

Sthita Prajna



Guru Vandana

*Samsara sagara samuddharanaika mantram
brahmadi deva munipujita siddhamantram
Daridrya dukha bhavaroga vinasha mantram
Vande mahabhayaharam gururaja mantram*

- Guru Gita verse 112

I adore and bow down to the great *mantra* of the Guru which is the only *mantra* that enables one to cross the ocean of the world. Thus it is the *siddha* (perfected) *mantra* that is worshipped by all the celestials and even Brahma and the *munis*. This divine mantra rescues one from all manner of poverty, misery, worldly disease and fear.

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FROM THE EDITORS :

“Human life is a gift from God. We the children of God have great potential divinity. Through selfless service our hearts will open, the bud of life will blossom, and we will be worthy children of God.

- Paramahansa Prajnanananda

In this issue “Message of the Master” talks of spiritual harvest and how the Kriya Yoga technique will enable us to reach the divine goal quickly. In “Prajnanavani”, Paramahansa Prajnananandaji talks of levels of intelligence and the ability to make right decisions.

Rama Katha takes us to Sundara Kanda, the most beautiful section, when Hanuman succeeds in his search for Sita, finding her in the Ashoka vana.

Kaivalya Upanishad our series on Self Knowledge talks of the unity of – the trinity, the Indra, the Sun, the Moon, the fire, the time and the prana as the divine manifestations of the Brahman – the one Supreme reality.

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

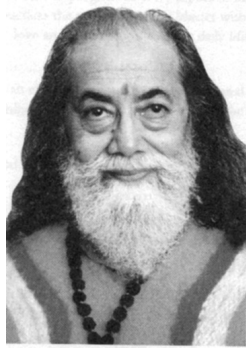
Practical Spirituality talks of Sannyasa – the fourth stage of life and what it really means.

In this issue we are happy to introduce the series on Yoga Sutra of Patanjali with the commentary of Lahiri Mahasaya and metaphorical explanation.

Hope you enjoy this issue and those to come.

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

SPIRITUAL HARVEST



This is the time to know God. Human structure and constitution are made for God-realization only. In human beings there are two qualities: one is the gross body, full of illusion, delusion and error; the other is the invisible body, your indwelling self. That is your soul. That is your real body, which is pure, perfect, sweet, kind and loving. Your five sense organs are your enemy. Always engrossed in the material world, you do not feel that the power of God is within you. In the scriptures it is said that if you do not cultivate your body land and if you do not sow seeds, then you cannot expect any spiritual harvest from it. The Archanadikam says:

*mulapadme kundalini yavat
nidrayita prabhu
tavat kinchit na siddheta
tantra mantra,
archanadikam*

As long as you are not withdrawing your power from the coccygeal to the sacral, cervical to medulla, you cannot know God. It is why Jesus said: “You are born of the flesh, so you are after the flesh.” (John 3:5,6) You are always after money and sex, food and food, sex and money. You know only about these external activities, and you are spending your days in this way. Jesus said, “You are to be born from above, through water and spirit.” (John 3:5-8) Water means love for God, and spirit means the power

of God, which is within you. He also said, “Your divine kingdom is there. Your heaven is within you. Your liberation is in your hand.” (Luke 17:21). If you meditate now, you will get liberation. You are not to go to the grave having spent your life only eating and sleeping, working and having physical pleasure.

In scriptures it is said: *yoga karmasu kausalam*. The Kriya Yoga technique will enable you to reach the divine goal quickly. The pilot lifts the airplane up very quickly, and he is able to cover a long distance within a short period. Similarly, by the practice of the authentic original Kriya Yoga, within ten minutes’ time, you can change your mind, thoughts, intellect and ego into knowledge, consciousness, super-consciousness, cosmic-consciousness and wisdom. It is not to be perceived by suggestion, speculation, hallucination and imagination. It is to be perceived by going to the atom, by God-realization only.

You should realize God, because without God you have nothing. Your life is meant for God-realization. You can change

your bad habits to good. Leave dishonesty for honesty, ignorance for knowledge, impurity for purity, imperfection for perfection, and bondage for liberation.

*pindam kundalini shakti
hamsa iti udahrtam
rupam bindu iti jneyam
rupatitam niranjanam*

Your whole body is covered with illusion, delusion and error, which is called *kundalini shakti*. *Hamsa iti udahrtam*: All the power is remaining below. You are to bring the power to the top. *Rupam bindum*: Then you are to fix your attention in the atom point where the power of God is remaining. *Rupatita nirañjanam*: Then you will get the stage of Godhood. The power of God is formless. You are to perceive, conceive and realize it.

It is said in the Mahabharata :

“Animals and men are alike in many ways. Both of them eat, drink, sleep, enjoy sexually, and give birth to offspring and experience fear. But there is a difference between an animal and a man. That is known as *dharma*.

Animals have four legs, but man has two legs and two hands for work.” Work is worship. The Western people know the technique of working scientifically, but they do not feel the power of God acting through the human brain.

Isha Upanishad (*mantra* 3) says.

“Man is born for God-realization only. The soul is just like a sun. If man does not seek the soul, then he is in darkness,

like the blind man seeing nothing. His life like the life of an animal always in ignorance. People who do not seek their divine quality spoil their human and rational qualities. These people are in hell.”

I pray to the Almighty Father to lead all in the path of God-realization. The power of God is abiding within you. I want to bow to every human being for you are all the living power of God.

DATES TO REMEMBER

June 21	: Ratha Yatra of Lord Jagannath
July 3	: Guru Purnima
August 2	: Mahasamadhi of Swami Satyananda Giri
August 9	: Janmashtami, Birthday of Lord Sri Krishna
August 10	: Birthday of Paramahansa Prajnananandaji Maharaj
September 19	: Ganesh Chaturthi, Birthday of Lord Ganesh
Sept 22	: Miami Ashram Foundation Day
Sept 26	: Mahasamadhi of Lahiri Mahashaya
Sept 30	: Birthday of Lahiri Mahashaya

PRAJNANAVANI - THE VOICE OF WISDOM

WHO IS INTELLIGENT?



People want to portray themselves as being very intelligent. What is the sign of intelligence? If someone is successful in life, would you say that he or she is intelligent?

I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to spend some time with a great monk from India, who was highly intellectual. He was just like a roaring lion. One day when the media was interviewing him, a journalist asked, “Swamiji, I would like to ask you a question. Why are you not involved in politics?”

“Why should I be?”

“Because if we had a leader like you, this country

would be great,” the journalist said.

The monk replied, “I will give you an honest answer. Those who have entered the political arena are not very intelligent. If they were truly intelligent people, they would not act the way they do.”

What he said is true, and should be taken as an observation, not a criticism. Many of our leaders, in all levels of government, behave in ways that are not ethical or morally healthy. So, can we honestly say they are intelligent? However, if those who lead us are not intelligent, then who is?

The yogic scriptures give a description of one who is intelligent. They say an intelligent person is one who makes the right decision at the right time. However, let me take a step further by saying, after one makes the right decision, one then has to act upon it. One may call this practical intelligence. Simply making a decision is not enough. What is required is making the right decision at the right time and then taking the right step. Unfortunately many of us do not make the right decisions. We become confused. Why can't we see things clearly? In order to find the answer, we must first analyze where the problem lies. Often we cannot see our own mistakes, we cannot see our own weaknesses, we cannot see things as they are; therefore, we cannot find an intelligent solution to our problem. Why does this happen, if the function of our intellect is to make the right decision and take the right step? The problem may be that you do not have a good memory. You may not remember the lessons you learned from past experiences and therefore you repeat your mistakes.

Memory plays a key role when it comes to the decision-making process. For example, in the judicial system, people bring their disputes before a judge who then makes a decision on what the outcome should be. The presiding judge relies on his or her memory of the law and prior outcomes of similar cases. I knew an attorney, a good friend of Gurudev, who was an exceptional genius with unusual brain power and an amazing memory. Typically, one will find many law books in an attorney's office. However, in this attorney's office there were none – no books on the shelves and none on his desk. When clients came to see him, they would sit in front of him and describe what type of problems they were experiencing. Without referencing any written material, he could counsel them. He retained the facts regarding all similar, prior cases – the court, the year, the judge, the verdict – everything was in his head. Hence, you can make a good decision when your memory is good. In our own lives, when we remember the consequences of doing something, we are able to act

accordingly. For example, if you remember getting punished or scolded about something wrong that you did, it is more than likely you will not repeat the same mistake.

Different Levels of Intelligence

When it comes to intelligence we can divide people into three categories. First, there are those who observe and learn. Next, are those who have difficulty learning. Finally, there are those who never learn. If we analyze our lives, can we honestly say that we are learning from our mistakes? One day at lunchtime I was having an informal conversation with a few disciples. We were discussing about whether or not we should give children our opinion about what is good or bad. One person remarked that children should learn from their own experiences as they grow up. However, I did not agree with this view. I said, “You have stated that children should learn through their own experience. My counter-question to you is, have you really learned from your own experience? Have you not repeated the same mistakes again and again? If we

repeat the same mistakes over and over again, obviously we are not learning from our own experience. So how can you honestly think that children will learn from their own experience?” I then further said, “If this is the case – that children should learn from their own experience – then you should not send your child to school, because whatever is studied in school, for example, science, mathematics, and other such subjects, all came from someone else’s experience. For instance, the law of gravity came from Newton’s experience. So if you really believe one should learn from one’s own experience, then one should not study science or anything else.” But the truth is, we do get the benefit of others’ experiences and by remembering what they learned, it becomes useful to us.

Making Wise Decisions

We can make an intelligent decision if our memory is good and if our ego does not interfere. When our ego gets involved, our decision will be flawed. We make good decisions if we have clear vision, clear understanding, and if the mind is peaceful. But,

what happens when we are unable to reach a decision when it is needed? There is a proverb in Odia language: “You get more ideas after the thief has left.” I will illustrate what this means with a true story. In India, there was an elderly monk who had gone to bed for the night. It was around midnight and a disciple was meditating nearby, after having given the monk’s massage. Suddenly, a thief entered the room and began searching the pockets of the monk. The thief took the monk’s cell phone and whatever papers were there. The disciple that was meditating got up and asked the thief who he was. However, the thief did not reply; he just silently left the room. The puzzled disciple stood there for a moment, pondering whether or not the person that came in was a devotee. Then he realized he had made a mistake and that he could have easily stopped the thief, because the thief was a man of small stature. He wondered why he did not at least close the door or shout for help. But it was only after the thief was gone that all these ideas popped up about how to deal with the situation.

Now we already said that forgetfulness can interfere with our ability to make decisions, but we also often fail to reach a decision because of our natural habit to procrastinate. Once a son asked his father, “Father, would you please tell me the meaning of the word procrastination?” The father replied, “Don’t worry, tomorrow I will look it up in the dictionary and let you know.” So procrastination means to not give an answer today, to keep it for tomorrow. Paramahansa Yoganandji said, “You can postpone everything for tomorrow, except your search for God, love for God, and your own inner transformation.” My father often said, “My dinner can be postponed for an hour, but not my meditation. First I will meditate; then I will eat.” Do you procrastinate when it comes to the truly important things in life? If you do, then you will be unable to make a right decision at the right time. If you want to be an intelligent person, then live intelligently. Use your memory; use your ego in a healthy way. Make wise decisions, and then put them into practice.

PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

THE FOURTH STAGE

Jyothi Bathina

Recently my parents took sannyas. They left behind family and friends, home and belongings, rights and responsibilities, and entered the fourth stage of Hindu life. It is not something most people do. Despite knowing from childhood what our tradition lays out as ideal, most remain in either the second or the third stage. And frankly whether or not one is Hindu I believe most can identify with the four stages of life.

The first stage is that of *brahmacharya* or the student. Our first 25 years are spent in learning about the world, exploring our options, indulging our senses, feeding our intellect, and generally figuring things out.

The second stage or *grihastha*, is the time when we become householders, with families of our own, building our careers, pursuing our dreams, putting all that learning to use to create a rich and fruitful life for ourselves and for our children.

The third stage or *vanaprastha*, is when we should be turning away from material pursuits, planning retirement, enjoying our grandchildren, gradually relinquishing responsibilities to the next generation and beginning in earnest our spiritual practice, study and meditation.

The fourth stage is *sannyas*, when having spent a decade or two in preparation and gradual detachment from worldly affairs, we cut those ties for good and turn completely toward rapid spiritual enlightenment. No longer bound by any burdens, bonds or responsibilities other than finding peace and spiritual progress, we are free at last to focus wholly on our self-realization.

Looked at in this way, it seems to be a perfectly logical, even pragmatic structure for living. By gradually encouraging elders to let go of material pursuits, the wise sages who created this structure

allowed for the younger generation to flourish and for the elders to hand over the reins when it was time. In the old days, even the wealthiest kings would leave the throne when they entered *vanaprastha* and set off into the forest to meditate. This helped them avoid much of the chaos and conflict we see throughout history around the world, when kings refused to relinquish their thrones and sons had to fight to gain their rights.

At the same time, this structure allowed for young people to have the luxury of enjoying their youth, unburdened by responsibility. They were able to lead lives of scholarly pursuit and youthful curiosity. This was followed eventually by the timely indulgence of human instincts for passion and procreation. Every stage had its time and was enjoyed fully. Each stage also had its duties and since they were clearly set forth, those duties could be fulfilled properly.

A far cry from today, when children work at increasingly younger ages in order to fulfill their desires for an xbox or designer clothing, where students care more about

their jobs and their love interests than about academics. Where householders have no time for their families because they are so intent on providing for them and where the retired have no time to rest or reflect.

Despite the mixed up nature of the first two stages in modern times, we still manage to pass through them without too much difficulty. We get through the *brahmachari* stage quite well, with different degrees of experience and indulgence and manage for the most part to flourish in the householder stage as well. We pursue careers, build families and raise children despite the ups and downs of fate. It's the third stage we have a problem with.

No one wants to stop and reflect, to let go and to move inward. Once on the householder track, we continue to climb up, continue to strive for more, continue to pursue an always-elusive end goal of prosperity, often confused with happiness.

While there are no thrones to relinquish or forests to retire to, we refuse to leave the boardroom or the operation theater, the law office or the

engineering firm, because too often, our career defines who we are. Even if we were to have an identity apart from our job, there are too many obligations that need to be fulfilled and income needs to continue unabated in order to fulfill them.

And so, because we refuse to downsize, because we continue to upgrade our homes, our cars, and our wardrobes, we continue to be trapped in the struggle to make it. For those fortunate souls who have accumulated enough wealth and no longer need to work, there is the desire to enjoy the fruits of our labor, to travel, to consume, to acquire to explore. So that, rather than moving forward to the focus on spiritual enlightenment and gradual detachment, we cycle back to the *brahmachari* stage, feasting the senses, exploring new horizons, always looking for something new, taking on new hobbies, boating, golfing, remaining in effect a student of life, a consumer.

Unable to get through the third stage, most of us have completely dismissed the fourth stage as unattainable and also undesirable. When life demands

so much, and has so much yet to offer, who has time to sit and meditate? Who can possibly indulge in self-realization and how realistic is it to renounce a world that we continue to live in?

Well, my parents are two of the rare souls who even in this day and age, have chosen to follow through. They were fortunate enough to enjoy each of the preceding stages, studying hard to get their degrees, building a marriage and strengthening it through fifty years, raising three children and making sure they were all settled in their own lives, enjoying and indulging their grandchild, seeking and finding a Guru, practicing meditation and spiritual progress and gradually cutting down on their material attachments and responsibilities, until now, when both they and their Guru felt they were ready, they chose to formally begin their period of self-realization. Now in their seventies, and having lived a dharmic life, they have chosen to spend their last years totally devoted to the path of enlightenment. They are incredibly happy in this decision and I am equally happy for them.

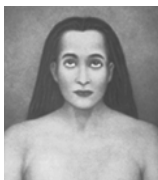
Rather than admire those who are so intent on self-realization, we are conditioned to think that those who give up the world must do so because they have nothing of value in it. We fail to see that in fact, those who “give up the world” are actually giving up their own selfish view of the world, their narrow identity as student, worker, parent, friend, and embracing the larger world by acknowledging their part in the universal family.

It is a luxury in fact that my parents and those like them have earned. It is the luxury of being absorbed in God consciousness and having the opportunity to study, to meditate, to reflect and to serve, every waking moment of the rest of their lives. I would not deny them that hard-earned luxury.

That is why, as their daughter, I feel not the least bit of remorse or sadness or loss.



Brazil Retreat

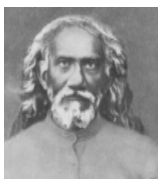
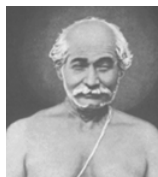


“The door of Kriya Yoga is open only to earnest seekers and sadhakas.”

Mahavatara Babaji

“There is not work without desire Work which is duty bound is also born of some desire.”

Lahiri Mahasaya



“Everyday do regular svadhyaya coupled with meditation and study of spiritual books and scriptures.”

Swami Shriyukteshwar

“Keep your mind always in tune with the scriptures and the teachings of the Masters.”

Sanyal Mahasaya



“The first rule in prayer is to approach God only with legitimate desires. Pray for their fulfillment, not as a beggar but as His child”

Paramahansa Yogananda

“Never accuse others of their mistakes. If a person has only one good quality out of 100 then try to see that good one not the 99 bad ones.”

Swami Satyananda



“The Mind is lord of all senses, but breath rules the mind. So breath-control will lead you mind-control and liberation.”

Paramahansa Hariharananda

“One must constantly endeavour to be perfect in every thought, word and action.”

Paramahansa Prajnanananda



BIRTHDAY OF PARAMAHAMSA PRAJNANANANDA



August 10th marks the birthday of our beloved Baba Prajnananandiji. After a hectic schedule of book work and conducting several New Brahmachari and Monk initiations in February, Baba Prajnananandaji has taken some time off for seclusion and silence and working on some books.

Baba has emphasized several times on the power of silence. As he has said, “In prayer, we talk with God. In meditation, God talks to us.” What is God’s talk? When one enters into the inner temple of silence, one hears a continuous Divine sound. That is the voice of God. That is the whisper from eternity.

In Sanskrit silence is *mauna* and mind is *mana*. In

the Bhagavad Gita while talking about manifestation of Divinity the Lord said:

*maunam chaivasmi
guhyanam* (Gita X-38)

“Among all the secrets of knowledge, I am the Silence.”

What does it mean? To find the hidden treasure in you, Lord said you have to enter the state of silence. Be silent externally and internally. Practice it. Everyday allot some time for silence. Spiritual masters gave these disciplines for self-control. Through understanding and analysis accept some disciplines and follow them. Without discipline spiritual progress is a dream.”

Even if physically absent the presence of the Gurus is everywhere. On the auspicious day of the birthday of our great Master, let us pledge to ourselves to be more disciplined and meditate more by entering the inner temple of silence. All Ashrams and centers across the world will celebrate the special day wishing Baba a happy and healthy birthday and praying for his blessings.

GURUPURNIMA

SERVICE TO THE TEACHER

Knowledge is God. Knowledge is power. Knowledge is the door to liberation. Knowledge is the special gift of God. Knowledge is free and it makes others free. The taste of freedom is possible through living in knowledge. Knowledge is the beginning and the wisdom is the end. Wisdom is the applied and assimilated knowledge. How do we get this wisdom?

The disciple attains the state of wisdom by apprenticeship to an able master. You can learn about supreme consciousness if you become a favorite of your master. Follow the master deeply, serve the master humbly, remain indebted to your preceptor, and always ask how to achieve God-realization most quickly. If you do, the realized person will teach you the quickest means to success in God-realization.

Service and surrender to the Guru should be given without any personal ego, with respect and devotion and without any

expectation. The willingness to serve and the readiness to serve with an unquestioning attitude is what benefits the student and through this he will progress.

“By bowing down, by asking the proper questions, and through service, you will be taught this knowledge by those who are wise, by those who have the vision of truth.”

(Gita 4-34)

The attitude of the student should be like that of Arjuna who surrendered to Lord Krishna saying

“Unable to judge what is right or wrong and deprived of my heroic nature, I am now a victim of the strain of cowardliness. I therefore ask you; please let me know, what is suitable for me? I am Your disciple, I surrender myself, please teach me.”(Gita II:7)

This should be the attitude of the student – willing to surrender, ready to be disciplined.

The primary essential quality of a spiritual teacher is

love. If one has not experienced love within he cannot give love. If he is not rich in love he cannot distribute love. If the teacher has the realization he becomes a lover of the whole universe. He spreads knowledge to the true seekers who have surrendered themselves to him. A teacher is one who has experienced love and manifests that love through every thought, word and action. The disciple is one who is ready to receive that love from the teacher.

For one who is on the spiritual path the journey becomes easy if there is a friend on the way. Who can be

a friend? One who knows the way can alone be a good companion and guide. When a teacher is with you he cautions, alerts and guides on the way. The primary essential quality of a spiritual teacher is love.

The Guru always encourages and inspires, helping us to overcome the weaknesses of life through knowledge, understanding and love.

As we celebrate Guru Purnima – the full moon day designated for the worship of all Gurus let us remember our teachers and try to serve them by surrender and learn from their wisdom.



Balashram Summer Camp

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 Search for Sita

Sugriva related to Rama how his brother Vali misunderstood him and drove him out of the kingdom. Rama agreed to help Sugriva to regain his kingdom and Sugriva in turn promised to help Rama in the search for Sita. Rama killed Vali and made Sugriva the king. Rama and Lakshmana spent the rainy season in a cave near the Rishyamuka hill. They spent time in discussions related to wisdom and Rama spent time in giving valuable advice to Lakshmana.

Once the rainy season came to an end, Sugriva sent his men to the four sides of the earth under the leadership of four chiefs to search for Mother Sita.

Towards the south went Angada, Hanuman and others. Before they left they all came to Rama for blessings and Rama gave his ring only to Hanuman to give to Sita as his identification and not to anyone else. He knew that only Hanuman had the capability to know the whereabouts of Sita. Only an egoless person can serve God and work for God. A person with ego is far away from God. On the way Hanuman and his group met Sampati the brother of Jatayu. Sampathi can see for hundreds of miles and he gave them the whereabouts of Ravana. But the question was how to cross the ocean and reach the island of Lanka. In the troop of Angada, different warriors

declared their capacities of how far they can reach but there was no one who could cross the ocean and return back. Then the members of the troop turned towards Hanuman and chiefs like Jambavan started reminding Hanuman of his strength. Here is the role of the Guru. The Guru reminds us who we really are and what capabilities we have. Each individual is a deluded person forgetting who he is. We are potentially divine but we have to establish ourselves in that state of faith. They said, “Hanuman, you don’t know who you are. As a child you thought the rising Sun was an apple and jumped to catch the Sun. Through your breath control, you have the capacity to achieve whatever you want. Now you have forgotten your strength.” Inspired by these words and reminded of his strength Hanuman with his heart filled with love for Rama and his mind determined to find Mother Sita, took a leap into the sky and was over the ocean. Overcoming many obstacles on his way, Hanuman crossed the ocean and reached the city of Lanka. It is said that Hanuman had so much strength because of his breath control

that even after crossing the ocean he was not out of breath.

He reached Lanka and entered the kingdom of Ravana at night. At first he tried to search for the divine mother Sita in the palace of Ravana. He soon realized the mother who represents peace and divinity cannot be in the palace of material prosperity, glory and glamour. Then as he was going from house to house from one house he could hear the name of God. He discovered that it was the house of Vibhishana who advised him to go to Ashoka Vatika to find Sita. Hanuman entered the Ashoka Vana and found a beautiful lady sitting under a tree surrounded by many *asura* women guarding her. Hanuman was sure she must be mother Sita. At the time he saw Ravana approaching her and Hanuman himself among the branches of the tree and heard the threatening words of Ravana asking Sita to forget Rama and marry him. After Ravana left Hanuman started singing the glory of Rama. Surprised Mother Sita looked up to see Hanuman. He dropped the ring of Rama near her and narrated the story of Rama’s search for

her and introduced himself as the messenger of Rama. He asked her not to lose hope, as Rama will come to get her back. Sita asked him about the welfare of Rama and Lakshmana. She sent her message to Rama to come soon and save her from Ravana.

After finding Sita and comforting her by giving the message of Rama, Hanuman started jumping from tree to tree and breaking the branches. This shows the increase of the mental strength. When mental strength increases you do what you want. He destroyed many of the gardens. The report went to Ravana that a monkey is ruining the gardens. He sent many of his chiefs including his son Aksha Kumara to catch Hanuman and bring him to the court, but Hanuman killed them all. Then Hanuman also wanted to see Ravana and assess his strength. Hanuman was a very wise person. One who is a celibate and has breath control has a powerful mind. He wanted to be taken to Ravana to have a direct conversation with Ravana. So he let himself be captured by Indrajit and taken to the court of Ravana. Hanuman started praising the

glory of Rama in front of Ravana and declared that Ravana will never be able to conquer Rama. Enraged by this Ravana ordered Hanuman to be killed. At this point Vibhishana interfered and said it is not ethical and against the code of conduct for a king to kill an emissary. Then Ravana said as a tail is dear to the monkey let the tail of this monkey be set on fire. Hanuman took advantage of this and jumping from house to house set the city of Lanka on fire. Except the house of Vibhishana who was a devotee of God, and the Ashoka Vana where mother Sita was, everything else was burnt to ashes.

Is Hanuman really a monkey? A monkey in Sanskrit is called a *vanara*. A *vanara* means a special kind of being whose mind is in God. The second meaning is one who lives in a *vana*. *Nara* is one who lives in towns and *Vana Nara* is one who lives in the forests. The tail in Sanskrit is known as *langula* or *priccha*. Those who have read the Taittiriya Upanishad come across

tasya *priccha*
pratishtha – *priccha* means
brahman.

langula means one who has constant communion with God. *Langula* also means *laga* – the divine sound. So Hanuman is burning Lanka means to be free from body consciousness with the divine sound.

This section of Ramayana is known as the Sundara Kanda. *sundara* has two meanings. One meaning is beautiful. This section has many beautiful descriptions of the city of Lanka and the Ashoka Vana.

Ravana always suppressed and oppressed many divine beings. Kubera was his gatekeeper. The fire God was cooking for him. The air God was blowing wind gently to his

orders. The story goes on. He used all nature for his own pleasure. So the name could have been based on this.

After destroying Lanka, Hanuman went back to Sita to bid farewell. She gave him her Chudamani (an ornament worn on the head) to be given to Rama and Hanuman returned to Kishkindha. As he approached Rama he uttered the words,

Sita was seen

He presented Rama with the ornament given by Sita and narrated his findings and Sita's message to Rama. All were happy and preparations started to go to Lanka and rescue Mother Sita.

KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI

THE BIRTH OF KRISHNA

*janma karma ca me
divyamevam yo vetti
tattvatah
tyaktvā deham punarjanma
naiti māmeti sorjuna*

The one who knows the truth of my divine birth and actions, O Arjuna, attains Me giving up the body and is not born again. Gita IV: 9

The lives of divine incarnations like Krishna, are not just stories. They are much more significant than that. A childish understanding perceives them as stories; an intellectual approach analyzes them as history. It is only when one goes beyond both story and history, and penetrates the mystery behind them, that one really understands their significance.

Most of us know the story of Krishna. He was born at midnight in the dark recesses of a prison, where both his parents were held captive, weighed down by heavy chains. Once he was born, he spoke to his father, and asked him to take him across the turbulent waters of the Yamuna River to

Brindavan. When the father obeyed the infant's commands, he was miraculously free of his chains and his prison, and was able to safely speed the infant across the waters. He then switched the baby Krishna for Nanda's baby and brought her back to the prison. This is the story in brief. But what is the real meaning of this birth? What is the hidden significance of these miraculous events, and more importantly, how are they useful to us? Let's take a close look at the circumstances surrounding Krishna's birth.

Krishna was born in a prison. What does the prison represent? Each human body is a prison. Why? Because our body consciousness, and our identification with the body we are in bondage. Our soul is tied down by the attachment to and identification with the body. Both the parents were chained and the mother was exhausted and not conscious at Krishna's birth, but the father was conscious. As the father was looking at the child, the child started speaking to him. "Take

me out of this prison, cross the nearby river and take me to the other side to the house of Nanda. There is a newborn child there. Exchange me for that child and bring that child here.” This is the mythological story.

The story seems unrealistic- A child talking immediately after being born and giving instructions to the father. There are two ways of looking at this.

One way is to agree that anything is possible in God’s creation. The other way is to explore the inner significance. When a person is trying to attain real spiritual progress with enlightenment as the goal, though the individual (the father-Vasudeva) is living in the cage of the body (in the prison), his ordinary human nature (the mother - Devaki) is sleeping. The individual attains Krishna consciousness. The father looks at the child and obtains an inner awakening - the specific directions from the child. So one must, like Vasudeva, escape body consciousness, keep one’s attention on God, and crossing the perilous river of life, get to the other side.

When Vasudeva placed Krishna on his head in a basket,

the chains gave way of themselves. When one is God-conscious and loves Krishna in every breath he becomes free. Crossing the river has two meanings. The river is the world. Here the river is Yamuna, which symbolizes devotion. Krishna represents knowledge. With knowledge and devotion, one can attain success. Krishna was born at midnight. Those who are familiar with the Christian tradition know that Jesus was also born at midnight. Night is the time of spiritual practice and meditation.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said,

*ya nisha sarva bhutanam
tasyam jagarti samyamí
yasyam jagrati bhutani sa
nisha pasyato muneh*

Gita II-69

Ordinary people spend their nights engaged in pleasure or in deep sleep. The spiritual person, however, remains awake, his mind absorbed in God. When one sits absorbed in meditation, then slowly the moon rises. The moon is the symbol of the enlightened mind. So with steadfast concentration, the inner darkness disappears and light is seen. This is why Krishna was

born at midnight. If you want Krishna to be born within you, you should meditate with self-control. Devaki and Vasududeva spent eleven years in prison, forsaking all material comforts. Here, the prison represents a life of strict discipline and control. They became the parents of Krishna.

Krishna was the eighth child. Why eighth? In each human being there are seven *chakras* in the body. Yogis have the experience of an eighth *chakra* above the body. When the mind goes beyond the seven *chakras*, crossing them, one is merged in God and yogis call this *samadhi*. Krishna was born as the eighth child after passing the seven issues. When the father had this eighth child on his head, he was free from bondage and could cross the Yamuna

When Vasudeva took Krishna to the other side to Nanda's house, Yashoda was in deep sleep after giving birth to a female child, Maya. Vasudeva exchanged Krishna for the baby girl and returned to the prison. When he entered the prison with the child, all the shackles reappeared and the bondage was renewed, since God had

been exchanged for Maya when the children were switched.

Krishna's life from the start was full of challenge. Lord Krishna faced hostile threats and attempts on his life from his very birth in a dark prison on a dark and gloomy night. His whole life thus becomes a metaphor for the struggle of the soul to survive obstacles and dangers and remain pure bright and whole. Throughout his danger filled childhood, despite poisonous milk and venomous snakes, an uncle who wished him dead and his displacement from royalty to a peasant family in a dusty village, Krishna remained ever beautiful, ever joyous, and ever content. As a child who stole the butter and a youth who stole the hearts of all around him, as the kind and generous friend, and brave and noble warrior, as a pious and wise teacher, as Yogeswara Krishna and a leader of his people, Krishna stands out as an example of how to live each moment of our lives with contentment and joy. He teaches us the lesson of love, of keeping love as the main focus in every activity and every breath. May this recounting of his story remind us of that important lesson. ***

THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI

Sutra 1

The Discipline of Yoga

atha yogânuśāsanam ||1||

Word Meaning

atha – now; *yoga* – yoga; *ânuśāsanam* – teaching, discipline, exposition

Translation

This is the discipline of yoga.

Commentary by Shri Lahari Mahasaya

Thereafter, yoga is really explained. By complete tranquilization of thoughts (intellect), one will keep the mind completely absorbed in the “atom-point” (*bindu*), like an innocent (pure) person continually concentrating on a star. One will attain the spontaneous state of *samadhi*. When one is entirely engrossed in one thought, it is *samprajnata*, and when one is completely thoughtless, it is *asamprajnata*.

Metaphorical Explanation

This aphorism consists of three words: *atha*, *yoga*, and *ânuśāsanam*. To understand this sutra better, one should understand the meaning of these words clearly.

Atha

Atha is the word used in all the three sutra books mentioned earlier.

atha atah bhaktim vyakhyasyamah

“Now we will explain and examine devotion (divine love).”

- *Narada Bhakti Sutra* (sutra 1)

atha atah brahma jijnasa

“Then therefore the question of Brahman, the Absolute”

- *Brahma Sutra* (sutra 1)

Why does every sutra scripture start with *atha*? The word *atha* has six meanings – *mangala* (auspiciousness), *prashna* (question), *karyarambha* (initiation), *anantara* (thereafter), *adhikara* (qualification or right), *pratijna* (promise or determination) – that relate to six chakras, from the *muladhara* (bottom center) to the *ajna* (soul center).

Ordinarily, people believe that the word *atha* means to remember God, Who brings all auspiciousness in the beginning of any work. So, it is an

invocation to God. But this auspiciousness is really associated with the coccygeal center, *muladhara chakra*. One should bring auspiciousness into life through the practice of yoga.

The second meaning of *atha* is “question.” The general explanation of this *atha* starts with the question, “What is yoga?” Sage Patanjali’s entire book explains yoga in its entirety. Here, *atha* is also used in connection with the second center, *svadhisthana chakra*, and with a question: “Do people really want God consciousness in daily life or not?”

The third meaning of *atha* is *karyarambha*, which means “initiation of effort.” Metaphorically it consists of two syllables *atha*, *a* is the formless power of God and *tha* is the syllable in the navel center, the *manipura chakra*. Thus *atha* means the spiritual journey as the one progress from the navel center to the formless power of God. The navel center is the center of energy. Spiritual practice starts from this center.

The fourth meaning of *atha* is “thereafter.” When one crosses the *nabhi chakra* and comes to the heart center, the *anahata chakra*, with purity

and love, one wants to know *atha kim* and questions, “What is after this?” This is the state of self-inquiry.

The fifth meaning of *atha* is “qualification.” When one crosses the propensities of the heart center and reaches the neck center, the *vishuddha chakra*, and then transcends above, one is in the state of a qualified spiritual aspirant, to perceive, conceive, and realize yoga.

The sixth meaning of *atha* is “promise” or *pratijna*. When one really goes to the sixth center, the *ajna chakra*, one enjoys peace, bliss, joy, calmness, and love, and promises not to be distracted from this state.

Yoga

The second word in this sutra is “yoga.” Yoga in Sanskrit has a multiplicity of connotations and meanings, covering at least thirty-two different uses. But the spiritual meaning can be correlated with the word “yoke”: to unite or to be in the state of union – of body and soul, of the individual self with the Supreme Self. Just as the union of two wires in an electric circuit makes the flow of current possible, the union of the above-mentioned pairs – body and soul, individual self and

Supreme Self – yields a life that is divine.

Although this state of union constantly remains in every person, ignorance prevents most people from realizing it. Just as the thread is the link in a rosary, keeping the beads together, the thread of breath keeps the body and soul together. When, by the grace of the Master and blessing of God, one learns the science of soul culture, which removes all the impurities of mind, one perceives Truth constantly.

Anushasana

The third and last word of this aphorism is *anushasana*, which means “the directive, discipline, or teachings.” The realized master teaches the disciples to discipline their minds and senses and directs them on the path to perceive the inner reality.

The intelligent seeker (*sadhaka*) should silently, sincerely, and meticulously follow the instructions and practice them in daily life. Yoga is the union of body and soul, which is what life is. The purpose of yoga is to lead the individual to a divine life because it enables one to overcome all human limitations and go beyond the realm of

mundane, restless life, and to enter a life of inner calmness and peace.

In essence, it can be said that a disciple, through his apprenticeship with the realized Master, should try to discipline his extrovert mind and senses and make them more Truth-oriented. Yoga is really a discipline. Undisciplined people cannot enjoy the beauty of yoga, which is already within them, though they are not aware of it. Those who follow the realized master and his teachings, particularly the teachings about scriptures, and practice a technique like Kriya Yoga, can really enjoy the constant state of yoga.

The Scriptures contain the treasure of sacred and divine wisdom. They are the echo of the voice of God, experienced by the realized masters. The scriptures are the divine dictum instructing us to lead a God-conscious life. All the scriptures are like the Divine Mother. As the milk from the mother’s breast nourishes the body of the child, the scriptures are the personified Divine Mother, the words that nourish spiritual life. Each word of the scriptures has the potency of the highest spiritual truth. The scriptures are the spiritual handbook of every seeker for

quick progress and realization.

In the Bible, it is said, “All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

In the Indian spiritual tradition, people believe in grace. Grace in Sanskrit is *kripa*. The grace of the Divine is always associated with sincere effort. Spiritual life is not a life of dreams or idleness; sincere and scrupulous effort is necessary in every stage of life. So man’s effort is first and God’s grace is next. Gurudev Paramahansa Hariharananda taught this truth in the following humorous way: When anyone prayed to him to receive grace, he said, “Please ask for *Kripa*”. Then Gurudev asked, “Do you know what *kripa* is? *Kri* means ‘you do’ and *pa* means ‘you get.’ Everyone gets the result of his own effort (thoughts, words, and deeds).” This *kripa* is of three kinds:

atma kripa – the grace of the soul (achieved through self-effort)

guru kripa – the grace of the master (achieved through

following him sincerely)

shastra kripa – the grace of the scriptures (revelation of the inner meaning of the scriptures achieved through purity of mind and intellect)

Through the grace of the master, the disciple is exposed to the real and metaphorical meaning of the scriptures. A student with ego cannot really understand the deep purport of the scriptures. An egoistic student can follow neither the master, nor the scriptures. Truly speaking, the words of the master are the content of the scriptures.

O Seeker! All the scriptures sing of the glory of the Divine and the path of the soul culture and God-realization, a message with a charming impact on the heart of the seeker. He gradually becomes free from all vanity and ego. Elimination of ego is possible only through humility – *pranipata* (humble reverence) to God, guru, and scriptures. The scriptures bring self-discipline and self-unfoldment. They contain the seed of spirituality, which can grow into a fruit-bearing tree if the mind is pure, like fertile land.

VALUABLE VOLUMES



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

ANAHATA CHAKRA

(From *THE UNIVERSE WITHIN*)

The *Anahata chakra*, or heart center, is located in the spinal region behind the middle of the chest in the human body.

The Vital Energy

Air is the vital life energy. Air is the symbol of stillness. There is still air outside which is a symbol of the still air inside, the vital life energy referred to as the Prana in Hindu scriptures. When the air becomes restless outside, it blows as a breeze or a wind.

When air moves inside the body, it manifests as the breath. When the wind outside becomes strong, it can take the form of cyclones and hurricanes, causing natural disasters. Likewise, when our breath becomes fast and strong, it results in the damaging emotions of anger, passion, depression, and tension.

Through breath control and self-control, yogis regulate their life energy and are able to tread the path of inner peace and joy. The prana or the life energy can be classified into different types, each responsible for different activities. But the heart is the place of the main vital life force, which regulates the breath.

The sons of Vayu

Breath control is self control, breath mastery is self mastery and no breath state is the state of realization. Yogis through breath control bring control over the inner universe which in turn brings one's own control over the response to outer universe. Through breath control one gets immense strength of the body and mind. Heart centre is the place of such control and regulation.

Two mythological heros are described as the sons of Vayu. Vayu is the air God. Hanuman in Ramayana and Bhima in Mahabharata are both considered the sons of the wind god. By controlling the breath and thereby controlling their mind they have both shown super human powers. Hanuman was of unparalleled strength and was able to accomplish impossible feats.

Bhima the middle Pandava brother symbolising the middle air or heart center is described as invincible and conqueror of all the enemies.

Both the characters indicate the powers of breath control.

Life is preserved in the body through the breath. The other centers are used periodically, but only the breath circulates continuously. Even when the body is resting, the heart center preserves life through the circulation of life energy.

Emotional Disorders

The heart center controls our emotions. Most of us are ruled by our emotions. Our loves are deep and our agonies are devastating. We become

much too quickly attached and very quickly bored. Our moods take pendulum swings from wildly happy to miserably unhappy. Anger is an emotion we have trouble controlling. It bursts forth in harsh, cruel words we would give anything to take back only a few minutes later. And despite our own moods, we are extremely sensitive, unable to take the slightest criticism, and resent such criticism as a wound to the very soul. The heart, which should be a place of love, has become a place of anger, ego and pride.

In recent times, emotional problems have become rampant. Mood disorders, stress related disorders, depression, anxiety, suicide, among adults and teens alike, have become widely prevalent. The pace of modern society, the stress of the workplace, the loneliness and isolation of urban life, and the disintegration of the family unit have all been cited as factors in this increased emotional turmoil. Whatever the cause, and there are plenty, for pain, anger, or depression, there is only one cure. That is to achieve a balanced emotional

state in which neither pain nor pleasure can disturb the inner calm and tranquility of our minds.

Universal Love

The heart center can be the source of either immense emotional satisfaction or intense emotional despair. By focusing on this *chakra* and by developing our awareness through deep meditation, we can energize this center and make it a source of profound inner joy. First, by achieving the balance needed to deal with ups and downs with equanimity, and secondly by channeling our emotions into constructive channels. Self-love, which is the root cause of many of our problems today, will be replaced with the all-encompassing love for others. All of us have the same basic need: to love and to be loved. By turning the selfish love we feel toward ourselves and our immediate circle into the warmth and compassion for all who share this earth, we will find ourselves released from the self-made prison of our emotions. We will be free at last to love wholly, without fear and without restraint. Through loving others, we love God, and that love returns to us a

thousand-fold when it is given unselfishly and without ulterior motives.

How can such a state be achieved? Through the same process of relaxation, meditation and self-inquiry with which we overcome the downward pull of the other *chakras*. Selfish emotion drags the mind down, burdening it with feelings which bury our spiritual energy and dissipate it in the joys and sorrows of the moment. True happiness and spiritual awakening require that we expand our emotions to envelop the entire universe and gain the riches therein.

Vishnu -The Symbol Of Tolerance

The presiding deity of the heart center is Vishnu. Vishnu is the maintainer and the sustainer of creation. Once a great sage by the name Bhrgu wanted to test the tolerance of Vishnu and went to visit him. At the time Vishnu was sleeping while his divine consort Lakshmi was massaging his feet. Bhrgu expected Vishnu to get up and greet him as Vishnu is the omniscient God. But when he did not show any signs of recognizing his presence he was upset and wanting to test

Vishnu with apparent anger went close to him and kicked him on the chest which was a great insult. Vishnu woke up and looking at the angry sage touched his feet as a mark of respect and said, "Please don't be upset. I am sorry I was sleeping and did not recognize your arrival. Your soft feet must have been hurt by kicking my hard chest" and started massaging the feet of the saint with sandal wood paste to pacify him. Life can be maintained in the body by tolerance. Brahma creates and Vishnu maintains the universe with tolerance and with the help of his divine consort Lakshmi he sustains the universe.

Preservative Knot (Vishnugranthi)

Located in the middle of the seven chakras, it is also called the center of transformation. From here the mind can go down to the lower three centers when necessary,

or travel upward to the super conscious state by going to the upper three centers. The path of spirituality requires the transformation of passion to compassion and emotion to devotion. This transformation is possible through the art of breath regulation and control under the proper guidance of a teacher. Sometimes people are transformed temporarily, but are pulled back by temptation and passion. But by regular practice and persistence the transformation becomes permanent, just as butter once separated from milk by churning, does not go back into the milk again. The presiding deity of Vishnugranthi is Vishnu and many believe that the presence of God is manifested more there. Those who meditate in the heart center gain love and devotion which should be directed properly by ascending to Vishuddha chakra.

LIFE'S ESSENTIAL RELATIONSHIPS

(From *THE CHANGING NATURE OF RELATIONSHIPS*)

MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS

'It is hard to live without the sun and without a relationship.'

Indian Proverb

Our relationship with the external world starts with our mother, who provides our first home, the womb, and nourishes us from her body. A good mother gives the best of herself, and is capable of any sacrifice for the well-being of her offspring. A mother's love is the purest form of love.

A multiple family relationship involves the rest of the family unit, and it is made up of blood links between people that are physically and emotionally close. In some countries the family bond encompasses grand-parents, aunts and uncles, nephews and nieces and often has several generations living under the same roof.

Our external relationships are ever expanding. The purpose of each relationship is to enhance our life, and allow us to grow. We should strive to

make each one of our relationships healthy and peaceful, loving and divine. When the threads of a relationship break, there is usually a great deal of pain, it is like a bud stunted in mid-growth. Every circle in life must be complete.

A relationship is permanent in life only when it combines love, humility, sweetness and flexibility. There is a wonderful story about an old philosopher who lived in China, long ago. A young student approached him, wanting to understand the truth about life. The old man wrinkled his face into a huge, toothless grin, and in a husky voice whispered, "No teeth, only the tongue. What do you understand?" The thoughtful young man was quiet. After a long while he answered, "The tongue is soft, flexible and humble, whereas the teeth are strong and adamant. Those who are hard, strong, unbending and unable to compromise will come and go, but the tongue will outlive them."

When a conflict starts, ego rises on both sides, but if one side remains humble, there is no fight, no further reason to struggle. It takes only one small, harmful word to spoil a relationship, but a hundred unselfish acts are needed to maintain it. Human relationships are bilateral, they depend on one another. When two people are tuned one into the other, their emotions, happiness or unhappiness, are reflected in each other like a mirror.

The Social Nature Of Relationships

As we step into the outside world, we start to be exposed to many people and before we know it, we become immersed in many types of relationships.

Our relationship with society starts with our teachers and friends. As we grow into adulthood we must learn to handle the more complex relationships of our working environment. It is not always easy to find balance between superiors, colleagues, and subordinates. Throughout our life we must strive to grow in an atmosphere that will bring out the best we have to offer.

A larger circle includes the place in which we were born, our particular culture, religious affiliation, and mother tongue. A more expanding circle covers the world in which we live and the environment. Finally comes the most essential, all-embracing circle, which is our relationship with God.

Human beings are born into a social environment, and belong to particular ethnic and religious communities. Life itself is an extended learning experience that has the family as a primary foundation, but continues through the school system, university, working place, or any communal link we create for ourselves, once we have reached a certain maturity.

While family relations hold a paramount importance for a developing child, the family unit, however strong, cannot provide the overall training required for the proper evolution of an individual. Family relations are a bond that can make us strong or weak. The relationship will be strong, if it is directed towards the positive goal of enabling the individual to expand and thrive, but the same

relationship can become a bondage if it is filled with troubles and difficulties.

If the child is overly dependent on the parents, or if the parents themselves are too protective, the child's overall development will be hampered. Coping with peers in a social

environment is not easy. A young adult must have already developed an independent, strong mind, and a well defined personality. To have interactive, successful communication, we must have developed the ability to give and receive, in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.



Summer Camp

MYSTICISM OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS

RED AND WHITE SANDALWOOD

White sandalwood is used for some specific purposes by the Brahmins, the priests. Red sandalwood is used by the *kshatriyas*, the warriors or administrators, as well as by those who practice tantric procedures, and is offered to the Divine Mother Durga or Kali. White sandalwood is used for Mother Saraswati.

What is the symbolism of *kumkum* (vermillion) or the red mark? It is the color of fire, and fire is eliminating. When fire eliminates, let it eliminate the negative qualities. It also shows, at the same time, the rising or setting sun. The rising or setting sun is like a red dot on the forehead of the sky. When the sun is rising, it is beginning of prosperity, when the sun is setting it is beginning of adversity. The sun maintains a similar color, teaching us to maintain equanimity in all stages of our lives. When problems come, people are sometimes unhappy, sad, or depressed and when success comes, they are excited or happy, and they

ignore the developing pride and ego, which results in committing mistakes. So do not develop either excitement or unhappiness; instead, be in a cool and balanced state. This state is symbolized through the red dot on the forehead.

The *bhasma* or *vibhuti* symbolizes elimination. In the Isha Upanishad (mantra 17), it is said:

*bhasmantam shariram
krato smara kritam smara,*

“May this body end in ashes, O Intelligence, remember, remember what has been done.”

Remember the end of everything. Everything has an end. Do not be attached to anything that is transitory. Be conscious that one day this body will be burned into ash; this body will become ash or will go to the soil. Do not be too attached to the body, and do not develop pride or ego because of the body.

The Vaishnavas also use special clay, known as *tilaka*

or *gopichandana*. The Vaishnavas are those who seek Lords Krishna, Rama, or Vishnu. They use special clay to make a paste, which they put on the forehead and on different parts of the body. Its name is *gopichandana*, a special clay in memory of the *gopis*, the devotees who loved Lord Krishna from their heart. It is said that where they left their bodies, it became holy soil that was a beautiful yellowish color. This soil also has a healing effect on the body, and

many people in naturopathy use this soil on the body. This soil cools the body, eliminates tension, and brings more divine awareness.

The mark on the forehead should always be used to open the eye of knowledge, to eliminate ignorance in our life. The sandalwood and holy ash have medicinal value and should be used on the body. Some people use stickers that are like the *bindi* on the forehead, but these do not have the same effect on the body.



Denver Retreat

STORIES TO LIVE BY

GOD'S PRESENCE

Once a holy man was walking on foot from northern India to southern India with a group of pilgrims. He carried with him a container filled with Ganga water from northern India, to take to the Shiva temple. Often people will carry water to be offered to (poured upon) Lord Shiva. These pilgrims had been walking for many days and they had traveled thousands of miles. As they neared their destination and were only a couple of miles from the temple, they joyously began singing the song of God.

Suddenly the holy man saw a donkey in the field that looked very feeble and extremely weakened by the blazing summer sun. As he approached it, he could see that the little donkey was dying of thirst. It had not rained for quite some time and no water was to be found. The sight of the suffering creature filled the holy man's heart with compassion. He thought, "It is better to give this Ganga water to this thirsty donkey than to pour it on Lord

Shiva." So he opened his water pot and slowly poured the water into the parched mouth of the little donkey.

His traveling companions, who were watching the scene unfold, could not believe what they were witnessing. They began to yell, "What are you doing! You came thousands of miles carrying this water, and instead of going to the temple, you are pouring it into the mouth of this donkey!"

The holy man, ignoring their reaction, said, "Go to the temple and offer your water to Lord Shiva. I am offering my water right here. Continue on your way."

So the pilgrims once again set off for the temple, leaving the holy man to care for the donkey. When they entered the temple, they had a strange vision. They found that the holy man, who previously had poured water into the thirsty donkey's mouth, was already in the temple, pouring water on Lord Shiva. Unable to comprehend what they were

witnessing, they thought, “This cannot be. We left him a few miles back. How could he reach here before us? It is not possible.”

Reflection

This story is a simple incident in the life of a holy man. Is it really possible? Can one really see God in a donkey rather than only finding God in the stone? Yes, omnipresent God is everywhere. If we develop the attitude of serving

others – even those whose behavior may be hard to accept – and remember that God’s presence is within them, we will begin to find omnipresent God and realize He is everywhere. It is not possible to find the all-pervading nature of God if you deny His presence within someone, even if you disagree with their actions or dislike them. To be able to see God’s presence in all is the greatest wisdom.

Having learned this immortal yoga sadhana I re-established it with the wish of spreading it to each and every house, so people will tread this path to ultimate liberation.

God appears as the Master to show the path to devotees. Roads to receive God’s grace is closed to those who are doubtful.

Lahiri Mahashaya

ATMA-VIDYA

PURSuing SELF KNOWLEDGE

KAIVALYOPANISHAD

The Guru continued his teaching on self knowledge further to answer Asvalayana's question. This verse explains the suitable conditions for meditation and the importance of understanding the teaching of the guru.

Mantra 8

*sabrahma sa shiva sendra
sokshara parama svarat
sa eva Vishnu sa prana
sa kalogni sa chandrama*

Substance

He is Brahma, he is Shiva, he is Indra, he is the imperishable, supreme ruler, he alone is Vishnu, he is the vital energy, he is time, and he is the moon.

Commentary

Let us look at the inner meanings of all those listed as He. In Hindu tradition there is the trinity of creator, sustainer and the destroyer. These are the Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. In our life when a thought is created, it remains in us for sometime then that thought dissolves. Again another thought comes and the cycle is repeated. In our life moment to moment there is creation, sustenance and dissolution going

on continuously. If a good thought comes we are happy and if a bad thought comes we are unhappy. We are puzzled with these thoughts and we cannot experience a continuous flow of happiness and love as the quality of the thoughts keeps changing. But all thoughts are coming from one source and no thought is permanent. We live in a world of changing phenomenon but there is one changeless state, which we should experience. A meditator –having meditated, goes within, beyond body and mind realizes the state of oneness or *brahman* and coming down also maintains that.

sa brahma –brahma could be the creator. *brahma* is the thought.

yatra yatra mano yati brahmanastatra darsanat- wherever the mind goes there is the presence of God. First theoretically accept the omniscience of God. Even when a thought comes to distract you never forget divinity.

sa shiva –*Shiva* means the soul. From *Shiva* if you remove *i kara* it becomes *Shava* that means dead body.

sa indra- Indra is the Lord of the kingdom of heaven. Indra is also found in the *upanishadic* and *Vedic* prayers. Indra is an abbreviated name. The actual name is *idandra-idam drashta*. One who is only watching everything is Indra. When I perceive the divinity as *brahma* coming as thought, divinity of Shiva the soul, remaining in the body as breath and divinity just observing is *Indra*. Indra also means the Lord of the *indriyas*. In every *indriya* or the sense organ there is a lord or the presiding deity. In the left eye the moon, in the right eye the Sun and in the third eye fire, in the nose is Ganapati, in the tongue shakti, in the hand Vishnu and so on.

Then *sa akshara* – *akshara* means imperishable and immutable. *kshara* means perishable, changing and flowing down. *Akshara* means imperishable changeless and without any flow. The body is changing continuously, the mind is changing continuously, everything around us and also our inner life is changing continuously. With all these changes there is one imperishable soul. This is one meaning of the *akshara*.

Akshara is also a word –any syllable that is coming out. Brahma is thought and what comes out is the word or *akshara*. We do not speak everything that we think. Sometimes we think one thing and speak another thing. *Akshara* is that word which is coming out as the thought. In the Upanishad mantra it is said, *vak vai brahma*. Each word that comes forth is God.

paramasvarat- means the supreme Lord or Supreme ruler. In our life, who is ruling all the activities in life? Yogis say it is the breath. Without breath nothing is possible.

sa eva visnuh – vishnati pravishyati iti vishnu- The meaning of Vishnu is one who

is penetrating everywhere. There is no time and no place where you can ignore him. The touch sensation is Vishnu.

sa prana- *prana* is the vital energy. In the body there are five principal vital energies- *prana, apana, vyana samana and udana*. *Prana* is the life force that controls the heart and lungs, *apana* is that which helps in the excretion, *samana* is that life energy that digests food and provides the food to every part of the body, *vyana* keeps the life force vibrant in all parts of the body and *udana* is the vital energy remaining in the throat and is very interesting. *Udana* plays an interesting role. *udana* is the gate for evolution or the downfall.

Prashna Upanishad explains this as,

*atha ekaya urdhva udanam,
punyena punyam papena
papam,
ubhabhyam manushya
lokam nayati*

When you do something good *udana* helps your evolution and takes you much higher, and if you do something negative it will push you downwards and if your good and bad karma are equal it just stays where it is.

sa kala –kala is time or the time spirit. Looking at the watch is not time. The date and time are not the time. The time is the flow of consciousness that is appearing to us in the form of past present and future but it is beyond the past and future and is a present flow. The etymological meaning of *kala* is *kalayati iti kala* –that which measures and assesses everything is *kala*. *Kala* is the time spirit, which watches everything within you individually and in the given frame. *Kalosmi* – I am the *Kala* says Lord Krihna in the Bhagavad Gita.

sa agni –agra ye nayati iti agni – that which always goes up is *agni*. There are five elements- the earth for ex. stone or soil, if you throw it up it falls down. Take some water and do the same, it falls down. Air goes everywhere in all directions- *vayu sarvatra gomahan*. If you look at the fire it always points upwards. So the literal meaning is - that which takes you upwards. Our two eyes are the eyes of duality but the third eye is the fire that can take you upwards. The fire purifies everything and most religions ceremonies are done keeping a fire burning.

sa chandra ma – *candrama manaso jatah* says the *purusha sukta*. From the cosmic mind the moon was born. Moon influences the mind. The Latin words Luna means the mind and those who are mentally sick are called lunatics. So mind and moon are correlated and in the body the mind is the moon.

All these are the manifestation of the one

Supreme Being alone. One who knows that he is that awareness that is *anantam* or eternal, which is inclusive of everything that exists, realizes that all the above – the trinity, the Indra, the Sun, the moon, the fire, the time and the prana are all himself.

This is

*ayam atma brahma,
prajnanam brahma
and aham brahmasmi*

The seed of devotion and faith is hidden in the hearts of All. Good Company, spiritual discussion, and self analyses are essential for the development of the plant.

Every karma or action has a twofold result. One enjoyed in this life and the other deposited in the next life.

Swami Satyananda Giri

BALASHRAM BI-CYCLE EXPEDITION ON EARTH DAY

Nature gives everything for our existence but in return we exploit it more than our need. With an idea for creating awareness among the people of nearby villages the Balashram scout students started on a bicycle rally on 22 March 2012 on the occasion of Earth Day. In the morning all of our scout students got ready with bicycles each holding a placard of slogan on Earth Day. We were guided by our scout master Shri Gopinath Dash and assisted by other teachers and Br. Anandananda. The Principal of our school flagged off the rally. We left Balashram at 7:10 a.m. and bicycled towards Indupur which is about 15 kilometers away. On the way, villagers greeted us and offered water to drink thereby making our journey comfortable. They were curious and asked questions about the significance

of Earth Day. We shared our knowledge as well as gained some ideas on environment from the interaction.

We got an opportunity to see the river Brahmani. Though it flows a couple of kilometers from Balashram, we hardly get to see it because of the busy schedule. When we reached the river bank, we were hungry and our teachers arranged for some snacks from the nearby daily market. Although the river is big, currently during the summer season, there was less water in the river. During rainy season it floods and affects the nearby villages.

We experienced that nature plays crucial roles at different moments. We humans contribute to disturbing the harmony of nature. We do not take proper care of our surroundings and as a result we

face various problems in our everyday life.

Trees are the main agents of soil conservation. We tried to create an awareness amont the people about the

importance of plantation. If we take care of Nature, Nature will take good care of us. Our rally on Earth Day was enoyable as well as educative for all of us.

“Love is the only bow on life’s dark cloud. It is the Morning and the Evening star. It shines upon the cradle of the babe and sheds its radiance on the quite tomb. It is the mother of art, inspirer of the poet, patriot and philosopher. It was the first to dream of immortality. It fills the world with melody for Music is the voice of love. It is the perfume of the wondrous flower –the heart. Without it we are less than beasts but with it is heaven and we are gods in embryo.”

Robert J. Ingersoll

AROUND THE WORLD

INDIA

PRAJNANA MISSION

Kriya Programs and Retreats

Several Programs were conducted in many states of India by Swami Samrpananandaji with other monks and Brahmacharis of the mission. March through May, Kriya Yoga initiation programs and satsangs were conducted in many centers of Andhra Pradesh including a program in the capital city of Hyderabad.

There were also programs in Lucknow, Patna Bilaspur and Tatanagar.

In south India programs were held at Coimbatore and Madurai. Several sadhana camps were also conducted in the cities of Cuttack and Bhubaneshwar on a regular basis giving the disciples a chance to intensify their sadhana.

Foundation Day of Cuttack Ashram –May 17, 2011

We celebrated the 19th/20th Foundation Day of Jagatpur Ashram with Swami Shuddhananda Giri. Swami

Arupanandji presided over the evening satsang. Asimanandaji Maharaj was the chief guest who addressed the satsang. Yogacharya Siddheshwar Baba also spoke on the occasion and Hemant Baba concluded the program with a vote of thanks. The satsang was well attended and on the hot and humid day and at the end of the program four hundred people took Prasad. Cuttack ashram, now the administrative office of Prajnana Mission, was founded by Paramahansa Prajnananandaji, with the advice of Gurudev,

Gurudev's Jayanti Celebrations –May 27, 2012

Gurudev Baba Hariharanandaji's 105th Jayanti was celebrated at all ashrams and centers across the globe with special prayers, worship, seminars and meditations.

Ratha Yatra celebrations

Our Hariharananda Gurukulam took an active part in Lord Jagannath's Chariot festival, serving the pilgrims with our book store, ambulance and medical services.

Gurupurnima Celebrations

Guru Purnima will be celebrated at the Gurukulam with Guru paduka puja and havan at the Guru Mandir.

Matru Ashram News

In the month of April two satsangs exclusively for women were held in the village of Arua by the residents of Matru Ashram. Matru Ashram is also organizing health camps along with Prajnana Mission to provide medical help and also basic health education for women. Two such health camps were organized at Nimpur near Pattamundai and another at Baluriya near Dandisahi. The Nimpur Health Camp was inaugurated by Swami Gurukrupanandaji, a senior monk of Matru Ashram. A group of doctors from Cuttack and Pattamundai provided consultation to the villagers. More than 460 patients at Nimpur and nearly 300 patients at Baluriya were served during these camps and were provided free medicines. All the monks and Brahmacharinis of Matruashram were present during the camps helping in registration, and assisting the patients and the doctors.

Balashram

This summer was special for children of Balashram. 10 students who could not go home for Summer went to a summer camp at Nagpur and Bhopal organized by Kriya Yoga Centres at those respective locations. At both places the camp was action packed .The children were involved in various activities such as drawing/painting, trekking, Judo training and music. They also had sessions of child psychology, yoga and meditation. There were visits to places of interest which included Mantralaya, Vidhan Sabha, Birla Mandir, Bada Talab – Boating and Bike Show, Indira Gandhi Manav Sanghralaya in Bhopal and the Raman Science Center in Nagpur.They also had the opportunity to visit the Radio Center where there a recording was done for Bharat Darshan Programme of Akashawani, which was broadcasted on first Sunday of June 2012. The Boys recited Sanskrit prayers and Hindi and Oriya Songs and were also interviewed. It was an exciting and great learning experience for the children thanks to the sponsors and organizers the two cities.

ASIA

Mar 2, Kriya Program, Hong Kong, China

Swami Atmavidyanandaji conducted a Kriya Program in Hong Kong in March 2012. There were 34 new initiations and a special question answer session for those previously initiated. This is our second program in Hong Kong.

EUROPE

Vienna Ashram, Tattendorf March 7-12

Mother Center Europe had Higher Kriya retreat with Swami Atmavidyanandaji. The retreat was well attended. Swamiji also gave talks on “Faith” and “Science of sound” which were very interesting and informative.

May 25-28

Gurudev’s Birthday was celebrated with a special Seminar at Tattendorf.

May 21-24

A retreat was held at London, England with Swami Samarpananandaji and Swami Mangalananada Giri

June 4-6

Retreat at Budapest, Hungary,

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

Upcoming retreats will be held

Latvia, Poland, Ireland in the month of August

August 10

The Birthday of Paramahansa Prajnananandaji will be observed as a special event at the Tattendorf ashram

AMERICAS

North America

Mother Center – Homestead FL

Higher Kriya Retreat, April 18-23

The Higher Kriya Retreat at the Mother Center was well attended form national and international participants. Swami Atmavidyanandaji conducted the retreat assisted by Yogacharyas Bhadrayu Baba, Durga Ma and John Thomas Baba. Several of our monks and brahmacharis also helped in organizing the program for new initiations into higher Kriyas and with guiding meditations.

Swami Atmavidyanandaji gave interesting and informative talks on Science of Sound and

the specific benefits of chanting of certain sounds like specific mantras with a scientific explanation which triggered great interest in the listeners.

Gurudev's Birthday Program, May 24-28

Our beloved Gurudev, Baba Hariharanandaji's birthday was celebrated with a five day seminar and special worship at the Miami ashram with Swami Atmavidyananda Giri, resident monks and Brahmacharis and Yogacharyas. Several disciples national and international attended the program.

Guru Purnima Seminar – July 1-3

Guru Purnima will be celebrated with a 3 day seminar at the mother center with special worship and meditation.

Kriya Vedanta Gurukulam Joliet

Midwest Retreat - May 11-13

The Annual Midwest retreat was held at the Kriya Vedanta Gurukulam - our Midwest Ashram, with Swami Atmavidyananda Giri, Yogacharyas Durga Ma and Bhadrayu Baba, assisted by the monks and brahmacharis of the

Ashram. Swamij's talks were inspiring and guided meditation sessions thrice each day and the question and answer sessions enhanced spiritual progress of the disciples.

Guru Purnima Seminar - June 30-July 3

A 3 day seminar is planned for GuruPurnima celebrations at the Joliet Ashram with Swami Atmavidyananda Giri, other resident monks, Brahmacharis and yogacharyas. The highlight is an Interfaith Conference of Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Muslim and other faiths.

South America

Brasilia April 4-10

Swami Atmavidyanandaji along with Yogacharya Bhadrayu Baba conducted the annual Kriya program and retreat in Brasilia. There were twenty four new initiations. The theme for the retreat was "The Law of Karma" which was interesting and thought provoking.

Sao Paulo –April 11-16

The Kriya program in Sao Paulo with Swami Atmavidyanandaji and yogacharya Bhadrayu Baba brought in forty-eight new

people to the path of Kriya. The retreat was attended by a large audience of over hundred people. Planning for a new ashram continues and hopefully will be reality before the end of this year.

Argentina and Chile

Kriya Programs are planned this year in the New Kriya centers of Argentina and Chile expanding the Kriya family in South America.



Earthday at Balashram

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

NEW BOOK RELEASES 2012

ONLY HER GRACE

The much awaited major work on Devi Mahatmya (Durga Saptashati) of seven hundred slokas describing the glory of the Divine Mother is finally here in three beautiful volumes, with a commentary by Paramahansa Prajnanananda.

FREEDOM FROM FEAR

A thought provoking work on what is fear and how to be free from it by Paramahansa Prajnananandaji.

SEEK GOD ALONE: TEACHINGS ON BHAJA GOVINDAM

The teachings of Adi Shankara's composition, Bhaja Govindam, also known as Mohamudgara are like the blows of hammer that crush delusion, to save man tossed over by waves of pain and pleasure in the sea of this

changing world. Paramahansa Prajnananandaji brings out the essence of these teachings in his own unique way for our understanding and application in daily life.

DIVINE MOTHERHOOD

Another inspiring work of Paramahansa Prajnananandaji, this book is contemplation on the beauty of Mother and Motherhood starting with the earthly mother and ending with the divine Mother.

A COLLECTION OF INSTRUCTIONS ON KRIYA YOGA

– By Paramahansa
Hariharananda

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