

Sthita Prajna



Guru Vandana

*Saptasagaraparyantam tirthasnanaphalam tu yat
Gurupadapayobindoh sahasramsena tatphalam*

Whatever merit a person has accumulated from pilgrimages and bathing in the sacred waters of holy places, covering the entire seven oceans of the world, is equal to only one-thousandth part of a drop of water that washes the Guru preceptor's feet.

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FROM THE EDITORS :

“The beauty in life is not living for oneself; it is giving, sharing, and caring. Let us try to offer all of our goodness to others, not our sorrow and misery. Let us share our knowledge, skill, and positive thought; let us relieve others of their suffering.”

Paramahansa Prajnanananda

Year 2011 was a year of great events. It marked the completion of 150 years of Shri Shyamacharana Lahiri's Initiation into Kriya Yoga by Shri Mahavatar Babaji and was commemorated with Baba Prajnananandaji leading the Kriyavans on a pilgrimage in the footsteps of the Kriya Yoga Masters. We welcome year 2012, to bring even more growth in kriya activities, spirituality, love and wisdom under the guidance of our gurus.

“Message of the Master” speaks on yogic evolution. With Mahashivaratri approaching “Prajnana Vani” talks of the divine qualities of Lord Shiva and their inner significance which helps in meditation.

Practical Spirituality explores the idea of attachment and non-attachment through a discussion of the ties that bind us to people and places and how that might actually be a good thing in the process of evolution.

Rama Katha depicts the play of Lord Rama's sorrow on kidnapping of Sita by Ravana. We observed the Punyatithi of our beloved Gurudev on Dec 3. Prashnottari answers questions on lives of great Masters and incarnations. The article on Self Knowledge describes achieving a state of no thought through knowledge and right understanding.

Excerpts from some of Paramahansa Prajnananandaji's seminal works continue to elaborate on chakras and the body and mind. The significance of bowing, a common practice in some cultures and its benefits are also commented upon.

We bring you the Christmas and New Year message of Guruji and excerpts from other messages.

Around the world covers the happenings and highlights of ashrams across the world and upcoming events.

Sthita Prajna wishes a happy and prosperous New Year and thanks all its readers and sponsors for their support. We look forward to your continued support in making this endeavor of spreading the message of the Masters fruitful in the coming years.

HOLY DAYS MESSAGE

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Loving and Divine Soul,

Time and tide waits for no one. Intelligent people, aware of this continuous flow of time, try to live carefully and consciously and utilize their every moment in a productive and prayerful manner. On the other hand, unwise and lazy people tend to waste precious time.

One year is almost gone and another year is knocking at the door. One should carefully think what one has done in this outgoing year. God is so kind, the last week of the outgoing year begins with the birthday of Jesus. So Christmas and New Year come together with one week difference. Those who have made full use of the passing year can offer all their success at the feet of Jesus and begin the New Year with determination, new dreams, and with a renewed devotion. Even for those who have not given proper value to time, it is the time of awakening and repentance for wasting precious time and praying for

forgiveness to make themselves ready to welcome the new year with a new spirit.

Let these two celebrations not be celebrated only externally, but internally in the altar of the heart. Let the love and compassion of Jesus be vibrant in our heart and in our life. Let not our treasure of time be wasted with laziness, idle gossip, or procrastination. Let not our tongue be tarnished with speaking ill of others, or with slander. Let not our mind be polluted by negative thoughts. Let our life be filled with peace, bliss, and joy.

On the occasion of Christmas and New Year, I am praying to God, Mother Mary, Jesus, all the divine incarnation, saints and sages, all spiritual masters of all times and places, to bless all of us, who include all of creation.

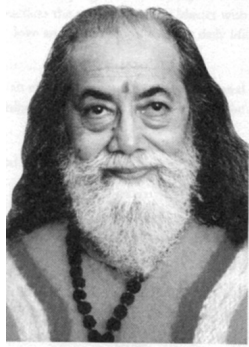
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

I bow to all of you.

Prajanananda

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

YOGIC THEORY OF EVOLUTION – HERIDITY



If you only read the words of Bhagavad Gita, you will not learn the true meaning of the spiritual texts, which describe soul cultivation. When you sit by the side of the Guru and read the Gita, learning its true meaning and meditation, you will attain God realization.

In the 13th chapter of the Gita human beings are described as twofold: consisting of a body kshetra and the soul, kshetrajna, the conductor of the body. The physical body consists of twenty four gross elements which include all the body functions such as sight, taste, touch, smell and so forth. Ultimately these twenty four elements keep people in delusion, illusion and error.

Since the soul is the conductor of the body and its

twenty four elements, the soul creates the delusion, illusion and error. When a mother gives a child many dolls and toys, the child becomes engrossed in playing and completely forgets about the mother. Similarly human beings who remain in an extroverted state completely forget their mother nature, the soul.

Realizing the presence of this forgotten soul is your birth right. Though all beings are born of sexual pleasure receiving DNA from both the parents; this DNA cannot function if the soul does not activate the life force in it. Every human being is a living soul and the soul nature is your true destiny. Your true heredity is the soul created by the grace of God, not by parents.

PRAJNANAVANI - THE VOICE OF WISDOM

MEDITATION ON QUALITIES OF LORD SHIVA



*Chandrodbhasita sekhare smarashare gangadhare shankare
Sarpairbhushita kantha karna yugale netrottha vaisvanare
Dantivakkritasundarambaradhare trailokya sare hare
Mokshartham kuru cittavrittimmalamanyaishtu kimkaramabhi*

Sivaparadha Kshamapana Stotram

“O Lord, who wears the moon – ornamented crown, who is the enemy of the God of Love, who carries Ganga on his head, who gives peace to his devotees, who adorns snakes on his neck and ears, who has *vishvanara* fire rising in his eyes, who wears the beautiful cloth of elephant skin, and who is the Lord of the three worlds, please make my mind steady for my liberation, for what use is there for any other path.”

This beautiful hymn from Sivaparadha Kshamapana Stotra of Adi Shankara describes both the beauty of Lord Shiva and also how to meditate on Lord Shiva.

Candrodbhasita sekhare smarashare gangadhare shankare - “O Lord Shiva, you are adorned with the crescent on your head, you are the destroyer of cupid, the lord of love. You are Gangadhare, holding Mother

Ganga in your locked hair. You are Shankara.”

The next line states
Sarpaihi bhushita
kanthakarna yugale
netrottha vaisvanare .
kanthakarna yugale means
‘the two ears and the throat.’
Lord Shiva has an ornament of a snake on his ear and on the throat. Why would one use snake as an ornament on their body? It is a symbol. The snake has been used as a form of symbolism throughout history. One may find references of snake in the Bible. The snake is depicted in two places in two ways. In the Old Testament the snake came to Eve and encouraged her to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge though she was forbidden from eating the fruit assured her she would not die by eating the fruit.

As we know Eve brought this fruit and seeing that it was very nice and pleasing to the eyes, called Adam and said they should taste it. And when they ate it, they found that they were naked. So they took fig leafs and stitched them together and covered their bodies with it. In the evening hours, when the Lord was strolling in the garden, searching

for him he was not to be found , because he was feeling shy and also guilty for not obeying the Lord’s words and was hiding. When the Lord saw called them, he put a curse upon the snake.(Genesis 3:1-15) Here snake is a symbol of delusion that made Adam and Eve ignore the instructions of God and made them become slaves of their desires.

In the New Testament, when it states Jesus taught his students to be “innocent like the dove and shrewd like the snake.” (Mathew 10:16)What is the intelligence of snake? Snake is intelligent because it does not make its own dwelling. It lives temporarily in the holes made by others. Jesus wanted his renunciate disciples to be move from place to place preaching and teaching without attachment and used the snake as an example for detachment.

Snake is also a symbol of energy. In all Shiva temples you will find the symbol of a snake. When a snake is coiled it represents unmanifested energy. In the yogic philosophy, it describes the five presiding deities in the five chakras: The Vishuddha chakra is the place of the element of space, ether

or vacuum, and the two sense organs are of speech and hearing. Although we call the tongue as the organ of speech, the sound comes from the throat, from the vocal cord. We use a lot of energy in speaking and listening. When we talk in a loving way, it creates joy in others. If we are emotional and speak emotionally, we create emotions in others. If we are unhappy, we will bring unhappiness to others through our talk. If we are angry or agitated, we bring agitation towards others. So Lord Shiva kept a snake in the ears and throat, which means to be careful of the energy that we use or misuse by talking and listening. Lord Shiva, being a yogi and an external symbol of regulated energy, used it carefully. One should not speak or listen unnecessarily.

The last two words of the line are *netra uttha vaiswanare*. *netra* means eye and *uttha* means rising up and *vaiswanara* means 'a special fire.' It is said that the three eyes of a yogi are represented as follows: the left eye is the moon, the right eye is the sun and the third eye is fire. The third eye is the eye of wisdom

or the spiritual eye. Lord Shiva, Mother Durga, Mother Kali, Ganapati and Surya have three eyes. Lord Shiva's two eyes are horizontal and the third one is vertical. With vertical eye, one looks upwards. The image of Lord Shiva with vertical eye contains a symbolic message.

Let your look always go up, not go down. Ordinarily our look goes down towards money, pleasure, food – towards the lower chakras. If it goes up, it will be always be perceiving divinity, and peace from above. So *netra uttha vaiswanare means*, O Lord from your third eye, *vaiswanara* is emanating.

In ordinary people, *vaiswanara* is the fire remaining in the navel center, the digestive fire. Here it is said that Lord Shiva has *vaiswanara* fire from his third eye at the midpoint of the eye brows. If the word *vaiswanara*, is split up we find that *vai* means 'specially' and *asnan* means 'to eat,' thus it means to eat in a special way. When we eat food with the mouth it goes to the stomach. Lord Shiva doesn't eat through the mouth, he is eating or consuming all our sins and vices, and in turn giving us knowledge and

devotion. He does it with his special fire which burns our negativities. Through his look he is killing our vices and destroying our weaknesses.

Dantiva krita sundara ambaradhare trailokya sare hare – It is a beautiful expression. *Danta* means ‘tooth.’ One who has teeth is *danti*. We all have teeth, but we hide them. The one animal that always shows its teeth is the elephant. So *danti* is usually used for the elephant. It is also said, “Oh elephant, you have such beautiful teeth, they are useless.” The elephants’ tusks are not useful for eating their food. They are just a showpiece. However, *tvak* means ‘skin’ and so *dantitvak* means the skin of the elephant. *krita* means “made of,” *sundara* means beautiful and *ambara* means cloth or clothing. “O Lord Shiva, you have made the skin of the elephant as your cloth.”

In this verse it says that Lord Shiva used elephant skin as his cloth. It shows a sense of detachment.

The last words of the line are *trailokya sare hare* – *trailokya* means the three worlds : heaven, earth and

netherland and *sara* means the essence or the best and *hara* is another name of Lord Shiva. Shankara is saying that Lord Shiva is the best in the three worlds.

Now the last line is a prayer which states *mokshartham kuru cittavrittimmakhlam anyastu kimkaramabhi*

“O Lord Shiva, you make my mind still. *moksha artham*: for my liberation. *Citta* usually means the mind but also memory.

Chitta vritti is a beautiful technical word that you will find in Yoga Sutra of sage Patanjali (Samadhi padha, sutra 2) when he defines what yoga is. *yogah chitta vritti nirodh*, yoga is the art of disciplining your mind.

We will contemplate more on *chitta*. Whatever you have experienced till now, everything is remaining in your memory. Memory is like a storehouse, where we knowingly or unknowingly preserve all the experiences and impressions. It is just like going to a retreat and purchasing many books and then bringing them home and putting them on the bookshelf. Maybe you have

purchased so many books, and have a huge collection, not remembering that you purchased a particular book.

We remember a lot and likewise we forget a lot. Even if we forget, it is still there in the memory and could come out occasionally. The biggest problem with memory is we have both good and bad experiences. Now which memory should we entertain more? Which memory should we avoid? We should entertain positive inspiring, motivating memory, not the negative things. Ordinarily we entertain or discuss what was bad, because of our negative attitude towards life. We can compare *chitta*, memory, to a pond, a reservoir. When you throw a stone into the pond into the center, a little circle, and ripple came and it is not ending with one. One after two, three, four, five, six, so many coming up and they are coming towards the bank of the pond. In the memory, one stroke, one thought, brings up series of thoughts – one after the other.

Vritti means modification or thought in memory. One who can easily regulate one's own thoughts is a yogi. Here, Shri

Adi Shankara is praying to the Lord for *mokshatam* - for liberation or freedom. Freedom from what - From bondage of thought – nothing else. Here thought means attitude. So thought is the cause of misery. If we can eliminate thought or we can transform or modify thought or stop thinking, two things are needed. Those who are intelligent can bring good thoughts, productive thoughts, and useful thoughts to use in day-to-day life. And they eliminate negative thought in practical life. In the same manner as we can tell our friends that we want to be alone, similarly we can tell the memory to leave us alone; To stay in a quiet state of no thought, or just in one thought is the state of yoga or meditation.

So here Adi Shankara is saying, “O Lord, whatever mistakes I might have committed, now I have one request. I do not want to stop my thoughts, you stop them.” *Anyastu kim karmabhi* - What is the need of other activities? Now if Lord Shiva comes forward and says, “Ok, I switch off your thinking system, full stop,” it would

make things much easier. But when we pray to the Supreme Being, is our prayer sincere? Remember, if the prayer is sincere, it will not go in vain. But people pray half-heartedly. Have you ever questioned the sincerity of your prayer?

Shri Adi Shankara is praying to the Lord that he does not need any other karma and to stop his useless thinking and make him free. However if we want to be free, we should stop or transform our pattern of thinking. By changing the way of thinking, life is changed.

DATES TO REMEMBER

January 5th	: Birthday of Paramahansa Yogananda
January 14th–20th	: 13th IIKYS
January 18th	: Mahasamadhi of Bhupendranath Sanyal
January 20th	: Birthday of Bhupendranath Sanyal
January 28th	: Saraswati Puja
February 5th	: Mahasamadhi Day of Gurupremanandaji
February 20th	: Maha Shivaratri
March 7th	: Mahasamadhi of Paramahansa Yogananda
March 9th	: Mahasamadhi of Swami Shriyuktेशwar



*“Self analysis is a secret element
on the road to progress.”*

Paramahansa Yogananda

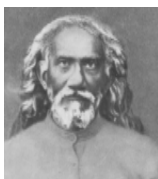
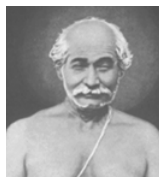


“To serve a saint is sacred and brings great spiritual gain.”

Mahavatara Babaji

“Control the mind rather than being a slave to the mind. Kriya Yoga helps to keep the mind under control.”

Lahiri Mahasaya



“If one does not remain absorbed in God, one’s downfall is imminent.”

Swami Shriyukteshwar

“Maintain control over your tongue to gain control over your life.”

Sanyal Mahasaya

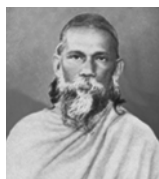


“Self-analysis is a secret element on the road to progress.”

Paramahansa Yogananda

“We need a guide and a teacher in spiritual life as much as we need a guide and a teacher in material life.”

Swami Satyananda



“Be still and know that you are the living power of God.”

Paramahansa Hariharananda

“One must constantly endeavor to be perfect in every thought, word, and action. One reaches the state of perfection through regular practice and integrated awareness.”

Paramahansa Prajnanananda



PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

THE TIES THAT BIND

Jyothi Bathina

Many years ago, I read a little book called Cutting the Ties that Bind. It was a self help book about recovering from painful events and severed relationships. I was in need of solace at the time and it was before I met Baba or discovered the calming effects of meditation. The book discussed ways to deal with the pain of separation by visualizing a physical cutting of ties, using a mental scissors and a virtual thread that stretched from us to the person we were separating or separated from. I remember practicing the exercise and finding some relief from the pain I was feeling then.

Recently we opened our hearts and home to a new young family member who came to live with us and attend school. We guided him, loved him, encouraged and mentored him. He became part of the family and we believed he would stay for a long time. That's not how things worked out, though. He spent three months with us and then he

decided he needed to go home, to a familiar country, a familiar environment and his family and friends. The pull of home was too strong, the pull of ties that bound him to his neighborhood, his family, his friends, his city, his country. Though he felt a slight remorse at having to leave so soon and leave us behind, the moment the decision was made, we could see lightness in his bearing, a glow in his smile. He was going home.

We adjusted to the news, understood his feelings and dropped him off with smiling faces and words of encouragement at the airport. It wasn't until we drove home that it hit us. He was gone. And in the short space of three months, we had already formed such strong ties that we broke down at his leaving. It took a whole day of mourning to begin the process of letting go. While he texted us messages about friends meeting him and taking him out to dinner, we sat in our suddenly quiet house, forlorn.

It's funny how quickly we absorb each other's auras and find comfort in them. A relative stranger can become an integral part of our lives, however quiet or unobtrusive they may be. This boy went to school, he went to the gym, he spent most of his day upstairs studying, yet when he left, he left a painful sense of absence behind.

It made me think about the process of forming and breaking ties. We are told not to be attached, to live without attachment. But is that really possible? From the moment we are born, we begin the process of attachment. The only tie we sever at birth is the one to the umbilical cord. That one tie is replaced with a hundred others, to mother, to father, to siblings, to pets, to grandparents, cousins, friends. We become attached to places as well, to our childhood home, our very own room, our neighborhood, our school, our city, our country. As we grow, so do our attachments. It seems a hopeless case then. We are bound by our ties, and it seems impossible to ever achieve that ideal of non attachment.

As I reflected more on the process however, I realized

that our attachments do not remain static and permanent. They tend to shift and change constantly. As we grow up, move, get new jobs, we leave behind family, friends, neighborhoods and homes. It is a constant process in most lives. So we are familiar with the severing of ties as well. We cut those ties that no longer serve us in the moment, that bring no real reward and that demand too much effort to keep alive. Perhaps there is some merit then to the idea that there is an invisible thread that keeps us connected, that our auras mingle and coexist when we are together and that as we move apart, so do they. Perhaps it is true that as we move on or move away, that thread gets thinner and frailer, until either we sever it or it snaps on its own. Already after just two days, we are moving on with our lives, we take a quick glance at the empty room or come across a stray belonging left behind by our young guest, and we feel a quick pang, but within a week that too will fade. Are we fickle then as human beings? Are we disloyal, self-serving and cold? I don't think so.

I think that this is a gift we've been given to aid our spiritual progress. Just as we have no memory of the supposedly countless lives we've lived in the past, I believe that this ability to both make attachments and break them is a cushion provided for us on our path to liberation. Without this ability to forget and to let go, I believe we would suffer immensely, be rooted in one spot, chained to our past and our present, unable to move, to grow, to evolve. It is this cushion that helps us deal with loss, with death, with divorce, and with disruption.

So yes, this gives me hope on my journey toward

non-attachment. Perhaps it is these multiple bonds that we make and break throughout our lives from birth to death, some joyous, some painful, that give us the strength and the eventual ability to remain in the world unbound. And as I finish the last bag of green tea brought home by our guest from his part time job at Starbucks, I no longer feel sad at this token of his affection but hopeful, knowing that both he and we have met and parted for a good reason. Our time together was wonderful but it is time now to cut the ties that bind and go forward on the journey we all share to the destination we all crave.



"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

MYTHS AND METAPHORS

RAMAYANA



*Sri raghavam dasaradhatmajamaprameyam
sitapatim raghukulanvaya ratna dipam.
ajanu bahum aravindadalayataksham
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.

The Kidnapping of Sita

Ravana, who was waiting for this moment of the absence of the two brothers, took the guise of a holy man and came to the door of Sita and asking for *bhiksha*. A guest especially a holy man who comes to the door of a householder for food is considered as God in Vedic tradition. Sita asked him to step inside. Ravana said he is a holy man and he could not enter a house. Sita was convinced that he was a great ascetic and was in a fix as what to do. If she had to give the *bhiksha* she had to cross the lines drawn by Lakshmana. When she did, Ravana snatched her away carrying her on to his chariot proceeded to Lanka. Sita realized her mistakes and was

crying helplessly calling to Rama and Lakshmana and she left a trail dropping her ornaments one by one from the *vimana*. Sita tried to tell Ravana that he would be bringing great destruction on himself and his kingdom and his people by this vicious act. However all her advice and warnings failed.

Jatayu, a vulture of great strength heard the cries of Sita for help and saw what happened. In spite of his old age and diminishing strength he decided to stop Ravana. He flew with great speed along the side of the chariot giving Ravana advice and also hitting him with his beak and trying to slow down the chariot speed by creating wind with his wings. He succeeded in stopping the chariot for a while

and engaged Ravana in the battle for sometime but he could not fight for long. Ravana cut off his wings disabling him and Jatayu fell to the ground. He could not fight any more and after doing his best to serve Rama he resigned himself to the divine will, keeping himself alive by his will waiting for the arrival of Rama.

Rama's Sorrow

When Lakshmana reached Rama, he could see the golden deer was killed and it was in fact Marica. Rama asked Lakshmana why he left the ashram against his order. Lakshmana related what had happened and they both hastened back to the ashram. When Rama and Lakshmana returned to the ashram they found Sita missing.

Here Tulasi Das beautifully describes the sorrow of Rama weeping for Sita. Many times people ask why Rama cried if he was a divine incarnation. That is the beauty of the divine play. Even though he knew the truth when the Lord is acting his divine role it is a perfect role-play. There is also a description in the Mahabharata of Lord Krishna having tears near Gandhari the mother of the

Kauravas. They hide their divinity and try to set an example at the human level. Much self realized people also act in such a simple manner as if they do not know anything. Rama was talking to the trees and birds in the forest asking them if they have seen Sita. This is a beautiful emotional drama – which teaches us that it is all right to vent our emotions, as suppressing emotion leads to depression but at the same time not to express it near everyone as it would create misunderstanding. Express it near some one who can understand. The ideals set forth by Masters and incarnations have to be followed and demonstrated for teaching humanity. From this divine play every householder and every individual is taught the highest ideal of righteous conduct. Ramayana lays down the guidelines for all relationships in life and also for achieving the highest ideal of self-realization.

Jatayu

They set out in search of Sita and on the way they found Jatayu, the bird that was almost bleeding to death. Jatayu narrated that he was a friend of king Dasaratha and what had happened and how Ravana had

taken Sita. Looking at the condition of the bird, Rama was filled with compassion and gratefulness at the attempt of the bird to stop the mighty Ravana and rescue Sita. He embraced the bird and Jatayu breathed his last in the lap of Lord Rama. Lord Rama himself performed the last rites for Jatayu treating him like his own father. Devotees with pure love and surrender can be found even among the trees and animals.

Jatayu means – *Jata* means matted hair and *ayu*

means life. *Jata* the intertwined and matted hair represents our own karma, which determines the span of life and the fruits of karma to be enjoyed in a particular life. Again new karma is being done in each life and more lives are to be taken and this eternal cycle of births and deaths goes on. The true spirit of karma is to die in the lap of god in God consciousness. Cremating Jatayu with Vedic rites Rama continued his search of Sita accompanied by Lakshmana.



“To lead an ascetic life is not child’s play. To become a saint is not a religious spectacle or the exhibition of miracles, it is only for God realization.”

Swami Shriyukteshwar

PARIPRASHNA

How do the teachings and lives of great Masters inspire you?

The saints and sages live a life of sacrifice, the life of prayer and meditation, and their lives inspire and motivate us. When we remember them and how they loved and how they planned their lives and the many difficulties and problems they went through, it gives us inner strength. That is why the lives and teachings of great Masters, saints and sages, even great people, become a source of encouragement. They create hope that we can also achieve that state. First study the life, and then study the teachings.

Can you talk about Lord Krishna ?

I could spend my whole life talking about Lord Krishna. Know that your breath is Lord Krishna. *Krish* means to cultivate and *na* means formless power of God. Krishna is hiding within you and breathing within you. If you love Lord Krishna, have the attitude:

“He is the formless power of God hiding within me. My body is Brindavan, his play ground and he is playing with his friends in this body, in this life. I want to love him.”

Lord Krishna is the personification, the symbol, of perfect wisdom, perfect love perfect action and perfect yoga-knowledge, devotion, action, and yoga integrated together in one. From his childhood up to his last moment he showed this. Krishna is within you and Krishna is within me. He is in all.

Why is Jesus important to you?

I love Jesus as I love Krishna. I love Mother Mary as I love my divine Mother Kali. I love Jesus because his life is a complete life, a practical life. He lived to manifest love through suffering and humiliation. He was an unusual example. How many people can pray when they are humiliated? How many people can really pray for those who

are persecuting them? Only Jesus could do that. When I read from the Bible about the crucifixion I had so much pain that I was crying. Slowly in course of time through my meditation, I realized the silent teaching of Jesus was how to live in the world in spite of suffering and how to manifest love. It is possible only when you are in communion with God.

Can you please talk about Mother Mary's greatness?

A mother is always great. My mother was great. My mother, the Divine Mother whom I worship, is great. How is Mother Mary great? Mother Mary was a lover of God from her very childhood. She constantly prayed to God. In her youth when an angel of God

came and told her the will of God, she accepted. How many people accept hardship as the will of God? She accepted and loved God and became the chosen mother of Jesus.

I love Mother Mary because I want to feel that love very strongly in me. Mother Mary was a personification of pure love and surrender to God with compassion for all and opening the door of liberation for everybody. This is my understanding of Mother Mary. I love her from the core of my heart. I see my mother in Mother Mary and I see the Divine Mother in Mother Mary. Mother Mary is the Divine Mother. All mothers are one mother. There are no two mothers.



"God is love. His plan for creation is rooted in love."

Paramahansa Yogananda

VALUABLE VOLUMES



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

SWADHISHTANA CHAKRA

(From *THE UNIVERSE WITHIN*)

The *Swadhishtana chakra* is located in the spine in the sacral region behind the genital organs. *Swadhishtana* in Sanskrit represents the place where the mind is established for a long time. Next to the *Muladhara*, this is the center which demands most of our time and energy. The water element predominates in this region. It is subtler than the earth element. While earth has a shape, size, and independent existence, water needs a container and takes the shape of the container. In each *chakra*, there is a symbol. In the *Swadhishtana* the symbol is of two triangles such as those found in the Jewish Star of David. One triangle represents the female aspect and the other represents the male aspect. In Hinduism, God or the Absolute

is considered to have no gender. Without gender, no creation is possible. When the Absolute divides into male and female aspects, then we have creation. The female aspect of Shakti is needed for creation and is therefore the presiding deity of the second center.

Sex and Food

The two sense organs ruled by this center are the tongue and the genitals. Moderation in eating and in sexual activity, avoiding the pitfalls of gluttony and sexual overindulgence, is a prime requisite in attaining lasting peace and tranquility. This is not to say that unless one lives the austere life of a monk, subsisting on roots and tubers, and practicing strict celibacy, one cannot attain realization. In

fact, the overly zealous practice of austerities can be as much of a handicap as overindulgence in sense pleasures. Those who eat too much, as well as those who continually fast, cannot progress spiritually. The life of Buddha is a perfect example.

Buddha's Realization

Prince Gautama left behind all his worldly possessions in the pursuit of truth. He gave up his kingdom, his family and the luxurious life he knew. With great determination he decided to sit and meditate until he achieved knowledge of the self, making the declaration: "I will sit here. Let the body be dried up. Let my skin, flesh, and bones be destroyed. I will be self-realized" (*Buddha Charita*).

He sat like that for forty days without food or drink. Later, he related his experiences during that time to his disciple, Ananda. "I was so weak, I was hardly able to move my limbs. When I touched my stomach, I could feel my backbone. My scalp was so dry that the hair was falling off. My eyes receded deep inside my skull and those who saw me thought that I was a ghost" (*Buddha Charita of Ashvaghosh*)

After this experience Gautama Buddha realized the folly of such extreme measures, since he found he could not concentrate when he was in such physical agony. Buddhism therefore advocates the middle way, which avoids all sorts of extremes, in order to gain self-knowledge.

For meditation and spiritual progress, we need moderation in food as well as enjoyment. We are spiritual seekers. We need to control the mind and make the mind listen to us. For example, if there is a little less salt in the food, instead of overreacting, we need to tell the mind to accept it.

Not Enough Salt

There is a Shiva temple near Cuttack in India, which I visited 10 years ago. After the worship, I was served the consecrated offering on a banana leaf and the priest asked someone to bring me some salt. I protested that I did not need any extra salt. The priest replied that the food did not contain any salt at all. When I asked why, he explained that the king who had constructed the temple had arranged for all the provisions and supplies, but left out any provision for salt.

Since that time, it had become a tradition to cook food without salt at that temple. After I heard the story, I answered "If Lord Shiva Himself has been accepting the food offered here for centuries without salt, surely I can manage for one day without it."

It is very necessary to have some control over the tongue. One way to practice this is to give up our favorite food for a while. If we are addicted to sweets, we should try giving up sweets for some time. If we have a strong habit of drinking coffee or tea we might try foregoing it for a few days. In this way we can gradually gain control over the tongue.

The Seduction of Taste

In our search for pleasure, we continually abuse the seven centers given to us for our own growth and realization. The digestive fire burns within us to turn nutritious healthy food into fuel for the body and yet we dump our bodies full of unwholesome, fatty, unhealthy, chemical laden foods and beverages in our craving for taste. If we think about it, the taste sensation barely lasts a few seconds, the

first two or three bites are all we taste and after that we may as well be eating cardboard for all we know. And yet we continue eating, shoveling food down our throats without tasting a thing, not for its nutritious value, but merely for its taste and texture, which we barely perceive after the first few bites. The seduction of taste. There is a lesson in it, as there is a lesson in everything we do and everything we experience. Life is full of illusion, the web of illusion is sheer and gossamer and sparkles with a thousand rays of enticement and promise. It pulls us in so many different ways, luring us with its ephemeral quality, intangible yet there, promising so much and delivering so very little.

Knowing What We Want

It is so rare that we stop and ask, "What is it that I want? What is it really that I am looking for?" Instead we lunge at the nearest promise of happiness, whether it is food or sex or marriage or big business, and when that promise is broken or unfulfilled, we still refuse to examine ourselves but blame the circumstance, blame the situation, blame our partners, unwilling or unable to look

within and perceive what it is we truly desire. All we really want is uninterrupted happiness, the unending bliss found not without but within. The sooner we learn to stop seeking temporary pleasures in the world, and delve into the permanent joy of the soul, the sooner we will reach that goal and fulfill the desire that drives us on, from the day we are born, till the moment that, exhausted, we give up this weary body. So be moderate in enjoyment. Without this resolve, spiritual progress is very difficult.

Yayati's Curse

There is a beautiful story in the *Mahabharata* about a king named Yayati. He married Devayani, the daughter of a Brahmin named Shukra. With her came a maidservant, Sarmishtha, who happened to be a princess. In the course of time, King Yayati fell in love with the beautiful maidservant and had children by her. Devayani's father, who was enraged by this conduct of Yayati, cursed him with premature old age. Yayati's mind, however, was still longing for sense pleasures. He begged his father-in-law to pardon him

and remedy the curse. The father-in-law relented, saying that if any of Yayati's sons would be willing to take the curse upon himself, then Yayati would regain his lost youth. The story goes on that one of the sons agreed to this and the king, becoming young again, continued his enjoyment. When he finally did reach a ripe old age, Yayati uttered a truth which he had discovered through long experience. The passion within him burned undimmed, despite all of his indulgence. He died with this advice to his sons and grandsons. "My children, do not believe that by indulging yourselves, you can extinguish the fire of passion. Yielding to desire is like adding fuel to the fire. The more you indulge it, the brighter it burns."

The desires within us are like smoldering fire. If the fire burns out of control, life becomes miserable. We need to use this fire in a regulated way, by disciplining the mind, step by step. The sexual center's passion and energy can be channeled toward the higher centers, where creativity and philosophy emerge.

THE BODY TEMPLE

(From *THE CHANGING NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS*)

Our body might be temporary, but it is a considerable gift from God. Usually when someone gives us a gift, whenever we look at it, we remember that person. When we think of the body we should remember God with a sense of gratitude. This form of body-consciousness can also lead to God – consciousness.

Our body should be well-kept, so that it renders its full use. A healthy body needs adequate hygiene, rest, food and exercise. Cherish the body, but do not be attached to it. After all, when the soul leaves the body, it will lose its present vigor, and in a short time it will begin to smell bad and rot. Finally, it must be buried or burnt, and so the remainder will return to the elements.

While taking proper care of the body, we should be conscious that one day we will leave it. A true yogi is happy to leave the body at any time. For the infinite soul the finite body is felt as uncomfortable as tight-fitting clothes.

A body is a container in which the soul lives; we must be sure it does not have any leaks so that, all that we experience can have a beneficial result on our road to self-improvement. Our body has been given to us for our growth, our evolution and for satisfying unfulfilled desires from past lives. If we focus our relationship with the body in this light, we will live in harmony.

Meditation is the key to establish right understanding. Meditation is a preparation to leave the body with a feeling of inner peace and contentment. When we are immersed in deep meditation, we are free from body-consciousness. A final exit from the body is not much different, it just requires self-mastery and complete awareness.

The body is given to us for our own growth and evolution and the opportunity to fulfill many of our desires. As the body is the product of our past karma and the genetic transmission of our parents in

this life, the same logic applies to our mind. We must use discrimination between the seen and the seer. We have already established that the mind is an object which constantly changes direction. Once we bring calmness over our mind, we are able to exercise control and discipline.

Not only does the world change, we also evolve in outlook, approach and emotions. With the passing of time all relationships are transformed. The main culprit is the swerving nature of the mind which has an enormous influence over our life.

The body is a physical entity that can be touched and seen, smelt and tasted but the mind is subtle and much more difficult to separate from our inner self. Our body is only *lento* us for a lifetime, but the mind makes a continuous journey with us, from life to life.

The human mind takes an impression of every little thing, and carries the heavy weight of memories, emotions and interactions, which occurred long ago, and continue to

influence our present life. Even though the precise memory might have receded, and we cannot remember why such a thing happened, we look at it with the same mind.

The mind is much more useful than the body, but we must learn to use it properly and bring it under control. When an emotion stirs up in our mind, it is expressed by a thought. If a person is rash and impulsive, there is an immediate reaction. Only through meditation, by maintaining some distance over our emotions and thoughts, we can bring balance and harmony into our life. Physically we might grow, but it is more important that we mature emotionally and intellectually. Animals are instinctive, but human beings always are rational.

The scriptures tell us that the mind is like a piece of clothing, which we can choose to keep dirty or clean. Clothes are nothing but threads, arranged in a certain way. The mind is a bunch of desires interwoven together, which crisscrosses our personality, and runs in all directions.

PRANAM OR BOWING

(From *MYSTICISM OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS*)

Hindu practices in India include the art of bowing to God and elders by bending down. Many times people ask why we bow? Bowing is not only the practice of the Hindus, but is a common practice in different religions too. If you read the Old Testament, people were bowing down flat on the ground. In the New Testament you will find verses in which people are touching and kissing the feet of Jesus. It was also the tradition to wash the feet.

In Islamic prayer, they bend their body and bow down to the Lord, praying to Allah. The same is done in other religions, like Sikhism and Jainism. When people bend their body, it gives more circulation in the brain, and the brain power increases.

Bowing Is A Philosophy

The act of bowing brings real success and joy. It shows an understanding of the reality of life. In Sanskrit there are a few words used for bowing

down. Let us understand their meaning. In Sanskrit, bowing is known as *pranama*, *namaskara* or *namah*. *Pranama* means to bend and to be humble. Without humility, one cannot grow spiritually. *Namaskara* is an action of bending or bowing with folded hands. The word *namah* is commonly used in mantras. *Namah* or *nama* means, “I bow to you.” It is the short form of *na mama*, which means “nothing is mine.” When we live in this world we develop ego. Ego develops in many forms – ego about one’s own body, beauty, intellect, worldly possessions, achievement, success and so on. All these factors, which lead to developing ego in the person, bring a lot of trouble in daily life. However, a truly spiritual person remembers that everything is a gift of God, and that nothing belongs to him or her. Even the body, mind and intellect, which are so close, so near and dear to me and could

belong to me, are also not mine. So it is *namama* or *namami* – it is complete surrender, nothing is mine.

There are a few ways to bow. In the traditional way of bending the body and bowing, there are certain procedures. One is *Sashtanga pranama*, using the eight limbs on the ground and dedicating eight aspects of life and actions to God. The eight limbs consist of the two legs, two hands, two eyes, heart and head. All eight are dedicated to God. Completely bowing flat on the ground symbolizes complete surrender. Another procedure is *tryanga pranama*, which uses three limbs, kneeling down with folded hands and bowed head. It is also known as offering three limbs.

How To Bow

There is a special way to bow to elders or teachers. One bows at their feet. Bowing at the feet is a scientific phenomenon, a philosophical attitude, and an art of complete surrender. The body has polarities: North Pole and South Pole. The head or the fontanel is the North Pole and the feet,

the South Pole. When one bows at the feet of the teacher or the feet of the elders, keeping the head at the feet, the person's North Pole is connected with the South Pole of the adorable ones, and this creates a complete magnetic field. As a result, the life energy, blessings, love, prayer and grace flow from the teacher, elder or the adorable one, to the person who is bowing down.

It is said in the scriptures:

*Namanti phalino vrikshah
namanti gunino janah*

*Shushka kashtham cha
murkham cha bhunjyate na
cha namrante.*

“A tree loaded with fruits is always bending down. Wise people, people with knowledge and intelligence, are always humble. Dry sticks or fools might break, but they never bend.”

Flexibility or humility is the natural quality of good people.

The people to whom we bow also give something in return. They lift their hand and give *vara* and *abhaya*. *Abhaya* refers to when the teacher or elder has the hands and palm facing downward in giving

blessings. Abhaya means to grant fearlessness, not to cherish any type of fear, because God is with us. When the teacher's palm faces upward while giving blessings it is known as vara.. They are giving blessings, grace to fulfill our noble wishes.

When bowing, we sometimes bend our heads. The head implies our knowledge or ego, and to bend, it means to surrender everything.

Sometimes we kneel down and pray or bow. Kneeling down is to cease all of our restlessness, all of our activities. Bowing is surrendering to God - there is no activity except complete surrender. Some people also clasp their hands together, which symbolizes a strong sense of determination, cultivating inner strength in life, and complete surrender. This is the symbolism behind bowing.



“Purity in thought, refraining from criticizing others, and freedom from vanity and ego are essential in spiritual life.”

Sannyal Mahashaya

STORIES TO LIVE BY

THE KING'S TRANSFORMATION

Once there lived a king who was notorious for levying heavy taxes on his people. He only knew how to take money and hoarding it in his treasury and was not charitable. One day a wandering monk was going towards the king's palace. A man met him on the way and asked him why he was going to see the king. The monk replied he was going to the king to see him and beg for some money as he was a wandering monk. On hearing this man said, "This king is known only to take and never gives. He would not only turn you down, he might even humiliate you." The monk thanked him for his advice and thought to himself, "If this king is really of this nature and humiliates his people I should meet him. I don't mind being humiliated but would like to see if I can bring about a change in him."

The monk secured a metal tin and filled it with some small pebbles. Whenever he shook it, it made a jingling sound as if it was filled with some coins. With this in hand, he approached the palace and was stopped by the gatekeeper. The monk convinced him that he came to give the king a

precious gift. When the gatekeeper reported this to the king, he sent word for the monk to see him. The monk said he had something to give the king but on one condition, that the king should return it to him in his next life. The king who was not very intelligent called the minister and asked him if this would be possible. The minister replied, "No, My majesty, you will not be able to carry anything with you to your next life." Not believing him the king next called his commander in chief and asked him the same question. He also answered in the negative. Then the king asked what he can then take with him. The monk then explained to the king how all material prosperity has to be left behind and the only thing that goes with the person is the merit one accumulates because of his good deeds in this life.

This brought a real transformation in the king's life and he accepted the monk as his guru and led a virtuous life from then on.

Moral - The only treasure one can carry is the merit of one's good actions.

MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES OBSTACLES TO MEDITATION

THE PERSON DESIRING RAPID SPIRITUAL PROGRESS
MUST BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL OF SIX THINGS:
SLEEP, DROWSINESS, FEAR, ANGER, LAZINESS AND
PROCRASTINATION.

Manu Smriti

ONE WHO SLEEPS TOO MUCH OR KEEPS AWAKE
CANNOT BECOME A YOGI, A TRUE MEDITATOR.

Bhagavat Gita 6:16

THE DOUBTFUL MIND IS DOOMED

Bhagavat Gita

TOO MUCH EATING, EXTREME ACTIVITIES,
UNNECESSARY AND IDLE GOSSIP, TOO MANY
REGULATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS, THE COMPANY
OF MATERIALISTIC AND WORLDLY PEOPLE, AND
WORLDLINESS ARE THE SIX OBSTACLES TO YOGIC
PRACTICE AND MEDITATION.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika 1:15

ATMA-VIDYA

PURSuing SELF KNOWLEDGE

KAIVALYOPANISHAD

Mantra 6

*Acintyam avyaktam anantarupam
sivam prashantam amritam brahmayonim
tatadimadhyantavihīnam ekam
vibhum cidanandam arupam adbhutam*

Meanings

acintyam-unthinkable,
avyaktam- unmanifest,
anantam- unending, *rupam*-
form, *sivam* -auspiciousness,
prashantam-complete peace,
amritam - immortal,
brahmayonim- the origin of
thoughts, tat-that, adi –
beginning, madhya- middle, anta
–end, *vihiṇam*-devoid of *ekam*-
alone, *vibhum*- all pervading,
cit–consciousness, *anandam*-
bliss, *arupam* – formless,
adbhutam-wonderful

Substance

That is unthinkable or of
no thought, unmanifest, endless
form, all auspicious, of complete
peace, immortal, the origin of
the creator, without beginning,
middle or end, one without a
second, all pervading,
consciousness, bliss, formless
and wonderful.

Commentary

When you really go there
– to the state of no color and
calmness you will get the stage
of no thought. *acintyam* is
translated as unthinkable. That
would mean we have to think
of the unthinkable. This may
look like a contradiction. Many
statements which may appear
contradictory are in fact not and
that is why the teaching of a
guru is necessary than mere
reading. How can you think of
something that is unthinkable?
Mind can think of what? Mind
can only think of what is
grasped by it through the
interaction of the senses with
the sense objects or what it has
seen before. You can think of
something you know and that
has a name and a form. You
cannot think of something that
has no name and no form except
God. When you want to go

there if you think of Krishna there is a form of Krishna with a conch or a flute. . If you think of Jesus there is the form of Christ on the cross or in the temple .When there is thought there is form. Atma is beyond the perception of the senses and inference. It is what is behind the mind that makes the mind think and what is behind the eyes that makes the eyes see. It is not an object of perception but is the subject.

The real meaning here with right understanding of the teaching you will achieve a state where there is no thought. Knowledge or *jnana vritti* removes the ignorance after which there is no thought of the knowledge also.

Adi shankara explains,

Ajnanakalusham jivanam
Jnanam.....vinirmalam krutva

Jnanam svyam nashyet
Jalam kataka renuvat

So long as the thought is there you are only trying. The real meditation begins when the thought ends. It is like in the state of deep sleep without thought.

Avyaktam is unmanifest. That which does not manifest but is the substratum for all

manifestations is *avyaktam*. When you are beyond thought there is no form. *acintyam* is no thought and *avyaktam* is no form. *vyakta* means manifested and has a form. The simple example is the electricity that is seen as the light of the bulb or the movement of the fan but it is not manifest.

Anantam is endless form. *Atma* is the basis of all that is manifest and so it has an endless form. Endless form is formless stage. You go to that state of no thought, no form and endless appearance.

Then you experience *Sivam*. Many people think you will have the experience of some divine nature. Siva here means a blissful state. *Prasanta* is complete peace. When you go close to the fire you experience warmth. When you go close to your own nature you will experience the nature of self that is bliss and peace. Where there is no duality it is *sivam*.

amritam means you will experience that there is no body and mind. We have the fear of death when associated with the body and the fear of emotion and ups and downs when associated with the mind but

beyond body and mind it is the complete tranquility of peace and love and that is the state of immortality.

The type of experiences that come to you – *brhma yonim- yoni* means the place of origin or the place of birth. *Brahma yoni* is translated as the place of the creator but here *brahma* means your own source or thought. Creation is a thought. You have to go to the source of all thoughts. You can see from where the thoughts are coming. When you practice conscious breathing like in Kriya yoga, even for five – ten minutes, before the thought comes you can see that the thought is coming. Even when I am talking continuously I can see how the thoughts are coming. The thought comes in four stages- the first is *para-* which is the *brahma yoni* –the state of absolute. *pasyanti* is when the thought is visible to you . You can see the thought. Then *madhyama* is when the thought has overpowered you. *vaikhari* is when the thought is coming out of you through your action or talk. Most of us are not conscious when we talk

and use many words that are not necessary or appropriate. When the thought is unmanifest but visible you can see the *brahma yoni* from where the thought is coming. Gurudev used the example- when you see all the 26 letters put them in a bottle and cork it so no thought will come up during meditation.

When you go to the *brahma yoni* you will see the God's presence continuously without *adi* - beginning, *madhya* middle or *anta*-end. Whatever we see experience or do in this world has these three things- beginning, middle and the end. When the body was born it was the *adi* or the beginning, now it is *madhya* in between and when the body dies it will be *anta* or the end. Any relationship also begins, exists and ends. But there is a state of concentration when you experience that *adi madhyanta vihina* –unborn unending, immortal state that is all pervading, one without a second, consciousness and bliss, formless as all forms dissolve in it.

MAHA SAMADHI DAY OF SWAMI GURUPREMANANDAJI

Feb 5, 2012

The 3rd punyatithi aradhana of swami Gurupremanandaji, (Mother Vaidehi) an ardent disciple of Gurudev Baba Hariharanandaji and the mother of Guruji Baba Prajnananandaji will be observed at Balighai ashram with special worship and meditation.

“Try to be good to yourself and do good to others. Be always with God and Gurus and serve them and their mission, and then your life will be beautiful and you can easily cross the worldly ocean without any hurdles. Pray to God and Gurus and you will be liberated from the bondage and cobweb of maya.”

With these words Swami Gurupremanandaji encouraged all seekers on the path of truth and extended her spiritual inspiration to the entire kriya family.

Paying his tribute to the mother, Paramahamsaji has said,

“It is not an easy thing to talk about mother. One, who can understand the Mother, can understand life. One, who can love the Mother, can love God. One, who can know Mother, can know God.

In my Mother I found a Guru. If anybody asks me, “Who laid the foundation of spirituality in your life?” my simple answer is, “first is my Mother.” I understood the beauty of Motherhood more, because I was born a prematurely as a sick child in a remote village. So I have seen love, care, concern, compassion, and sleepless nights of my Mother praying to God for her child. When I think of the Mother my heart is filled with love. I’m really grateful to God to have given such a beautiful Mother to me. I am proud to be the child of such a loving, caring mother who at the same time was simple, but disciplined”

Let us remember and pay our tribute to the great mother who lived an exemplary life.

AROUND THE WORLD

INDIA

Cuttack and Bhubaneshwar

In addition to the regular monthly meditation camps, and initiation programs at Cuttack, Bhubaneshwar and Naugaon, programs were also held at Bhishindipur and Gujarat from October through December with Swami Samarpananandaji assisted by other monks and Brahmacharis of Prajnana Mission.

Nov 15-30

Kriya Pilgrimage in the footsteps of Kriya Yoga Masters was conducted as planned when disciples had the great blessing of visiting many sacred places in the company of the Master.

Dec 1-3 Gurudev's Mahasamadhi Seminar-

Baba Hariharanandaji's 9th *punyatithi* was observed in the divine presence of Baba Prajnananandaji at Balighai ashram with Guru paduka puja, and a special fire ceremony in the Guru Mandir. A few hundred disciples attended the event to pay their respect and meditate at the sacred site. The Mahasamadhi day was also

observed with special worship and meditations in all our ashrams and centers across the globe.

Bangalore Program –

A special program was held at Bangalore with Baba Prajnananandaji, which included a one day retreat for Kriyavans at Pyramid Valley, a lecture of Guruji at IIM Bangalore and initiations and guided meditations at selected venues. The program was well attended and the participants felt greatly blessed to be in the divine presence of Guruji and the other monks.

Christmas and New Year - were celebrated at the Gurukulam and Balashram with great enthusiasm.

Flood Relief Efforts – A Thank You from Prajnana Mission

Devastating floods in the Mahanadi River systems in September 2011, affected over nineteen districts of Orissa affecting over a million people, leaving many without shelter and food. The Prajnana Mission was on the scene, distributing emergency food packages and

helping to procure shelter for those hardest hit by the disaster. Many of the survivors that received assistance from Prajnana Mission were refugees from the river front slums and surrounding areas of Cuttack City, desperately poor, with no resources to cope. Within the first two days of the crisis, over 1,000 people have been fed, and quintals of cow-feds have been distributed.

As the crisis continued dry food relief camps were organized by Prajnana Mission in most of the villages hit by the floods and packets of food were distributed helping thousands of families. Emergency medical care and additional provisions, such as blankets and clothing, were also provided to the extent possible. Cow feed was also provided to most of the villages to rescue the cattle. The monks, brahmacharis and several volunteers of Prajnana Mission worked tirelessly to make this work possible.

Prajnana Mission thanks all those generous donors who responded to the urgent needs and helped them in this noble mission.

Balashram News

Balashram is progressing well with the children studying well and learning many skills.

Upcoming Events

Jan 7-9 - The Annual Gita Jnana Yajna and initiation program at Bhubaneshwar.

Jan 10-12 - The Annual Gita Jnana yajna and initiation program at Cuttack.

Jan 14-20 - 13th Intensive International Kriya Yoga Seminar in Gurukulam.

Feb 20 - Mahashivaratri

AMERICAS

Kriya Yoga Fall Retreat at Mother Center- Sept 17-26

The Mother Center USA celebrated the Foundation Day Seminar with Paramahansa Prajnananandaji and Swami Atmavidyanandaji and several of our Yogacharyas. The ashram was packed to full capacity with disciples both national and international for the 10 day retreat. The topic for Baba's talks was "Temptation" With countless examples from the scriptures of the East and West Prajnananandaji talked about the force of temptation and how a spiritual aspirant has to be alert at all times. Though he had to be away for a couple

of days from the retreat to attend the memorial services for Rabi Baba the compassionate Master continued his talks from New Delhi and Balighai Ashram on those days.

Foundation Day of Homestead Ashram Sept 22

On September 22nd, the Foundation Day of the ashram was observed in the divine presence of Paramahansa Prajnananandaji with an early morning havan and Guru puja. The evening was celebrated with talks by Yogacharyas and resident brahmacharis and with devotional songs and a skit "Truth" In his message quoting Gurudev, Baba said, *"Ashram is the physical presence of the Master. Anyone entering the ashram should feel the master's spiritual vibration and living presence. Those living in the ashram should be more beautiful than the flowers and sweeter than the ripe fruits. It is a big challenge for everyone visiting as well. They also should be like beautiful flowers and ripe fruits. As flowers, fruits, plants, and houses beautify the ashram, so our behavior,*

attitude, outlook, practice, study — everything — should make our lives more beautiful and divine."

Several initiation programs and intensive programs were held at most centers during the months of October through December

Oct 21-23 A retreat was held at Toronto Canada with Swami Atmavidyanandaji

Nov 3-6 A retreat was held at Austin, Texas with Swami Atmavidyanandaji. The topic was "Divine Qualities" from the 16th Ch of the Bhagavad Gita.

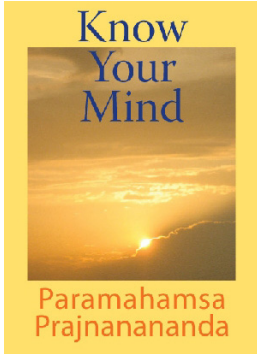
Balashram Trek 2011, Oct 28 - Nov 6

The 5th Balashram trek for fundraising for Hariharananda Balashram, combined visits to pilgrimage sites in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and Galilee with trekking in the Negev desert. As Baba Prajnananandaji said, it served to discover as trekkers the beauty of the country and as pilgrims to follow in the footsteps of Jesus and discover the origins and holy sites of Judaism and Christianity"

BOOK REVIEWS

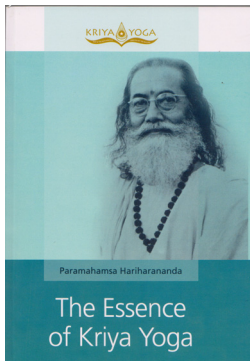
New Releases

Know Your Mind

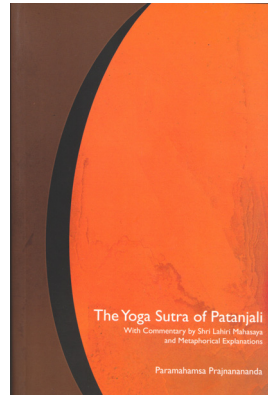


In this book, Paramahansa Prajnanananda takes us on a fascinating journey into our own mind. Possessing a keen insight into the human psyche, Paramahamsaji has the remarkable ability to take this complex knowledge and explain it in a manner that is easily understood by all.

The Essence of Kriya Yoga



In this book, The Essence of Kriya Yoga, the renowned Kriya Yogi Paramahansa Hariharananda shares his vast knowledge and personal insight of the history and science of Kriya Yoga.



The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali

This new treatment of the Yoga Sutra includes key translations of the Sanskrit as well as an original foreword and treasured commentary by acclaimed Yogiraj Shri Lahiri Mahasaya. Paramahansa Prajnananandaji builds upon this substantial foundation with insightful metaphorical explanations that will render the sutras more intelligible to contemporary seekers.

Forgive my Forgetfulness



In this thought provoking commentary on Shiva Aparadha Ksamapana Stotram, of Shri Adi Shankara, Paramahansa Prajnananandaji's deep love and reverence for Shri Adi

Shankara is reflected in his words of Fathomless wisdom .

The Beatitudes: Divine Guidance

In the Gospel of Matthew (5), Jesus instructed his disciples on the art of right thinking and virtuous living, painting a picture of the road to spiritual success, a road accessible to us all. Paramahansa Prajnananandaji provides rich and deep insight into this remarkable sermon, suggesting practical ways we can apply its timeless wisdom to our daily lives. toward enlightenment and self-perfection.

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