spine to the *sahasrara* or the thousand petal lotus at the top where the soul resides.

The six chakras are the place of energy and its manifestation, action and enjoyment. But beyond the chakras is the unmanifested absolute, that can be realized through *Shatchakrabedha* or penetrating the veil of energy and going to the state of *chakratita* beyond everything. that is the union between god and energy the state of absolute awareness

PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

AHIMSA : MY STEP TOWARD NON VIOLENCE

Jyothi Bathina

I've always loved meat. A couple of weeks ago, we received a gift certificate in the mail to a famous local steakhouse. It was perfect timing because our son was leaving for medical school and the \$100 certificate would be helpful since it was a very expensive restaurant. I made reservations and we all dressed up and went to dinner. I had read on the reviews that some people found the meat too gamey there, and this was apparently because they were used to over spiced and over seasoned, overcooked meats. The steak connoisseurs explained that this was how real meat tasted: farm grown and unprocessed, still fresh and full of blood, fat, and flavor. I was a little put off by that description but was excited just the same to be going to such a nice place with such famous steaks.

Once we got there we enjoyed the ambience, devoured

the fresh warm bread and savored the creamy tomato bisque. Finally the steaks arrived, on 500-degree plates to keep them warm, slathered in butter and dripping with juices. My husband and son both dug in and for a while the table fell silent as we all worked on our dinners. The first bite was good and I continued eating, but strangely I was not able to eat the whole thing. In fact, after just two or three bites I felt put off. The meat, cooked medium rare to keep it tender, did taste very "meaty" with no sauces or seasonings to distract me from the fact that this was an animal's body. With each cut of the knife, I felt progressively worse and finally said I couldn't eat any more and asked that the rest be packed up.

The next morning I sliced the steak into strips and gave it to my son for breakfast. I simply wasn't interested in having anymore. I wasn't quite

myself for at least two days afterwards and told my husband and my mother that I wanted to cut down on eating meat.

Since then, I have cut down drastically on my meat consumption, not even eating my usual chicken and having only an occasional egg. But yesterday, I saw a video posted on Facebook, a YouTube video called Glass Walls narrated by Paul McCartney and I can never in good conscience even think of eating meat again. It was one of the hardest 13 minutes I have ever had to endure and I often had to close my eyes or turn away from the most harrowing scenes. As McCartney says in the video, if slaughterhouses had glass walls, most of us would be vegetarian. To witness the horrific cruelty that is perpetuated on animals raised to be consumed by humans is unbelievably painful. Cows still clinging to life, while hanging with throats slit from rafters, pigs given electric shocks, chickens stomped on and abused, it is truly unbearable to watch.

While the video may have focused on the worst possible conditions and not all slaughterhouses may be as cruel as the factory farms shown, it made me realize that no slaughter of innocent creatures can be humane. These are intelligent sentient beings that feel pain. It was interesting to hear that the raising of livestock for our consumption actually produces more greenhouse emissions than vehicle exhaust. It was also enlightening to hear how inefficient the process is, taking 13 pounds of feed to create just one pound of edible meat. Not only is it cruel beyond words, raising and consuming meat is also destroying the planet and is incredibly inefficient at battling world hunger.

So why do we continue to do it? For me it has always been the taste. I have always loved meat, chicken, fish, lamb, goat, and occasionally beef. And honestly, I have never really thought about where my meat came from. In India, I knew that it came from the butcher shop but chose not to

think beyond that. And here in America, I am even more removed from the process, buying my meat in clean, sterilized, plastic wrapped packages. It looks nothing like an animal when it finally gets to me and I see only dinner, to be cooked with onions and garlic or coconut milk and green chilies. For me, it is the curry the meat is cooked in that provides the taste and the flavor more than the actual flesh itself, gravy bursting with wonderful spices, the creamy coconut milk, fresh cilantro, ginger, cinnamon and cloves. Which makes me wonder, did I really ever need that flesh in the first place? Would it have tasted just as good without?

Last night I spent a sleepless night mulling over my complicity in the sheer torture of so many creatures just so I could have a tasty meal that clogged my arteries and increased my cholesterol. I thought of the pain and suffering and agonized cries of the helpless animals being led to slaughter, the fear coursing through their veins and

spreading through the flesh I would soon be eating. I have lived a long time and been a meat eater for all those years, all the while considering myself to be a gentle and nonviolent person. I have known at the back of my mind that eating meat was a choice and that many considered it an unnecessary violence. My parents have been vegetarians now for many years as are many of my relatives. Yet it simply never sank in, never felt so wrong that I had to stop. There is no real way to wipe away the bad karma I've accumulated over the years through my actions, but as with any wrong action, I can only stop the moment I become convinced that it is wrong, and refuse to commit that action ever again.

Of course, it is not for me to dictate what others should do, or to judge them for not converting immediately to vegetarianism simply because I finally see the light. After all, it took me over half my life before I was convinced. My gentle Guru leads by example,

but has never once condemned me for my inability to follow, waiting patiently for me to come to the realization myself. Far be it from me then, to turn around and point fingers at those who are not yet convinced. But I do hope that readers, especially those like me who have no clue what journey our meat takes on its way to our table, will make an informed

decision once they view the video. I am only thankful that I happened to encounter it, at a time when I was already reconsidering my choices and feeling the need to change them.

For me, personally, this marks my first genuine step to a life of true ahimsa or nonviolence, one I intend to follow for the rest of my days.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- October 15-23 : Navaratri
9 day festival of Divine Mother
- October 24 : Vijaya Dashami
- November 13 : Deepvali – Festival of Lights
- November 17 : Birthday of Swami Satyananda Giri
- December 3 : 10th Mahasamadhi Day of Gurudev
- December 23 : Gita Jayanti – Birthday of Bhagavad Gita
- December 24-25 : Christmas Celebration
- December 31 : New Years Eve

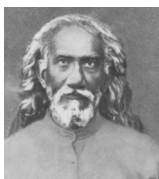
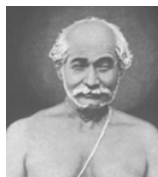


“Patience, ceaseless efforts and strong determination make everything possible.”

Mahavatara Babaji

“While perceiving Brahman, try to always have the conviction that “I am Brahman.”

Lahiri Mahasaya



“Like removing one nail with the help of another nail, the evil propensities can be weeded out by good samskaras.”

Swami Shriyukteshwar

“One who is blessed with the eye of wisdom is free from all doubts, confusion and duality.”

Sanyal Mahasaya

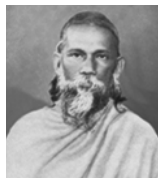


“By drawing and observing the graph of your mind, you can see whether everyday you are making any progress in your life or not.”

Paramahansa Yogananda

“Make an effort to study the scriptures related to self-knowledge and to discuss the teachings of the Masters.”

Swami Satyananda



“When your breath becomes very feeble, then you are really practising Kriya. You are established in truth.”

Paramahansa Hariharananda

“Life is for progress and evolution and one should listen to the promptings of God with rapt attention in order not to get into problems.”

Paramahansa Prajnanananda



TENTH MAHASAMADHI DAY OF GURUDEV Dec 3, 2012



Already 10 years have passed since the Mahasamadhi of the Great Master, our beloved Gurudev Baba Hariharanandaji.

He always said that human life is extremely temporary.

Every human body is prone to disease, decay, and death. But this body is not for misery and suffering; it is for emancipation and love. He explained how to use this

transitory but precious life to develop God consciousness. If we cultivate love and devotion for God during a practical spiritual life, our lives will be beautiful. Gurudev taught to love in every breath. With his beautiful smile, kind words and practical teachings Gurudev continues to live on in our hearts motivating us to move forward. On this special day we should contemplate on the life and teachings of Gurudev with special gratitude. We should also sincerely pray to have enough strength to follow his footprints.

The 10th Mahasamadhi day of Gurudev will be observed as a special event in all ashrams and centers across the world, with special worship, prayers and meditation.

Baba Hariharanandaji is the embodiment of spiritual truth, love and compassion. Not even the holiest scripture can substitute the encompassing influence of an enlightened Master.

– **Paramahansa Prajnanananda**

MYTHS AND METAPHORS

RAMAYANA



*Sri raghavam dasaradhatmajamaprameyam
sitapatim raghukulanvaya ratna dipam.
ajanu bahum aravindadalayatasham
ramam nishachara vinashakaram namami*

Salutations to Sri Rama, the son of Dasaratha, the jewel of the Raghu lineage, of long arms and beautiful eyes like the lotus petals, the husband of Sita, and the destroyer of the rakshasas.

Building the Bridge

Rama reached the shores of the ocean with Sugriva and the vanara army. Rama, with the help of his army, wanted to build a floating bridge and was wondering how to do it. With the name of Rama on their tongue and with their hearts filled with devotion to Rama the vanara army worked day and night to construct the bridge over the ocean. There is an interesting story in this connection that illustrates the power of faith in God's name. It is said that one vanara said he knew a trick that would float stones on water. Rama asked him how. He said: "I just take the name of Rama and say –

float on the water it is Rama's work and it will float."

Then Rama thought: "With my name the stone is floating, let me try it." He took a small stone and threw it into the water and it drowned in the water. Rama was surprised at this. Hanuman was standing behind Rama and laughed as he watched this. When Rama asked him why he was laughing, Hanuman said, "Because I was looking at your play. The stone drowned, because that which is rejected by you (God) will drown in the ocean of the world. It floated in the other case as the person had immense faith and love for your name and he believed that with

the name of God anything could happen. Where there is love, there is belief and trust.” The floating bridge was completed successfully.

There is another interesting fact. Before the setu bandhana it is said that a Shiva Linga was installed and that Ravana himself was invited to be the priest for worship and Ravana agreed. This is the greatness of Ravana. Ravana knew that Rama was coming to destroy him and constructing a bridge but when invited as a priest he obliged. Setu bandha pratishta and Rameshwara pratishta were done.

What is the meaning of *setu*? In the Upanishad it is said,

ātma vai setu.

In the ocean knowledge of the soul is the bridge.

What is the *setu bandhana*? The main land is the body and the island is the place in between the eyebrows. So to come from the body to the mid point of the eyebrows you need a link. Here again comes the link of breath. So they crossed over to Lanka using the bridge.

Vibhishana's Surrender

In the meantime in Lanka, Vibhishana tried to advise Ravana that he would not be able to win the war against Rama and to surrender to Rama. Ravana was very angry and drove Vibhishana out of Lanka for trying to discourage him from war with Rama. Vibhishana came to Rama seeking refuge. Sugriva was hesitant to give shelter to the enemy but Rama accepted him and asked for the water of the ocean to be brought to anoint him as the king of Lanka. Sugreeva objected –as to how Rama can promise the kingdom of Lanka to Vibhishana even before Ravana was defeated. Rama replied that if they lose the battle with Ravana, then Vibhishana would still be the king, as he would then give him Ayodhya. Sri Rama said,

*sakrud eva
prapannaya tavasmitica
yacate*

*a b h a y a m s a r v a
bhutebhyo daddmyetad
vratam mama*

To any one who asks for shelter saying, “I am yours”, I give my pledge of protection from all beings

One of the greatest virtues of Sri Rama is protecting anyone who surrenders and asks for shelter. Lord Krishna assures in the Bhagavad Gita on similar lines.

*ananyaschintayantomam
ye jana paryupasate*

*t e s h a m
n i t y a b h i y u k t a n a m
yogakshemam vahamyaham*

One who can surrender with devotion and faith like Vibhishana can be assured of the Lords protection.



Balashram Blessings Day – Art and Craft Exhibition

THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI

Sutra 2

Yoga is the cessation of Thoughts

yogah cittavrtti nirodhah //2//

Word Meaning

yogah – yoga; *citta-vrtti* – thought in the mind or memory; *nirodhah* – cessation, suppression, elimination

Translation

Yoga is the elimination, annihilation and suppression of the modifications of the mind.

Commentary by Shri Lahiri Mahasaya

All the waves of *chitta* are completely and naturally eliminated.

Metaphorical Explanation

In this sutra, there are three words: *yoga*, *chitta-vrtti* (a combined word, made of *chitta* and *vrtti*), and *nirodhah*. This most beautiful sutra, in merely three words, sums up a scripture and thoroughly describes a meditation technique.

Yoga

In the explanation of the first sutra, it was noted that yoga is a very broad concept

and that the term is widely used in various contexts to refer to spiritual practice, physical exercise, mathematics, astrology, astronomy and ayurveda. Yoga also means “an opportunity.” But in this immediate analysis, yoga is used in reference to the spiritual realm, where it is the means as well as the end: yoga is the process of meditation (technique) and yoga is the achievement of meditation (realization). Yoga is the beginning and end of everything.

Chitta-Vritti

Although *chitta* is simply translated as “mind,” and *vrtti* means “thought waves,” this concept has still an even deeper, inner meaning. In order to know what yoga really is, one needs to understand *chitta* (mind) in detail.

Each human being is endowed with the *antahkarana* – *chatushtaya*, four inner instruments: *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), *ahamkara* (ego), and *chitta* (mind-stuff or memory). Mind is not only a subject matter for

spirituality; it is also a topic discussed in psychology, in medical science, and in many other fields of human activities.

The simplest meaning of *manas* (mind) is “the doubting faculty.” The scriptures say, *samshayatmika manah*: “The mind always doubts.” The mind is always suspicious, curious, and doubtful. The mind loves confusion, and the mind lives in confusion. The mind cannot decide what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong. The mind is like a person standing in a shop, looking at garments and thinking that every piece of cloth is beautiful.

Superior to the mind is *buddhi* (intellect). The scriptures define *buddhi* as *nishchayatmika buddhi*, meaning that the intellect is the deciding faculty of human beings. *Buddhi* discriminates between what is good and what is bad, and then decides what should be done.

The third faculty or inner instrument is *ahamkara* (ego). The scriptures define *ahamkara* as *abhimananatmika ahamkara*. This egoistic faculty claims “I am the doer. I am.... I am....” This is ego.

The fourth faculty is *chitta* (memory). The scriptures say that *chitta* is *anusandhanatmika* or *smaranatmika*, the investigating faculty, or the faculty of memory. Mind is the product of experiences that are preserved in the midbrain as memory. Thus the midbrain is the storehouse of all human experiences. This memory is the cause of all thoughts. No thought can come to one’s mind if it is not based on a specific memory. An unknown or unperceived idea cannot enter the mind. A thought cannot come out of nothing. This *chitta* is born out of human experience through the mind and, in turn, the mind becomes activated from memory. *Chitta* is the computerized memory of the brain.

This can be explained by a simple example. *Chitta* can be compared to the ocean, and the mind to the waves. When a man tries to sit silently, immediately a whole chain of thoughts, one wave after the other, is the *chitta-vritti*. The human mind is always restless. A mind without restlessness is really no mind at all. Mind and restlessness are two sides of the same coin.

These *chitta -vrittis* are created out of ignorance. An ignorant person searching for happiness in the material world goes from place to place, person to person, object to object, trying to get peace and happiness. Real happiness is not outside, but inside. He does not know it. He collects and gathers various experiences and impressions, which are then stored as memory. This material memory is the source of all thoughts, *chitta-vritti*.

Nirodhah

Nirodhah is made of the prefix *ni* (completely) and *rudh* (to close). *Nirodhah* means confinement, locking up, enclosing, and covering up, restraint, check, suppression, control, or elimination.

Yoga as the Means

Yoga is the means of annihilating the waves of the mind. Now the question arises: Why are so many waves of thought continually arising in the mind? Think of a lake. The water in the lake is tranquil. When the wind blows, the water in the lake is no longer still; it is full of waves. Wind is the cause of the waves in the lake. Similarly breath is the cause of thought waves in the ocean of

chitta. In the Hatha Yoga Pradipika (2:2), it says:

*cale vate calam cittam
niscal niscalam bhavet*

*Yogi sthanutvam apnoti
tato vayum nitodhayet*

“When the breath is restless, the mind is restless. When the breath is calm and quiet, the mind is no longer restless.

So, by controlling the breath, the yogis attain the state of inner tranquility.”

Yogi Patanjali is saying that yoga is the way that helps to make the restless and turbulent mind extremely calm, peaceful, and still.

People, especially in this electronic age, are aware of the many names, forms, and formalities of yoga. They are all the branches of one yoga: Kriya Yoga is the tree of yoga, which is called the Royal Science and Royal Secret by Shri Krishna.

Yoga as the End

People practice different techniques of meditation and different forms of yoga. If they ask their own conscience, they can easily know whether they are really free from mind, thought, intellect, ego, body

sense, and worldly sense. If not, their practice is adulterated. Yoga is that process which brings the state of inner silence and tranquility. When the state of yoga really dawns, the mind becomes automatically quiet. Yoga is complete cessation of restlessness.

Before the achievement of such a state, there is restlessness. Once this state of union is achieved, there is no distraction or deviation. Yoga is that state of union: union of the two – the merging of the river with the ocean. The river is restless when it has not yet met the ocean. Once it meets the ocean, the limited river loses its name and form and becomes one with the formless and vast ocean.

God is the ocean and every individual is the river. The source of the river is the ocean. The water of the ocean is drawn up by the sun, then precipitates as snow or rain, and ultimately becomes a river. When the river meets the ocean, it simply goes back to its original source.

Yoga enables us to go back to our source, God, the Absolute. Yoga is a natural state of union. Yoga is the

manifestation of unity with the Supreme, Who abides in us. This is the union of body and soul, human being and God, individual self with the Supreme Self. One breath is the indication of that unity and we must realize it. If we realize this unity constantly in every breath, then all restlessness will disappear.

In this sutra, one thing must be clearly understood: the distinction between *vritti nirodha* and *vritti laya*. *Vritti nirodha* means restraint and control of *vritti*. *Vritti laya* means complete dissolution of *vritti*. In *vritti nirodha*, the meditator is completely free from all restlessness and ups and downs. Even after arising from meditation, his inner tranquil state continues, as he works and lives in the world compassionately detached. When the state of realization dawns, ignorance disappears completely; he lives like a liberated soul. Although *chitta-vritti*, the play of memory, remains, there are no more restless or overpowering desires. In *vritti-laya*, there is no rise of *vritti*. *Vritti-laya*, or complete dissolution of *vritti*, is possible only at the time of death.

O Seeker! Do you really want to be a yogi? Do you really want inner transformation? A piece of iron associated with a magnet is changed into a magnet. It behaves like a magnet. If you really want the beauty of yoga, then be constantly associated with God. There is no separation between you and God. Can a wave ever think that it has a separate existence from the ocean? The wave is born in the ocean, lives in the ocean, and ultimately merges in

the ocean. Ocean and waves are one and always have been one.

O Seeker! Perceive this constant yoga, this unity, association, identity, and oneness with Him. Your everything is God. Every aspect of your life is God. Please follow your master. Practice the technique of Kriya Yoga daily, regularly, and sincerely. This technique is itself divine. It will make you more divine and realized.



Balashram – Art and Craft Exhibition

VALUABLE VOLUMES



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

VISHUDDHA CHAKRA (From *THE UNIVERSE WITHIN*)

The Vishuddha is the center of religious and intellectual activities. The intellect can be used for material success as well as spiritual progress. Most intelligent people use their skill and talent to achieve name, fame and material prosperity. A few realize the intellect's potential for inner evolution and develop love, compassion, detachment and understanding. The expression of these qualities through speech and the written word result in the development of philosophy, which is an art as well as a science that probes into the meaning of life.

People develop love for God through this center. They study and listen to scriptures, intellectualize them and practice

religion. Religion is the practical aspect of philosophy. But over a period of time, religions become overly dogmatic, forgetting their true significance. Religion means reunion or evolution from the lower centers to the higher centers. All religions of the world are the petals of the same beautiful flower, the flower of life. They should be complements and not competition to one another.

Religious Intolerance

Three people were travelling in a crowded train in India. A Hindu priest, a Muslim priest and a Christian minister. The three of them were seated on the same bench each thinking he and his religion were superior to the others and trying

to keep a distance and not even looking at each other. Across from them was sitting a journalist who was amused at their behaviour and wondering how people become so dogmatic. It was getting late at night and sleep was overpowering the three men. When one is on the threshold of sleep the gross body becomes apparently inactive the subtle body becomes weak and the causal body takes over. The three of them started dozing and falling on each other but would quickly check themselves and sit straight again. Finally they all fell asleep and ended up lying with the head of one touching the feet of the other. The journalist seizing the opportunity took a picture of the three with his polaroid camera. In the morning when they got up the three men quickly moved away from each other and again tried to maintain their airs of superiority. The journalist quietly showed them the photograph with a smile.

Body consciousness creates many differences. Religion becomes

compartmental and brings disharmony. People who meditate deeply understand the spirit of religion and the inner unity of all faiths.

The cleansing and purification of the mind are the main activities of the neck center, which is located in the spine behind the throat. According to the *Vedas*, there are eight holy places within the throat, the region of purity, liberation and knowledge. Hindus believe that by taking a dip in holy rivers like the Ganga or Yamuna they become pure. The body no doubt gets cleaned and because of their strong belief, the mind also gets purified to some extent. But this is a temporary cleansing.

A Dip in the Ganga

Once a disciple came to the great saint Sri Ramakrishna and asked, "People believe that they will be totally free from sins and negative qualities by taking a bath in the river Ganga. Is it true?" Ramakrishna replied, "There is no doubt about it." The disciple argued, "My master, I have seen people taking a bath in the Ganga

everyday and yet committing the same sins again and again.” Sri Ramkrishna said with a smile, “When a person enters the Ganga, all the sins do leave him because at that time he has love for God. They leave his body but sit on a nearby tree or housetop. When he comes out of the water and is his old self again, they all descend on his head and he commits the same mistakes.”

If we look at our own life, we can see the same pattern emerging. We vow to reform ourselves, we make new resolutions at least once a year, we begin with great energy and spirit, yet we resume our bad habits, our addictions, and our faults very quickly. There is a simile in Sanskrit, *gaja snana vat*, meaning like the bath of an elephant, which is used to describe those who never escape their bad habits. An elephant takes an elaborate bath, filling its trunk with plenty of water and pouring it over its body repeatedly to cleanse it thoroughly. But as soon as it emerges from the river, it rolls in the mud again. Rather than

bathing in external holy rivers, what the *Vedas* extolled was inner purification through bathing in the internal oases of the self, located in the *Visuddha chakra*. The eight *tirthas* (holy places) of *Visuddha* are described as: truthfulness, forgiveness, compassion, knowledge, straightforwardness, purity of the Self, and liberation. All these eight virtues are in the neck center. When we dive into these eight holy rivers, as they are called, we will be free from the eight kinds of human bondage. The causes for human bondage include: shame, hatred, fear, sorrow, jealousy, pride, ego, and prejudice.

All human beings are strongly bound by these eight qualities, which are like strong ropes keeping us tied down. By bathing or filling ourselves with the eight divine qualities, we can purify our minds and escape the bondage we are in.

Nilakantha- Blue Throat

The Hindu god Shiva is the presiding deity of the throat center. Shiva once inhaled poison which threatened to engulf the universe.. But he

knew that if he swallowed the poison, he too would be destroyed. Unable to swallow and unable to spew out the venom, Shiva kept it locked within his throat. His throat, which held the poison, took on a permanent blue hue, earning him the name of Nilakantha or Blue Throat.

Hindu myth always contains an underlying metaphor. Here, the throat is

the center of speech, which can be extremely powerful. With our speech, we can either create harmony, love and understanding or hatred, bitterness and pain. The throat thus has the potential to contain poison or nectar. We need to speak with the understanding that our speech is powerful. Like Shiva, we need to swallow the bitter and refuse to hurt others through our words.



Birthday Celebrations at Miami Ashram

THE CHANGING NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS

The Compromise of Love

God made man and woman in order to continue His creation through them. Each one is incomplete without the other. A close relationship between two individuals, based in mutual love, will help them grow emotionally, mentally, intellectually and spiritually. It is necessary, however, to forget that two separate beings are involved and merge in oneness. Success depends upon that unity.

If there is true love, there will be no misunderstanding. To live close to someone, in harmony, takes a certain amount of compromise. A relationship becomes stronger when both sides sacrifice their inner ego. It is important to co-operate with each other in every possible way. When one partner is stressed or depressed, the other should create a neutral environment to bring relief from anxiety and tension. To be successful, the journey together must be like a 'three-legged race', the steps must be equal

and rhythmic, directed by a singleness of purpose.

To love someone does not mean to be possessive, which is a negative feeling derived from insecurity. Love is to allow the other to grow. Doubts are great obstacles to a healthy relationship. Once doubt enters the heart and mind, confusion and bitterness will follow.

The first goal in a relationship is to promote the betterment of the other. Selfishness only breeds destruction. It is important in a relationship to help each other overcome negative impulses. Everyone has some form of weakness or another.

A fault-finding person can be very destructive. Since our eyes look outwards, we can easily detect each other's mistakes. It is only when we start to turn inwards, that we begin to be aware, with a certain humility, of our own failings. To have a healthy relationship, we must learn the art of digesting mistakes done by others. If we

really want a person to correct their negative behavior, we should address the problem in an atmosphere of privacy, in a straight-forward and clear manner, so the message is not misunderstood. The Koran teaches us not to speak badly of others, spreading stories or gossip brings harm to everyone concerned.

Nevertheless, if a relationship is negative, and brings about constant unhappiness, it should be severed; nothing in life should stunt our overall growth.

A relationship between two people that love each other becomes more solid when it is focused in spirituality. When divinity is present within us, many of life's tribulations are more easily accepted and understood. Sometimes when one partner follows the spiritual path before the other, it is seen as a threat. Meditation is wrongly portrayed as withdrawal. Through patience and good communication, a compromise can be reached. In my case, no-one should ever be allowed to stand in the path of our spiritual progress, which is the backbone of our personal development. We must grow in

our relationships, never be diminished by them.

The Freedom to Grow

Human relationships are designed for us to grow in love, and to experience freedom. The ultimate goal of a relationship is to be free. This does not pertain to economic or social freedom, but to the freedom of the spirit. With every relationship we are to grow in a positive direction.

In the vegetable kingdom, we sometimes find a parasite plant growing alongside a healthy tree, and feeding from it. A parasite will not let the original plant grow and will, if the suffocating relationship is allowed to continue, be the cause of its destruction.

In animals and humans we also find parasites buried deep in the intestinal tract, causing illness, pain and digestive problems.

In the course of our life, we must never foment these parasitic relationships. One partner must never lean on the other, without making adequate return. In a healthy, loving relationship, we must help the other grow, in every aspect. The mutual gain from giving the

maximum to each other will manifest itself in a thousand ways.

A relationship blooms when we do not obstruct each other's positive development. We should never stand in the way of spiritual practice, even if we are not ready to walk along the same path. Relationships will flourish when we encourage positive activities in each other.

The bond of love should be a long-lasting commitment, capable of surviving all types' o situations, especially in times of hardship. To face difficulties together brings about staunchness of heart. Moral support, in times of distress, fortifies a relationship since problems are a test of endurance. Once they are successfully overcome, a relationship acquires a stronger foundation.

Communication is essential to the development and maintenance of a positive relationship, but we must speak with love, consciously and carefully, taking into account each other's feelings. A wrong word can bring about misunderstanding. It is best not to say all that we think, but to think all that we would say. A lie, an untruth, can be highly detrimental as once faith is diminished, it is almost impossible to re-establish trust.

A good environment and good company are healthy foundations for building a relationship. Common activities like reading to each other, cooking together, playing together, or helping others, are all highly beneficial. We should strive to build strong, firm roots, born out of love, and mutual understanding.

MYSTICISM OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS

BE LIKE A FLOWER

One may question whether it is just a courtesy to bring flowers when greeting people, meeting guests, or when visiting the temple or a friend, or if there is some truth, message, or instruction behind it. What does it really mean? The flower is one of the most beautiful creations of God. It is not possible to find even a tiny flower that is ugly. The tiny blue flower called “Forget-me-not” reminds us not to forget the One who has created everything. When looking at the flower, we should remember the One who has created this universe, including us. If this flower is so beautiful, then think of how the Creator is even more beautiful than the creation. When we take the flower to remember the Creator, to remember God, it acquires more meaning for our lives.

The meaning is that the flower symbolizes our heart and life. It is said in many Hindu scriptures, *hridaya kamala* – *hridaya*, the heart, is compared with the lotus or flower, and life

is compared with the flower. A blooming bud should open completely or it should bloom to become a fruit. This is the beauty of the flower. The flower becomes a medium and vehicle of God’s creation. The flower attracts both the human mind and butterflies. Similarly, the poets and mystics of India prayed: “Let the bee of my mind be attracted towards the blue lotus feet of the Divine Mother.”

The flower symbolizes the heart and life. The flower has five beautiful qualities, which can easily be cultivated in human life. These five qualities are beauty, purity, softness, honey within, and smell or aroma.

Beauty: The beauty in flowers symbolizes our efforts to cultivate beauty in our lives. If there is beauty in our life, it becomes nice and peaceful. It is not the beauty of outer physical form, color or complexion, but it is the beauty of one’s nature, beauty of love, beauty of compassion, and so

forth. When a person truly has love in the heart, it is beautiful.

Purity: The flower is pure. It blossoms with inner beauty, readiness to be a reminder of God's presence. Because of this natural quality of the flower, it gives joy. The purity brings real joy in life and thus, one should try to cultivate purity in thinking, speaking and acting in daily life.

Softness: The petals of the flower are nicely organized. Botany calls it the floral structure. These petals are so beautiful and tender; even when we touch them with our hands or cheeks we get joy. The flowers' softness is a reminder that we should be free from rudeness and rough behavior in our hearts, and that we should be tender, sympathetic and compassionate so that our lives will be more beautiful.

Honey within: Honey symbolizes sweetness. The bee is attracted to the flower because of honey within, and it collects honey from the flowers. Similarly, if we have sweetness of love, sweetness of joy in our lives, then our lives will truly be attractive and fruitful. Let us cultivate sweetness in our daily life.

Aroma or fragrance: Many flowers have fragrance. It is a common experience that the flowers that bloom at night are usually blessed with a beautiful aroma. Roses, jasmine, and many other flowers have a nice fragrance. Being like flowers in the garden of God, we should have a lovely aroma of life, symbolized through our good qualities or values. When the flower is blooming, its smell, its aroma, goes far and wide. Similarly, we should develop ourselves to cultivate good character. As a result, the value of an individual should spread far and wide. We all are children of God and we all should have divine qualities.

We should bloom like beautiful flowers and try to bring these five qualities of the flower into our lives. Then when we decorate the altar with the flowers, look at their beauty, it brings joy. The flower's beauty and aroma have a purifying effect. They beautify the place, sanctify the place, and we feel divine joy when we offer flowers.

Offering flowers when we greet people symbolizes that "my flower of life is for you, and let us be like flowers, let

us love each other, let us not have anger, hatred and jealousy.” This is the real flower, the flower of our heart and life that we should offer at the temple. Offering flowers at the temple also means that my

life, my heart, is offered to God, to the masters on the altars in the temple. The offering is: “O God, O Masters, my life is for you. You have given this life to me and I am dedicating this life to you again.”



Birthday Celebrations at Tattendorf Ashram

STORIES TO LIVE BY

THE SINGING BIRD

There once was a poor hunter who trapped birds in the forest, put them in small cages, and then sold them to earn his livelihood. However this hunter was not aware that in the very forest where he hunted every day lived a very unique and gifted bird. Not only did this bird enchant the forest with its beautiful melodies, when it sang, precious gems, like pearls and diamonds fell from its beak.

Every day the bird sadly watched the hunter capture many of its friends. This man would mindlessly toss the birds into a ragged canvas sack and then haul them off to the marketplace to be sold. The gifted bird thought, "This poor man has chosen an unrighteous way to earn a meager living. If he had enough money, he would no longer have the need to trap all these birds. If I go to this man and stay with him, he would soon become rich and this would save many birds from being caught."

So the noble bird, hoping to save its friends, flew over to

the man and, while perched on his hand, began to sing. The bewildered man stared in disbelief, as the most exquisite pearls dropped from the beak of the bird. Afraid any quick movements might set it to flight; he carefully clasped his hands around the bird and gently put it in a cage. The bird was puzzled why this man, instead of taking it home and becoming rich, chose to put it in a cage to be sold at the marketplace.

That day when the man arrived at the marketplace, he placed a large sign next to the gifted bird's cage. The sign stated that the bird had wondrous, magical powers; therefore it would be sold to the highest bidder. Soon the news of this amazing bird reached the king, who promptly sent his messengers to bring the bird and the hunter to the palace to verify whether the hunter's claim was true.

By now the magical bird determined that his plan had taken a turn for the worse. He realizes it was unwise to allow

himself to become imprisoned in the king's palace. So when the hunter placed his cage before the king and commanded it to sing, it just opened its mouth and let out a ghastly squawk. Thinking the hunter had tried to trick him, the king angrily ordered the bird to be set free. When the cage door opened the joyful bird spread its wings and began to sing:

“ I was the first fool to get myself trapped.

The hunter was the second fool who did not believe in me and wanted to sell me.

The king and the minister are both fools to have let me out.”

Then, just as it reached an open window, a steady stream of priceless gems began falling from its mouth – and it was never seen again.

Reflection

We should not waste our time trying to transform those who cannot understand the value of our words and actions. It is foolish to help foolish people.



Dhouli Art Competition

ATMA-VIDYA

PURSuing SELF KNOWLEDGE

KAIVALYOPANISHAD

The Guru continued his teaching on self knowledge further to answer Asvalayana's question. This verse explains that awareness or consciousness is everything. There is nothing else other than this.

Mantra 9

*sa evasarvam, yadbhutam yaccabhavyagm sanatanaṁ
jnatva tvaṁ mrityuṁ atyeti nanyaḥ pantha vimuktaye*

Substance

He alone is everything that was there in the past, is now and that would be the future, is ever new. Knowing this, one crosses death, there is no other way for liberation.

Commentary

Sarvam includes *viditam* –known and *aviditam* – unknown. We normally know some things and do not know some other things. We do not claim to know everything. But one who knows he is the awareness knows he is *sarvam* as there is nothing other than awareness. He is everything. *Sarvam also means the senses.* He is in all the sense organs looking through the eyes and hearing through the ears.

yad bhutam- that which was in the past. *Butam* means which was in the past. Another meaning of *bhutam* is all that has manifested.

Yacca- what is now

Yat bhavyam – that is also the future. Few years ago there was no house here. After some years there will be no house here. But house or no house this space was and the space will be. When we remove the walls of this hall the space is still there. With the walls back the space is still there in the hall. Just as the space is unchanged and the walls are changing and the house is changing this body is changing through infancy and adulthood but the soul is

unchanged. Everything is just a play of nature.

sanatanam – eternal or changeless. *sa eva nitya nutana- snatana* –what is ever new is *sanatana*. The body becomes old, the mind becomes old we talk of age of the body, or clothes or ornaments based on a number of years but who can say how old the soul is. The soul is ageless and is called *sanatana*.

jnatva tam –knowing that

mṛtyum atyeti- one crosses death or overcomes

death. One who knows that the body will die and the soul is immortal overcomes death. One, who knows that the world will come to an end but he is the Lord beyond death –I am free from death, crosses death.

Tarati shokam atma vit says the Chadyoga Upanishad.

nanyah pantha vimuktaye- there is no other way to freedom or liberation.

One who wants to overcome death should experience this truth. There is no other way.



Balashram Scout students welcoming the Guest

BALASHRAM HIGHLIGHTS

CELEBRATION OF THE 9TH BLESSINGS DAY

H a r i h a r a n a n d a Balashram, a brain child of Paramhansa Prajnananandaji became reality on 29th July 2004, with a view of providing education to the destitute or underprivileged children of society. It celebrated its 9th foundation day on 29th July 2012 with daylong activities.

The morning program had a display of yogasanas, human pyramid and music. A high light was a drama enacted by the care takers of the children.

The afternoon hosted an Arts and Crafts exhibition demonstrating the creativity and the talent of the children. A new scout room for the growing number of scout activities was also inaugurated. Guests also visited the recently opened Computer lab that had forty five computers installed for the training of the students.

The evening program was inaugurated by the chief guest Dr. Aurobindo Behera IAS, member board of revenue.

He was accompanied by Sri M. Gourinath, retired chief conservator of forest, Odisha. The guests were welcomed by Pabitra Mohan Das, Tehsildar of Pattamundai along with our student scout troop. Sumitra Mandal, a student of class VII was the Master of ceremonies. The Principal P.P.Singh presented the annual report of the school which detailed the progress of Balashram and about its different activities conducted throughout the year. Swami Achhalanandaji, secretary of Prajnana Mission gave his views on Balashram and its future mission. Describing the road ahead secretary of Prajnana Mission gave more emphasis on man making is the primary objective of Balashram. Swami Shuddhanandaji, President of Prajnana Mission showered his blessings defining the concept behind the logo of Balashram. Swamiji emphasized on character building of the students and making them a good citizen of our society. Dr.

Aurobindo Behera, chief guest gave a very inspiring speech. He was touched by the concept behind formation of the Balashram and its activities. Commenting on the prevailing education system where students are taught only to secure higher marks and getting good jobs, he said “Education should be a spontaneous process”. He advised the students on patience and perseverance and congratulated them and the members of Balashram for the progress they have made

Then came the variety entertainment of song, dance, and drama by the students that thrilled the audiences. This was followed a festive dinner in which was attended by more than 2000 people. Balashram is gradually rising up to new heights of excellence. The program was appreciated by all the guests and audiences.

Extra Curricular Activities Scouts and Guides

On 19th November 2011, Bharath Scouts and Guides investiture happened at Balashram with many students taking oath. Scouts unit is named as Sriyukteshwar troop

and Guides unit is named as Anandamayee Guide Company. There are three patrols in Scouts and Guides respectively. 19 Scouts and Guides attended a district camporee at Mandapara on 3rd April 2012 for two days. They won several prizes in various competitions. Best Guides captain was also awarded to our school guides captain.

Art & Craft, Singing, Dancing and Tabla classes :

Art & Craft, Singing, Dancing and Tabla classes are introduced as a part of extracurricular activities. All the students have regular art and craft classes. Each student would also learn any two of Odissi classical dance, Odissi classical singing and Tabla. The school is tied up with the Pracheena Kala Kendra, a preferred university under CBSE for the above courses. In the exams conducted by them, all our students have passed with high merit.

Children have displayed exceptional talent in art and craft exhibitions arranged on special occasions.

Community Work & Spreading awareness :

During autumn of 2011, students participated in various flood relief operations. Most of the boys were involved in packing the relief material for the affected people. Some students from higher classes even went to sight along with other volunteers to distribute the relief packages.

In the summer of 2012, there were several fire accidents in the district of kendrapara. Our scout children actively participated in the relief activities on 9th, 13th and 14th of June during which relief was provided to affected in villages.

On Earth day, 22nd of March 2012, a cycle rally was conducted by scouts in order to spread awareness in nearby villages. Students carried various message placards and spoke to many villagers about conservation of resources on earth.

Value education

Value based education is imparted to the children. This is with an aim to induce moral values into children. It is also

intended to cultivate noble qualities such as courage, honesty, humility, fearlessness, etc.

National Art Exhibition at Dhouli college of Arts and crafts Bhubaneswar.

On 22nd July 2012 a National Art Exhibition was organized by Dhauli college of Art and Crafts, Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The competition was a national level competition and students from different parts of the country had participated. Four of our Balashram students were selected for awards for their paintings

The students are

1. Srimant Budhia, class VII,
2. Meghnad Gahiri, class VII,
3. Sandhya Mandal, class IV,
4. Sanjay Palia, class III.

The students went to Bhubaneswar to attend the festival and receive the awards and while there participated in a spot painting competition in which Sandhya Mandal won another prize.

53RD BIRTHDAY OF BABA PRAJNANANANDAJI

“mahajano yenah gatah sa pantha”

“That is the Path which is directed by the Realized.”

– **Mahabharata**

God and Masters are so kind. With humble gratitude, we should always cherish those words in our hearts. The promise of our Kriya Yoga lineage, as expressed in the symbol and aphorism that Swami Shriyukteshwarji established, is that there would always be a Realized Master to guide sincere disciples on this path “across the worldly ocean.”

It is hard to imagine how many lives were transformed under Gurudev’s love and guidance. Though he may have left his mortal body a decade ago, in truth he never left us alone. Faithful to the tradition of an unbroken legacy, he handpicked a disciple who represents the highest caliber of selfless spiritual dedication. When he named Paramahansa

Prajnananandaji as his designated successor and our spiritual guide he was keenly aware that this great soul would carry his mission forward and guide countless kriyavans toward their real spiritual attainment.

On this blessed day we commemorate the birth of this rare and beautiful Master, our beloved Guruji, who is the perfect embodiment of Kriya Yoga as expressed by Sage Patanjali in the Yoga Sutra (Sadhana Pada, sutra 1), *tapah svadhyaya ishvara pranidhanani kriya yogah*: meditation, self-study, and surrender to God, together, constitute Kriya Yoga. Each moment of his life he is the personification of discipline (*tapah*), self-study (*svadhyaya*), and deepest love and devotion (*ishwara pranidhana*).

During this special time that Guruji has chosen to be in seclusion for deep meditation and prayer, we lovingly and wholeheartedly await his return.

In the meantime, what have we learned from his living example of Kriya Yoga in daily life? How can we best express our appreciation for all of his dedicated help and guidance? There is only one way to show him our love. Practice. Practice lovingly. Practice sincerely. Let our practice embody tapah, svadhyaya, and ishwara pranidhana. Bring more discipline, study, and love into your life and vow to be a real

kriyavan! Only this gift from the heart truly honors Guruji and all the Masters of the Kriya Yoga lineage, giving verifiable proof that we have absorbed the teachings to the best of our ability and applied them in our practical life.

On this auspicious day, honor this magnificent Soul with your deepest love and gratitude. Bowing ceaselessly at his holy lotus feet.

SILENCE

Silence brings inner peace.

In Silence Truth is revealed.

Nature speaks in silence, Silence is divine.

Silence is an art of living, an art of learning and an art of exploring the source of peace through experiencing divine love.

Silence is the best means of communication. By entering the temple of silence to commune with God we experience ecstatic perennial joy.

– Daily Reflections

AROUND THE WORLD

INDIA

PRAJNANA MISSION

**53rd Birthday of
P a r a m a h a m s a
Prajnananandaji Maharaj,
Aug 10**

Hariharananda Gurukulam

Our beloved Baba Prajnananandaji's 53rd birthday was celebrated at the gurukulam with a special gurupaduka puja at Sri Guru Mandir followed by satsang and meditation.

There was also a satsang in the afternoon

More than 100 disciples participated in the event of hoisting a flag in the Neela Chakra at the top of the Lord Jagannath temple in honor of this special occasion.

A special ghee lamp was lighted in the name of Baba in the sanctum sanatorium (Garbha Gruha) of Lord Jagannath for blessings on this special occasion. Beautiful ornamental dresses were presented to the Deities on this occasion. About hundred and fifty people took part in the

mahaprasad at the temple.

Amarkantak Ashram :

In Amarkantaka ashram celebrated the birthday with a lot of love and devotion. Eighty devotees participated and a special Sadhu Bhandara was held. Forty five Sadhus graced the occasion..

Durg Ashram :

At Durg ashram there was special Puja and meditation. Large number of people attended to show their reverence inspite of a heavy rain..

Balashram :

Balashram kids celebrated with great love the birthday of their beloved Baba and were treated to a special lunch on the occasion.

Kriya Programs and Retreats

Several programs were conducted from August through September in the cities of Hyderabad, Nagpur, Raipur, Jabalpur, Bhopal, and Indore by Swami Samrpananandaji with other monks and Brahmacharis of the mission. Several sadhana

camps were also conducted in the cities of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar on a regular basis giving the disciples a chance to intensify their sadhana.

ASIA

Sept 7-9 Kriya Program, Hong Kong, China

Swami Samarpananandaji conducted a Kriya Intensive program at Hong Kong

Aug 2- 5 Dubai special event

Dubai disciples had a special event of talks and guided meditations with Swami Samapananandaji

August 10 - Birthday Celebrations

Dubai disciples celebrated the Birthday of Baba Prajnananandaji with a special Guru Paduka Puja , Satang and meditation followed by dinner.

EUROPE

Vienna Ashram, Tattendorf

August 10 - Birthday of Paramhansa Prajnanananda

Guruji's birthday was celebrated as a special event at Tattendorf under the loving guidance of the yogacharyas Christine Jacobsen, Uschi

Schmidtke and Claudia Cermers. There was a gurupaduka puja in the morning and an evening satsang. Disciples watched a video of the Birthday celebrations of year 2005 .This was followed by the chanting of Guru Gayatri Mantra and guided meditation. The program came to an end with dinner. All those present could feel the love and blessings of Baba on the auspicious day.

September 5-10

A Kriya Intensive program was held at Kriya Yoga Center Vienna, Austria with Swami Atmavidyananda and Swami Mangalananda Giri.

Kriya initiation programs were held in centers of many countries throughout Europe.

August 13-16

A retreat was held at Latvia with Swami Mangalananda Giri

August 20- 24

Retreat at Poland

Upcoming events include

Oct 12-14

Higher Kriya Retreat at Sterskel, Holland

Nov 14-18

Frankfurt Retreat

Dec-03,

Special Event
P a r a m a h a m s a
Hariharanandaji's Mahsamadhi
Commemoration service

Dec-24 to Jan-01, 2013

Retreat Christmas / New
Year Seminar, Kriya Yoga
Centre Vienna, Austria

AMERICAS

North America

**Mother Center –
Homestead FL**

Mother center has been busy with increasing number of initiations and disciples coming for meditations. Daily resident discourse schedule and Group Gita study based on the Gita discourses of Guruji are followed on a daily basis by the residents.

Intensive for the Residents

During the stay of Swami Atmavidyanandaji at the ashram a weekly intensive for the resident monks and Brahmacharis was introduced. Swamiji conducted the intensive that included 8 hours of meditation (in three sessions). It was also a day of silence at the ashram.

**P a r a m a h a m s a
Prajnananandaji's Birthday
celebration –Aug 10 -12**

The 3 day event marked the birthday of our beloved Guruji Baba Prajnananandaji who is spending time in silence and seclusion this year.

The Birthday of Guruji coincided (Aug 10) with the Birthday of Lord Krishna (night of 9th Aug) this year making it doubly auspicious. The Birthday of Baba was celebrated at the Mother center on the 10th of August with special worship along with worship of Lord Krishna, Guru and Govinda were worshipped together. Gurupaduka puja and havan were performed followed by meditation and a festive lunch. The seminar continued on Saturday and Sunday with classes and guided meditations, devotional songs and bhajans. Residents and the disciples shared their love and experiences with the guru. There was a feeling of great joy great and everyone felt the presence and the blessings of the guru. Swami Atmavidyanandaji and yogacharya John Baba conducted the program assisted

by the other monks and Brahmacharis of the Ashram.

Annual Fall Retreat and Foundation Day, September 19-24

The Annual Fall Retreat at the Mother Center was well attended by national and international participants. Swami Atmavidyanandaji conducted the retreat along with Yogacharya John Thomas Baba and the resident monks and Brahmacharis. Swami Atmavidyanandaji gave discourses on the Cosmic Science of Vedic Astrology and its Relevance to Life. The six day retreat of several guided meditations, and inspiring discourses intensified the practice of Kriya disciples.

September 22nd, the 15th Foundation Day

The Mother center also celebrates the 15th Foundation day of the Homestead Ashram this year.

This day, fifteen years ago, Gurudev founded this spiritual center, which was also his home where he stayed continuously and guided us.

A special souvenir book will be released on this day

featuring photos and stories from disciples, Swamijis, and Yogacharyas bringing fond memories of Gurudev Baba Hariharanandaji, the great Master who transformed the ashram grounds and the hearts of the devotees with his love.

Kriya Vedanta Gurukulam, Joliet IL

Birthday of Paramahansa Prajnananandaji and Birthday of Lord Krishna

Lord Krishna's Birthday, on the 9th of August and Gurujis Birthday on 10th of August were celebrated together at our Joliet Ashram on the 12th. The resident monks and Brahmacharis conducted the program along with Yogacharya Durga Ma, with worship of Guru and Lord Krishna followed by chanting, songs and spiritual discussion. The program concluded with a special lunch.

Retreats and Programs

Programs were held in many centers of the country in the month of August which included initiation programs and the following retreats.

August 17-19

East Coast Retreat

August 24-26

West Coast Retreat

Dec24-25

Gurudev's 10th
Mahasamadhi Day Seminar

Dec 30-Jan1 2013

Christmas and New Year
South America

Upcoming Events

The following events are planned with Swami Atmavidyananda Giri and Yogacharya Bhadrayu Pandya

Oct-03 to Oct-08, 2012 Initiation Program Brasilia, Brazil

Oct-09 to Oct-15, 2012 Initiation Program Sao Paulo, Brazil

Oct-19 to Oct-21, 2012 Initiation Program Buenos Aires, Argentina

Oct-26 to Oct-28, 2012 Initiation Program Chile, South America

Dec-07 to Dec-09, 2012 Initiation Only Bogota, Colombia

Dec-10 to Dec-16, 2012 Retreat Armenia, Colombia

Australia and New Zealand

In the month of September initiation programs were held at Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, and Canberra.

Upcoming events include
Oct 5-7

Intensive at Auckland

Oct 8-14

Retreat at New Zealand

HARIHARANANDA GURUKULAM

BALIGHAI, PURI, ODISHA, INDIA

Announces the 6th Residential Brahmachari Training Course RBTC-2012

For three months - December 6, 2012 to March 10, 2013
Conducted by Swami Shuddhananda Giri.

For details contact please visit our website :

kriya.org, prajnanamission.org

Visit our web site:

www. prajnanamission.org

For current information.

E-mail : **seva@prajnanamission.org / missionprajnana@gmail.com**

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

**For available Books on
Yoga, Philosophy & Spirituality.
Please visit our websites.**

For **India** – www.prajnanamission.org

For **USA** – www.kriya.org

For **Europe** – www.kriyayoga-europe.org