

Sthita Prajna



Guru Vandana

*yadanugrahamatrena shokamohau vinashyatau
tasmai shree deshikendraya namo'stu paramatmane
yasmadanugraham labdhva mahadajnanmutsrujet
tasmai shree desisikendrâya namacabheeshta siddhaye*

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

I bow to the Guru by just bowing to whom and by getting whose blessings great ignorance is lifted.

CONTENTS

VOLUME 12

ISSUE 3

Sub	Page No.
• GURU VANDANA	3
• EDITORIAL	5
• MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER	6
• WISDOM AND LOVE	7
• DATES TO REMEMBER	8
• PRAJNANAVANI	9
• SHIVA TATTVA	12
• TEACHINGS OF THE MASTERS	16
• A TRIP TO AYODHYA	17
• MYTHS AND METAPHORS	22
• THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI	25
• VALUABLE VOLUMES	
• TAPPING THE SOURCE	28
• MYSTICISM OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS	32
• STORIES TO LIVE BY - THE GLORY OF GOD	34
• ATMA-VIDYA - PURSUING SELF KNOWLEDGE	36
• PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY	37
• THE SACRED COW	41
• BALASHRAM NEWS	44
• EDUCATION OF THE MIND AND THE SOUL	45
• AROUND THE WORLD	49

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FROM THE EDITORS :

"What do you become if you do not do sadhana? You will be like an empty husk without the grain in it."

Paramahamsa Prajnanananda

"Message of the Master" talks of the importance of cultivating our body land to reap spiritual harvest.

As we celebrate 40 years of Gurudev's coming to the West Prajnanavani gives a detailed description of 'Gurudev's first coming to west.'

The article on 'Practical spirituality' talks of how one can draw inspiration to work hard and to find joy in our daily routine by recognizing and reminding ourselves that all beings are fragments of the same Divinity, hidden in multiple forms.

Devi Mahatmya gives an account of the worthy seekers represented by Suratha and Samadhi, and the able teacher Rishi Medha and how we can learn from them.

Yoga Sutras of Patanjali explains how to understand error, false knowledge, and their nature (lakshana).

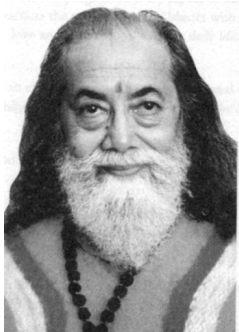
The article on Self Knowledge discusses how a person, who is awakened with an unbroken consciousness of who he is, perceives everything to be born from God.

Excerpts from some of Paramahamsa Prajnanananda's seminal works continue. Universe Within talks of the human miracle, the potential for unlimited achievement.

We bring you exciting news of the 15th International Intensive Kriya Yoga Seminar 2014, Inauguration of our New Health Center by Shri Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Puri, New Book Releases. messages of Guruji and many other inspiring articles, messages, stories, dates to remember, upcoming events, and the ashram news at home and abroad.

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

THE CULTIVATION OF YOUR LIFE



As a farmer cultivates the land and reaps the harvest, you have to cultivate yourself and reap the harvest of spirituality. If you cultivate your body's land, you will get a good harvest. In my life, I achieved the stage of Samadhi, the pulseless stage. My father, mother, brothers, and sisters all took Kriya initiation from me. If there had been no reality, truth, or sincerity, it would not have been possible. Why would my father, mother, and relatives take initiation from me? In school you studied and then went to college or university. Everyone is your teacher, since you have learned a lot from them. If you are sincere in spiritual life, then you must have a teacher or a guide to lead you on the path. However, you require inner

culture in order to effect changes in your life. If you cultivate the land of your body, ultimately you will get a golden harvest everywhere. So feel that your whole body is the body of God.

No one knows how long they will live. Every day so many people are dying. When the son dies, both mother and father will express extreme sorrow. This is the world. Sorrow and woe will surely come by turn to all persons. The wheels of life are constantly changing and moving. This is human life. You need soul culture. If you cultivate your life, you will taste the reality of Truth. If you gain the whole world and forget your own Self, what is your gain? You are born for your self-transformation and realization. From the time of your birth He has been inhaling. In every moment He is giving you joy, but good and evil still remain in the body. Like a farmer you will have to avoid the weeds of negativities to allow the plants of love and divinity to grow.

WISDOM AND LOVE

What is the end of knowledge? End of knowledge is love. Let us see how knowledge leads to love.

Suppose you are looking at a person on the street. You do not pay much attention. But suppose you had a terrible tooth ache and someone gave you the name of a dentist and you went to the dentist. If the dentist happens to be the man you have seen on the street a couple of times and he treats you very nicely and helps you to get rid of the pain, then you will start liking him and when you see him again on the street you start greeting him. What has happened here? When you first saw him he was a stranger. Then you knew he was a dentist. Then you knew he was not only a dentist and that he was very nice and a wonderful doctor and very loving and caring. With this knowledge you started loving him. This is the end of knowledge in love.

People say that they are practicing Bhakti Yoga (yoga of divine love) without knowing its

meaning. Whom do they love? Love comes from knowledge and knowledge comes through action.

So the first step is *karma* (action), next *jnana* (knowledge) and from *jnana* comes *bhakti* (devotion).

Upanishad or Vedanta is the end of knowledge in love. What is love? Suppose you love a person – say your guru. When you love him, his thought is constantly remaining in your brain and you do not forget him. If you forget then you do not love him. Love is constant remembrance in the brain. When you go to this person and he hugs you, at that moment will you still be thinking of him? No. At that time you have become one with him. Love means to be one with. The first stage of love is to think. When you know more and more about a person and you like what you know about him then your love has increased and as you get closer and closer you become one with him, and that is real love, to be united or one

with. At that stage there is no thought. It is a state of thoughtlessness. That is real love.

Those who meditate when they get that state for one minute or two minutes with no thought when the mind is like a clean slate that is real love. Wisdom and love are one.

There is a difference between knowledge and love. We all have knowledge but not wisdom. We know what is good and what is bad. This is

knowledge. But if we do not apply the knowledge in our daily life we are only theoretically intelligent. Knowledge is *jnana*. Applied jnana is *vijnana* and the happiness we get by applying knowledge is called *prajnana*. Knowing is *jnana*. Applying is *vijnana* through which you get the state of *prajnana*. Established in *prajnana* you will never forget the truth at any moment. He works with love, without anxiety or emotion,

DATES TO REMEMBER

April – June, 2014

March 31	: Ugadi
April 8	: Rama Navami (Birthday of Lord Rama)
May 10	: Birthday of Swami Shriyukteshwar
May 17	: The Foundation day of Jagatpur Ashram
May 27	: Birthday of Gurudev

PRAJNANAVANI - THE VOICE OF WISDOM

GURUDEV FIRST COMING TO WEST



This was the period from 1960-1973. During this period hundreds of sincere seekers from the West came to Gurudev hearing his name and spiritual state. They all were initiated into Kriya Yoga, meditating and experiencing more calmness and peace.

Although he was invited several times by his western disciples to visit the West, he was not interested. But in 1974, Gurudev was invited by a group of disciples from Switzerland and Germany and at last Paramahansa Hariharananda agreed to the Divine will. The prophecy of Swami

Shriyukteshwar and direction of Shri Babaji came true. In his own words: “I had no desire to go abroad, but six disciples of Switzerland who visited Puri for the third time insisted on my visiting their country. They said, “You are always busy with Indian disciples. There are hundreds of true seekers of God waiting abroad. Should you not help them? Are you born only for India? These words from a group of sincere disciples moved me and I decided to go on a mission to the foreign countries.” Passport, visa and other preparations for his foreign travel were ready in

time. It was June 3rd, 1974. He started for Europe from Delhi accompanied by a few disciples. He touched the sacred soil of India and boarded the big carrier of Air France to go to Zurich via Paris. This plane was carrying nearly 350 passengers and they were very curious to see an Indian monk with them. The dress, red vermilion mark on the forehead, rosaries of rudraksha around the neck were extremely new for them. Many of them became curious to know about him and surrounded him to talk regarding religion and yoga. They also wanted to know about his place of destination. When there was a big crowd always surrounding him, the captain declared that it was not safe to crowd near this area. He requested them to take their respective places and announced that if Swamiji wishes, he could talk for a short time on spiritual life, which he did. He had to talk with interested people the entire night, satisfying the curiosity of the passengers on different issues. The first place he landed in the West was Paris. He stayed one day in Paris and was impressed with the lifestyle

of western people and their mannerism.

The next day, June 5, 1974, he took the plane for Zurich. The plane landed at the scheduled time. The waiting room was full of disciples from Switzerland, Belgium, Holland and Germany. They were holding flower garlands and bouquets of flowers. When they saw him, they ran towards him with joy and prostrated in reverence in Indian fashion. The airport officials being impressed, also bowed down in similar fashion.

On June 6th, he gave his first talk in the West in Zurich. The hall was overcrowded. He delivered the talk on Kriya Yoga - the essence of all religions. In Zurich he stayed for a couple of weeks and initiated many people into the path of Kriya. From Zurich he went to Belgium, where he stayed for a while and guided many people in the path of Kriya Yoga.

From Belgium he wanted to go to London for a short visit, but he had no visa. He started for England in the name of God and with the belief that God would help him to enter the city of London. In his own

words, "I came by boat crossing the English Channel. Some hundreds of people came from Belgium to London. I stood far away from the checking counter. The immigration officer gazed at me with awe for some time, then came to me and asked, 'Are you an Indian monk?' I said, 'Yes.' Then he asked, 'How many children do you have?' I said, 'I am not married.' He then added, 'Indian monks are very strict and sincere.' He asked me a couple of questions, then said, 'Swamiji, I was attracted by your divine appearance from the distance.' Then he asked for my passport, but when he found no visa for UK, he inquired about my visa. I replied, 'I have no visa. Allow me to enter into London. You are my visa.' When he wanted to know from me the places in London that I wished to visit, I told him I wanted to visit King's palace, Hyde Park, Swami

Vivekananda's Ashram and some more places of public interest. God came to my help and I was issued a visa to enter into UK."

Although Gurudev stayed for a short time in London, many people came and took initiation from him. Then from there he returned back to Belgium. During this tour Germany was the fifth and the last country he visited. He went from Belgium to Germany by car. He stayed first in Meresburg and then in Koeln. In those two places, several hundred people were initiated into Kriya Yoga. He stayed three weeks there. Then with the subtle message of Swami Shriyukteshwarji, he left for India, from Koeln to Frankfurt and then to Delhi. His first travel to the West brought a new era in the history of Kriya movement after Paramahansa Yogananda.

(From River of
Compassion)

SHIVA TATTVA

*Om atmatvam girijamatih sahacarah, pranah sharíram gruham,
pujate vishayopabhogarachana nidra samadhi sthitih
sancharah kramayoh pradakshina vidhihi stotrani sarva gira
yadyat karma karomi tattadakhilam shambho tavaradhanam*

Who is Shiva? Why do we worship him?

A beautiful story narrates the Shiva tattva as an answer of a mother to the questions of a young child. Long, long ago there lived a rishi named Vyaghrapada. In olden days most of the rishis were married, living in the ashrams in the forests with wife and children, leading a very simple and austere, self disciplined family life dedicated to God. The rishi had two sons; one son was Upamanyu and the other Dhaumya. When the children were small and playing with other children, they went to a friend's house who was also the son of another Rishi. The wife of that Rishi gave them some milk to drink. This was the first time Upamanyu and Dhaumya tasted milk. They liked it so much that when they came back Upamanyu started crying for more milk. As they were poor and did not have any milk, to appease the child the mother made a drink out of rice flour to look like milk and gave it to

the child. But Upamnyu was not to be fooled. On tasting it, he knew it was not milk and continued crying. The mother not knowing what to do said, "We do not have any milk. If you really want milk you have to pray to Shiva."

Then the boy asked, "Who is Shiva? How do I pray and how do I meditate?" The mother answered the little boy by explaining the principle Shiva tatwa.

Who is Shiva?

In the Sanskrit language the name Shiva is made up of two letters *shi* + *va*. When the notation of the 'i' kara is removed from the *shi* it becomes *sha* and the word becomes *shava*. *shava* means a dead body. So when *i* is present it is *Shiva*, and when it is absent the body becomes *shava* or a dead body. That life energy present in each living being that keeps one active and beautiful and in whose absence the body becomes dead is Shiva. So the simple meaning of Shiva is the life principle

Another meaning of Shiva is sleeping divinity. The word comes from *se* meaning sleeping or dormant. That energy or divinity dormant and not manifested is Shiva. Each human being is potentially divine. Divinity is present in each one of us. But everyone does not realize it. All are extrovert and playing outside while divinity is sleeping inside. The sleeping divinity is Shiva.

Another meaning of Shiva is all that is good and auspicious.

The Destroying Aspect

In Hindu Mythology, the entire process of creation, sustenance and destruction is possible by the triple qualities of divinity. The aspect of creation is known as Brahma. That aspect that maintains is Vishnu and that which destroys is known as Siva. Shiva is the destroying aspect of life. So if Siva is the aspect of destruction should we love him? The answer is yes.

What is destroyed? Every moment some destruction is going on and because of destruction some new things are created. Without destruction creation is not possible. If you want to create something you have to destroy

something. Suppose you want a new plant. Seed has to be destroyed for the plant to come up. So many people call it as creative destruction. To construct a house you have to destroy some place and other material to create the beautiful house. Without destruction there is no creation and without creation there is no destruction. Shiva is the 3rd aspect of the Hindu trinity.

Where does Shiva Live?

The little boy asked his mother “where does Shiva live?” Many people go to the Himalayas to search for Siva. You might know the meaning of the Himalaya. Himalaya is a mountain. The inner meaning of Himalaya is *hima* means cold and *alaya* means the house. Shiva lives in Himalayas, means in the coolest temperament of your life there is manifestation of Shiva in you. When your mind is cool, when your mind is up, not agitated, irritated or turbulent then you are in the abode of Shiva. So Shiva is present in the Himalayas within you.

Shiva is also said to be present more in some places especially in the cremation grounds because that is the place of destruction. The beautiful body is destroyed in

the cremation grounds to a hand full of ashes and if the body is buried it becomes earth. Shiva is realized more in the cremation grounds.

How does Shiva Look?

Now the little boy asked “how does Shiva look?”

The mother said,

Shiva looks like a yogi. Shiva is a yogi. Shiva is the first yogi. His first disciple of yoga is his wife Parvati. Shiva has five heads with three eyes on each head. He has a snake as a garland around his neck and he wears skin as a garment. He has matted hair that is like a crown and there is a crescent moon on the top of his head. There is also the flow of the Mother Ganga from the head. His body is smeared with ashes. He is always in the meditative posture. The eyes are open but he is not looking at anything.

The Symbolism

What are the five heads? We all have the five heads. Each represents a sense organ through which we interact with the world. We have five organs of knowledge that are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. The three eyes represent the three *gunas* - *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The three eyes also

represent the sun, moon and the fire. Two eyes are open and the third eye is closed that could be opened by meditation.

Why are ashes smeared on the body? Isha Upanishad says,

bhasmantam sariram – the end of the body is ashes

Sages take bath in the Ganga and again smear the ashes on their bodies. One reason is ashes act as an insulating agent and give some protection from the cold.

More significantly it is also to remind one about the ultimate end of the body. The body is nothing but a handful of ashes. Even smearing ashes is a reminder of the ultimate end of the body.

Why does Shiva wear the skin? The body is the garment of the soul. Skin on the body represents the garment of the soul. Shiva uses a *trisula* or a trident as a weapon. *Trisula* symbolizes being free from the past present and the future.

Shiva is married. The name of Shiva's wife is Pravati also known as Sati, Hymavati, Durga or Kali. Shiva is changeless. But the wives change from one body to another- the form and the name

are changed. In us the soul is one, but the mind changes. When the mind is agitated it is like Durga or Kali. When very peaceful it is like Parvati. The mind changes but the soul is the same. There is a beautiful verse addressed to Shiva, which says the mind is your wife. So the mind is married to Siva. A spiritual person gets married to the soul or Shiva.

The Blue Throat

Then the boy asked why Shiva's throat is blue.

According to Mythology Shiva drank poison and held it in his throat without taking it in or spitting it out and as a result the throat turned blue.

Devas and asuras wanted to churn the ocean to get precious things. So with Mandara Mountain as the rod and vasuki the giant snake as the rope they started churning the ocean. Devas were on the tail side and the mouth side were the asuras. Many things came out of the ocean. But when they kept churning for more the snake that served as the rod could not take it anymore and started vomiting poison and the

entire creation was in trouble. They requested the help of Shiva and Shiva drank the poison to save the worlds. What is the meaning?

The life is an ocean. When we churn we get treasures. By meditation, we get inner peace, through study, we get knowledge and through hard work, prosperity.

In our daily life we have to drink some poison. If we bring the poison out others will be affected. If we cannot digest we should hold it. For example you know something but cannot tell others. If you tell it may not create a good feeling in them even if it is truth. We don't need to tell everything to everybody. Keep the poison within. This is another meaning of Shiva drinking poison.

Listening to this account it is said that the little boy meditated on Shiva with great faith and sincerity and realized. One name of Shiva is Asutosha. One who can be pleased quickly is Asutosha. Many believe that by praying to Shiva their wishes will be fulfilled quickly.

Teachings of the Masters

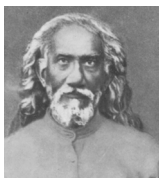
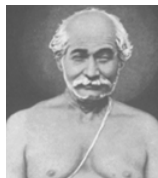


"To serve a saint is sacred and brings great spiritual gain."

Mahavatara Babaji

"Those who remain merged in Brahman, worship Brahman and whether they are aware of it or not, they constantly realize the atom point within the kutastha."

Lahiri Mahasaya



"Men of wisdom are neither deluded nor haunted by the spectre of birth and death. One should, without being inordinately confused by the words of wise man, follow strictly their methods of Kriya."

Swami Shriyukteshwar

"To be truthful in words is to reveal what one has seen or heard, without adding your own perception."

Sanyal Mahasaya



"When love for all things is seen as an expression of God, man's consciousness will at last be expanded in omnipresence."

Paramahansa Yogananda

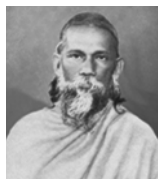
"Every karma (action) has a twofold result; one enjoyed in this life, and the other deposited for the next life."

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



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

Paramahansa Prajnanananda





A TRIP TO AYODHYA

After the monk's initiation in 2012, we finally were able to make plans to go to Ayodhya. Swami Arupanandaji promised to take us around from our Allahabad ashram where we were supposed to meet him. We left Hyderabad on the morning of 20th to Delhi and reached Delhi around noon.

We left for the New Delhi station and reached the platform on time to take the train to Allahabad, only to find out that the train was three hours late. We sat on the platform and strangely could spend the three hours quite peacefully thinking of God and it felt good to leave things to God.

This Ayodhya trip has been on our minds for a couple of years ever since Baba visited Ayodhya, and once during conversation mentioned it. I also got the Rama mantra from Baba on a Guru Purnima day during the centenary. It also so happened that around this time that our old guru from whom we had taken mantra diksha

many years ago and who was also a devotee of Sri Rama, printed Valmiki Ramayana in Telugu script in a large size font for easy reading and gave us a set as a gift. This triggered the interest in studying Ramayana again and we went from Valmiki Ramayana to Tulasi Ramayana to Adhyatma Ramayana and found the books to be wonderful. So when the opportunity presented itself to be able to go to Ayodhya we were very excited.

At 11 pm we finally boarded the Magadh express. The journey was quite comfortable. Had a good night's rest and when we woke up we were only a couple of hours from Allahabad. On calling Aroopanandaji he said he would meet us at the station. We reached Allahabad around 9 am. Arupanandaji was there. We had to go up and down quite a few steps –this was my first travel venture after the ankle fracture in June 2011, from which I was still having occasional swelling and some

difficulty with climbing stairs, but I managed. There was a taxi waiting and we drove to Allahabad ashram. This was our first visit to this ashram. It was a nice big building painted white with an orange border that looked beautiful and said "Hariharananda Dhyana Mandir, Allahabad" on it. The building we were told was the gift of a disciple couple of Gurudev.

Arupanandaji had planned a nice schedule. We were to go to Ayodhya that day and stay overnight there in an ashram and return to Allahabad the next day. So we had a quick shower and a light lunch and got into the taxi. It was a 4-5 hour drive and the road was quite rough at some stretches but we had an excellent driver and Arupanandaji kept us good company talking about the places to see and his previous visit to Ayodhya with Baba.

It was a great excitement that we were actually going to be in places where Lord Rama was and treaded those parts of the earth even if it was a few thousand years ago. Reading the Ramayana just before the trip helped as the description of Ayodhya and the other places

that Lord Rama had been to was still fresh in our minds.

We reached Ayodhya and first went to Kalyan ashram where we were to spend the night. It was quite a big ashram with its own temple and several guest rooms. From the temple we could hear the continuous chanting of Sri Chandi. We were told that it goes on continuously all the 24 hours and is never stopped. They have rotating priests who do the chanting round the clock. The people at the ashram were very hospitable thanks to the good contacts of Arupanandaji. They made us very comfortable in the neat rooms with attached bath rooms and fresh linen and blankets. We were told that the Ayodhya Temple would be closing soon for the day and so we rushed back into the city.

Ayodhya - Visited by pilgrims throughout the year, Ayodhya, attracts devotees from all over India and abroad, on 'Ram Navami', the day of Lord's birth, which is celebrated with great pomp and show, in the Hindu month of Chaitra. Situated on the banks of the river Saryu, this ancient city is believed to be the capital of the descendants of the Surya

dynasty. Lord Rama was the most celebrated King of this dynasty. Known as 'Kosala Desha' in ancient times, the place has been described as "a city built by gods and being as prosperous as paradise itself", in the Atharvaveda. The city of Ayodhya is also a place of many ashrams. Ayodhya literally means a place that is invincible.

Ramkot or the Rama Janma bhoomi –the location of the birth place of Rama is the chief place of visit in Ayodhya. This stands on an elevated ground in the western part of the city. The place is not accessible by car as that whole area is blocked off for security reasons. So we had to park in a spot and walk through the streets visiting the temples on the way. The main attraction – Rama Janam Bhoomi was sadly nothing but a piece of land. The dispute over the temple and an adjacent mosque resulted in riots and the bombing of the place which destroyed both the temple and the mosque. The place was heavily cordoned off and we had to walk through the narrow paths with metal fences on both sides and several security checks before reaching the spot. There was

also heavy military surveillance. We stood gazing at the place where the temple was at one time. It was still thrilling to think that we are actually at that site. I was reminded of what Baba had to say the year before after his visit to Ayodhya- "It was sad that to see the birthplace of Lord Rama, who has given liberation to so many, one had to go through such restricted and prison like atmosphere." The comforting fact was we were told that a new temple would soon be erected in that place.

We completed our visit there and came back into town again to see some more temples and palaces with the images of Lord Rama and the royal family. We were shown the royal place where king Dasaratha held his court and another beautiful building known as Kanak Bhawan, believed to be the dwelling of Sri Rama and Sita. This has statues of Sri Rama and Sita wearing gold crowns. The idols were beautiful marble statues with very bright eyes.

Hanuman Garhi - Next we visited Hanuman Garhi, a very big Hanuman temple,

situated in the center of the town and approachable by a flight of 76 steps. Legend has it that Hanuman lived here in a cave and guarded the Janam bhoomi or Ramkot. The main temple contains the statue of Maa Anjani, with Bal Hanuman seated on her lap. The faithful believe that all their wishes are granted with a visit to this holy shrine.

River Sarayu - Next we went to the sacred River Sarayu on whose banks Ayodhya is situated for a bath. Then we visited another temple where we saw that architectural bricks and pillars were being made and stored for the new temple to be erected.

We returned to the ashram around 7.30 pm and had dinner at 8 PM. We sat outside on the ashram grounds for some time with Aroopanandaji and then retired.

Next morning we left early to go back to Allahabad. We stopped for breakfast on the way. It was interesting to see that the common breakfast in the area was hot jilebi with yogurt and another item was aloo chop. We tasted both the items and continued the journey to reach Allahabad.

Triveni Sangam

Before going back to the ashram we stopped at the sangam. Three holy rivers – the Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati are in confluence at the sangam and a dip at the point of confluence is considered very auspicious. We had to go by boat to the point of confluence where there was another boat that served as a bathing ghat. We had to transfer to that boat to have a dip and then got back to our boat to return to the banks. We visited another Hanuman temple before going back to the ashram.

Chitrakoot

The next day's trip was to Chitrakoot. It is the hilly area in a beautiful forest where Lord Rama lived with Mother Sita and Lakshmana for quite a good period of time during his vana vasa. The place was very scenic and beautiful. Here the river is Mandakini. There were many beautiful spots.

Ram Ghat on the banks of River Mandakini is a most frequented place that is a center of ritual activity and the evening arati is really beautiful.

Hanuman Dhara is waters of a natural spring on a

steep hill side that cascade over an image of Hanuman.

Janaki Kund is another place of interest. It is an unusual cave over the river Mandakini where Mother Sita is said to have taken her bath in the clear waters of Mandakini during her stay at Chitrakut.

Sphatik Shila is a few kilometers from Janaki Kund. It is a very picturesque spot with two huge rocks with flattened tops, believed to be the place where Rama and Sita relaxed and enjoyed the beauty of Chitrakoot. The incident of Kakasura is also supposed to have taken place there.

Kamada Giri - Then we went to Kamada Giri, a forested hill of prime religious significance; this is believed to be the original Chitrakoot. The Bharat Milap Temple is located here where Bharata is said to have met Sri Rama to persuade him to return to Ayodhya. Pilgrims perform a ritual circumambulation of the hill to seek blessings.

Gupta Godavari is 18 Km from the town. There are two caves one is high and wide but with a narrow entrance and the other is long and narrow

with a stream of water of a tiny rivulet running along it. The source of the rivulet remains a mystery. It is said River Godavari came to see Lord Rama here. There are a couple of natural throne like rocks in the cave that are believed to be where Rama and Lakshmana held court.

Sati Anasuya Ashrama is located 16 km from the town. A very peaceful place in the midst of thick forests and river Mandakini flowing nearby. Atri muni, his wife Anasuya and their three sons are said to have meditated here. Rama along with his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana is said to have visited this place.

Rajapur the birth place of Goswami Tulsidas, the author of the famous Ramacharita Manasa is also here.

Visiting all these places we returned to Allahabad and left for Varanasi the next day. The pilgrimage to Ayodhya was a very fulfilling trip which reminded one of Lord Rama an incarnation of Dharma personified in every step. No wonder it is said about Ramayana that each letter of the great epic can destroy the greatest sin.

MYTHS AND METAPHORS

DEVI MAHATMYA



THE TEACHERS AND SEEKERS OF THE CHANDI

In this text, Rishi Medha describes the glory of the Divine Mother to Suratha, a king, and Samadhi, a businessman. This was retold by Sage Markandeya to his disciple Kraushtuki. Later on, as directed by the sage, the four wise birds (*pakshi*), the offsprings of Dharma (the lord of values and virtues), taught the contents to Jaimini. The entire text is ultimately compiled by sage Vyasadeva.

Just as in the Bhagavad Gita, the teacher is the Lord

and Arjuna is the student or the disciple, here, rishi Medha is the guru-preceptor and Suratha and Samadhi are the disciples. And just as the Bhagavad Gita is taught and narrated in three different places and at three different times (the battlefield, the palace of Hastinapura, and in the cave of the Himalayas near Badrinath), the Chandi is likewise set in the ashram of Rishi Medha, in the Himalayas (between Markandeya and Kraushtuki), and in the Vindhya

Mountains (the four wise birds to Jaimini).

As every scripture has its significance on three different levels physical, metaphysical, and spiritual similarly the Markandeya Purana in general, and the Chandi in particular, have multiple levels of significance.

On the ordinary level, Suratha, the king, and Samadhi, the businessman, portrayed in the Chandi are real historical personalities. Suratha was reincarnated as the Manu much later on. Metaphysically, the Chandi depicts the glory of the Divine Mother's elimination of the asuric forces – the negative and extroverted power on Earth. Spiritually, the Chandi elaborately describes the inner battle, the struggle to attain the state of perfection, which requires individual effort and divine grace.

In the Mundaka Upanishad (1:2:12), the rishi reveals the goal of life:

“Having scrutinized the worlds won by works let a *brahmana* arrive at non-attachment. The (world) that is not made is not (won) by what is done. For the sake of this

knowledge, let him only approach, with sacrificial fuel in his hand, a teacher who is learned in the scriptures and established in Brahman.”

Experience is the best teacher. Without experience to reveal reality, there is only imagination and fantasy. When imagination ends, realization begins, because reality exposes the bitter truth of life. Through one's own practical experience, one gains firmness in life. This is why emphasis is laid on a practical lifestyle. Science and spirituality have a common factor in the practical application of knowledge. But whereas science conducts its practical experiments in the four corners of a laboratory, the practice of spirituality takes place in the open field of life in everyday activities.

The Chandi is a practical book on spiritual life, evolution, and attainment of the desired result. In common experience, the mind and the memory, which are very flexible and sometimes extremely volatile, reveal affection or aversion. Memory takes us back into the past, while the mind with hope and expectation dreams of a better future, thus making it difficult

for a person to remain in the present. Reality is sometimes sweet, sometimes sour, and even extremely bitter at times. Having tasted the bitter reality of life, King Suratha and Samadhi, the businessman, were still not in a firm state of balance and harmony. Who can really help someone who is facing such turmoil in life?

The answer is the guru-preceptor. The Mundaka Upanishad (1:2:12) states, *sa gurum eva abhigachchhet*, which means, "Let the seeker proceed to a qualified teacher, a guru-preceptor." Here the guru is not an individual but an ideal - a personification of practical experience, strong and stable enough to speak the reality of life. Such a person, being firmly established in truth, makes no compromise with the truth.

In the Chandi, Suratha and Samadhi represent the worthy seekers and Rishi Medha an able teacher. The two seekers, facing similar problems but in two different situations, were eager to know reality and so approached the guru-preceptor named Medha.

Medha literally means, "intellect and wisdom" as well as "brilliance of knowledge". Such knowledge is not merely book knowledge; rather it signifies a person with practical and dynamic wisdom. Knowledge is always borrowed and collected, as the bee collects honey from flower to flower. When we live with self-discipline, with clarity of mind and intellect, and with adherence and apprenticeship to the guru-preceptor, this knowledge is gradually transformed to wisdom and applied in our daily life.

Medha is also derived from *medh*, which mean "to burn, kill, and sacrifice." In the fire of knowledge, one is to burn the weakness of ignorance. In the ceremony of life, one has to kill and sacrifice once weaknesses, one's animal qualities such as fear, anger, and other negative tendencies. In this way one becomes strong and firm on the path of truth, for this path is not for the weak or the timid. Rishi Medha further personifies pure love, practical wisdom, and a dynamic life, like a burning fire.

THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI

Sutra 8

False Knowledge

*viparyayo mithyajnanam
atadрупapratistham //8//*

Word Meaning

viparyaya – error, mistake, and false knowledge; *mithyajnanam* – false knowledge, wrong inference; *atadрупapratistham* – not to be established in the true form or nature of something.

Translation

Wrong knowledge is false knowledge, which is not based upon the true knowledge of the object.

Commentary by Shri Lahiri Mahasaya

Non-consideration of false as false, that is, to consider false to be true, is a real error called *viparyaya* (false knowledge) or *viparita bodha* (wrong experience).

Metaphorical Explanation

In this sutra, the second type of *vritti* (mental modification) is defined and described. This *vritti* is called *viparyaya* (error). The object

of discussion (*lakshya*) in this sutra is to understand error, false knowledge, and their nature (*lakshana*). The sage has used the expression *atadрупapratistham*, which means to deviate from reality and to be established in a misleading state. In this sutra, the cause and effect relationship is also nicely pointed out.

To understand this sutra completely, one should understand three concepts in Vedic literature: *sat*, *mithya*, and *asat*. *Sat* means “truth or reality,” *mithya* means “false,” and *asat* means “unreal.” To comprehend this triple terminology, one must understand the three periods of time: past, present, and future. That which exists across all three periods of time, such as the soul and God, is *sat* (real, or eternally true). That which is absent from the three periods of time is *asat* (unreal, never true) – for example, the child of a barren lady or the horn of a rabbit. That which is existent in one or two of the periods, but not all three, is *mithya*

(false, or temporarily present) – for example, all material objects, even the body and physical relationships, and all creation that we see, are false or only temporarily present.

Now from a behavioral viewpoint, all the things that one encounters are continuously undergoing change and modification. All that changes is false or impermanent; that which is changeless is real and eternal.

Every object (thing) or living being has five qualities or characteristics:

asti (*sat*) – existence

bhati (*chit*) – consciousness or knowledge

priya (*ananda*) – bliss, perfect joy, or peace

nama – name

rupa – form

Out of these five qualities, the first three are changeless or real, but the last two are false, because they change continuously. For example, a child has the combination of soul and body. Without soul, the body is dead. The body cannot grow, behave consciously, or even exist without the soul. The body cannot give joy or pleasure

without the soul. The soul has all the three qualities: *asti* (*sat*), *bhati* (*chit*), and *priya* (*ananda*) – existence, consciousness, and bliss.

The body also has the other two qualities: name and form. This name was not given before birth and the form is always under modification and continuous change.

The soul is *sat* and the body is *mithya*. Because of the union of body and soul, the body appears to be alive, beautiful, and pleasant. People mistakenly consider themselves to be the body, not the soul. The false inference that one is male or female, young or old, sick or healthy, rich or poor, intelligent or dull, tall or short occurs because of the erroneous belief that “I am the body. I feel my existence as the body.” People generally do not understand that they are the soul (*so-ham*), not the body. To experience the soul is *tad-rupam* (real form). Not to experience the soul and to be engrossed in body consciousness is *atad-rupam* – to deviate from reality. This is called *mithya-jnanam*, or false knowledge and inference. The cause of such false knowledge is a lack of right understanding and experience.

Meditation brings experience of the Self, and through meditation one is able to follow the path of right action. Where there is light, there is no darkness or fear. Light enables us to see everything clearly.

In the dark night, one may mistake a rope for a snake or a post for a ghost. But with light, the snake, and the fear arising out of wrong inference of the snake, disappears. Similarly, with the dawning of inner light through meditation and right action, one will continuously realize that “I am the soul, *sat-chit-ananda*, eternal and deathless, beautiful and blissful.”

This *viparyaya vritti* – idea of false inference – brings much trouble in daily life. Spiritual experience or enlightenment enables one to see everything clearly, with the help of the eye of wisdom, with the light of the Self.

O Seeker! Your stay in this world is not permanent. Live in the world, but know that your stay is temporary. Do not allow ignorance or falsehood to overpower you. Be free from the illusory effect of life. Be firm in knowledge. Pray sincerely to be free from the ignorance that leads to all troubles.



Balashram Programme IIKYS

VALUABLE VOLUMES



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

TAPPING THE SOURCE (From *THE UNIVERSE WITHIN*)

.....Throughout the preceding pages, I have tried to stress the importance of self-knowledge. Scientists, psychologists, and physicians have been constantly amazed and bewildered through the ages by the miracles which human beings are capable of. The superhuman strength displayed by mothers who lift cars to save their children, the uncanny instincts which warn us of danger or betrayal, the unbelievable acts of heroism demonstrated by people in times of distress or calamity and all the everyday common place miracles of kindness, creativity, scientific achievement, technological breakthroughs and spiritual love are apparent everywhere we turn.

The Human Miracle

How are all these

miracles possible? While God's universe is a phenomenon beyond description filled with rare and beautiful wonders, it is far surpassed by the constant wonders streaming forth from our own inner universe. Human beings are capable of tremendous things, not just heroes or geniuses or artists, but ordinary human beings, each of whom has the potential for unlimited achievement.

Hidden Treasures

There was a man who had four sons. By his hard work the father was wealthy. The sons were idle and were enjoying the wealth of the father without realizing the value of self effort. As the father grew old he was concerned about the future of his idle sons. As he lay on his death bed he told his sons that he had buried

some treasure in his land and they could explore and use it. The father died. The sons started exploring for the treasure. At first they tried digging her and there and did not find anything. Then they decided to dig though the whole land and still did not find anything. The time of monsoon was approaching and one of them said, "Since we cultivated the land why not sow the seeds?" "So they did that and in course of time it yielded a beautiful golden harvest. They realized that must be the treasure the father was talking about as there was no other treasure. Life is land and when cultivated would yield the treasures lying dormant in us

Most of our energy lies untapped, because rather than looking into the source, we spend our precious time searching for answers outside of ourselves. Meditation is the key with which we can unlock the treasures buried deep within us, which can transform our lives from ordinary to extraordinary. We can be successful in every arena of our lives, living rich, full and powerful lives filled with love and happiness.

By spending a few minutes each day stilling our active minds, shutting down our overactive senses and listening quietly to the voice within, we can tap the source within us and emerge with the unending bliss we have been searching for all our lives.

Dive Deep, Fly High

At one time owning land was considered prestigious. People tried to own as much territory as possible. Soon they even crossed the seas to acquire lands on the other side. Then they discovered the treasures underground which lead to digging and mining and discovering precious metals. Then came diving into the sea for hidden treasures. These activities of mining and diving are associated with a special techniques of breathing as the breath has to be regulated a certain way to be able to do these. It symbolically tells us that if you want spiritual treasures you should learn the art of breath control and self control. Human mind is not happy with superficial gains and pleasures. It wants to dive deep and fly high to find the treasures of soul. Remaining in the soul center one can go down to the

lower centers of earth and water or fly high into the fontanel to tap the real source of joy and pleasure.

A man was walking on the street and on his way he found a dazzling stone which looked precious. He took it to a jeweler for an estimate and it was indeed a valuable gem and he became rich over night. From that day onwards he was always looking down while walking in the hope of finding another stone that would make him richer. He was getting old and one day as he was walking he found another stone which was even more dazzling than the previous one and picked it up only to realize that it was just a piece of broken glass that was reflecting the brilliance of the sun. Surprised he looked up to see the beautiful shining sun and the sky. He did not remember seeing anything so beautiful in a long long time. He threw away the piece of glass and from that day onwards he started looking up. This is human life. We do have to look down some times but should remember to look up also.

Stop the Play of Mind

Tapping the source is

possible only if we can stop the play of mind. Mind is the cause of trouble. Mind is always restless and unless it is controlled in a regulated way it will not be possible to tap the source.

Kingdom of Heaven

Every religion believes there is a Kingdom of heaven and also a territory of hell. Heaven where one is rewarded for the meritorious acts and hell the place of punishment for the sins committed. They believe these are outside. Heaven and hell are both within us. The region from *ajna* to *sahasrara*, the cave of the cranium is the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus said at three different places in the Bible

The kingdom of heaven is near.

The kingdom of heaven is at your hand.

The kingdom of heaven is within you.

The journey to the kingdom of heaven is the way of experiencing peace, bliss and joy.

People are afraid of hell. In the Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna said there are three

doors to hell. Kama (passion) Krodha (anger) and lobha (greed). If one can close these three doors one can enter the kingdom of heaven.

Blissful State

Happiness is the be all and end all of life. Happiness is not a time bound enjoyment or pleasure. It is a continuous state of inner peace. We should be happy all the time.

Upanishad says,

We are born in bliss, live in bliss and merge in bliss. By exploring all the chakras and spending a few minutes each day stilling our active minds, shutting down our overactive senses and listening quietly to the voice within, we can tap the source within us and emerge with the unending bliss we have been searching for all our lives.



Deva Mandir at Gurukulam

PRADAKSHINA - THE HOLY WALK AROUND THE SHRINE

(From *MYSTICISM OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS*)

Pradakshina refers to circumambulation in the sanctum sanctorum. It is a practice in many religions. People go to church, temple, mosque, and so on, and move around the holy place or shrine or altar. Moving around is a common practice, and in Sanskrit it is known as *pradakshina*.

Pradakshina has multiple meanings. It comes from the word *daksha*, which means perfection or to be perfect. We all want to progress in our life. *Pradakshina*, or circumambulation around the shrine, invokes more love and devotion in the heart and mind, invoking strength for perfection.

Pradakshina also comes from the word *dakshina*, which means “in the right” – keeping on the right side. Hindus walk in the temple keeping the temple or the deity on the right.

Pradakshina can be *puṇapradakshina* (complete circle) or *ardhapradakshina* (semi-circle). Usually in the

temples of Lord Shiva, worshippers do *ardha pradakshina*, because they do not want to make a complete circle. In other temples they do *puṇa pradakshina*, making a complete circle.

What is the significance of keeping the deities to the right? It is a clockwise rotation. When you walk keeping the deities, temple, or altar of a holy place to your right, the right hand is usually performing most of the activities, which signifies that “in all my activities I will not forget you.”

Pradakshina is in every footstep. *Padena anuvindet* – in every footstep remember God. When you walk around the temple or around the sanctum sanctorum, you should also remember that wherever you are walking, you are walking around Divinity. Whether you are walking on the street, walking in the park, walking in your house, or even walking to a restroom, you have to remember God’s presence.

If there is no possibility to walk after the prayer and worship, a devotee sometimes moves around in a circle with folded hands, chanting a mantra:

*yani kani cha papani
janmantara kritani cha*

*tani tani vinashyati
pradakshina pade pade,*

“Whatever mistakes have been committed in this life or before, let all be eliminated by this circumambulation.”

The soul is the center of your life and you are moving around the soul, around Divinity. There is a mythological story about Lord Ganesha moving around Mother Parvati and Lord Shiva, who were said to be the center of the universe. By walking around them he had moved around the universe. One, who moves around the center, moves around the circumference, because without the center there is no circumference.

So move around, pray to God that whatever mistakes have been committed, let them be eliminated. Mistakes are not for mistakes, they are for correction. Thus, *pradakshina*, or circumambulation, is to walk in every step of our life bringing perfection, keeping God on our right, keeping our mind in God, always being alert of the indwelling divinity. Every physical and mental activity is movement, and all activities should be centered around God.

In yogic practices there is also inner or mental circumambulation, involving the use of the breath and remembering God. It is an inner rotation of the breath around the spinal centers. The creation is also rotating. For example, the planets rotate around the sun to get energy. When you rotate around Divinity, you get the energy of peace, love, harmony, joy, and bliss in your life. This is *pradakshina*.

STORIES TO LIVE BY

THE GLORY OF GOD

(From *Pebbles from the Pond*)

In the past, people used to be more afraid of God and of going to hell. However, even today there are people who fear God. There is a wonderful story about Yoganandaji, who one day was walking by the seaside on the west coast of the USA. He had been walking for quite some time and had become very hungry, so he decided to look for somewhere that he might get something to eat. Soon he came upon an old house, and he walked up the steps and knocked on the door.

An elderly man slowly opened the door, looking very worried and unhappy. He was not too pleased that Yoganandaji was knocking on his door. Earlier that day the man had gone to church and heard about how people are punished after death, by burning in hellfire for the sins they committed while on earth. He had a lot of anxiety about what was in store for his son, who was unruly and did not obey him.

Yoganandaji asked him why he was unhappy. Surprised,

and a little suspicious, he replied, "How do you know that I am unhappy?"

Yoganandaji looked at him and said, "I know you are unhappy because your son does not obey you. If you listen to me for a moment, I will tell you what you can do about it."

Desperate for a solution, the old man agreed to listen to Yoganandaji's plan.

"Here is what you do," said the wise sage. "Get some of your friends to come over to your house and build a big fire. Then, invite your son for lunch. When he arrives, ask your friends to help you tie him up. And when he is securely bound, carry him outside and throw him into the fire."

Shocked and appalled by Yoganandaji's seemingly heartless advice, the old man angrily said, "Are you a devil? Let my son not obey me. I will never throw him into hellfire!"

In a calm, soft voice, Yoganandaji then said. "If you have so much love for your

son, just imagine how much more love, God our Heavenly Father, has for us. How can He possibly throw his children into the hellfire?"

The man was surprised that Yoganandaji knew his inner fears. Deeply impressed by Yoganandaji's wisdom, the man understood that these were the words of a spiritual master who had firm faith in God's love and compassion. It relieved him of his agony and greatly comforted his heart.

Reflection

God loves us very much and He gives us many chances to grow. As a child, I always wondered why God did not give

instant punishment when a sin was committed. I thought that the world would be a better place, because people would be afraid to sin. Then one day as I was praying in a temple, God's answer came to me, "My child, I love each and every one. I give them all an opportunity to grow. If I gave instant punishment, would not my entire creation be crippled and handicapped?"

Every breath is the love of God. Through this we are alive and working. Understanding this, we will be realized. We are the children of God. God gives many opportunities for us to evolve and grow.



Gurudev
in the West

ATMA-VIDYA

SELF KNOWLEDGE

KAIVALYOPANISHAD

Mantra 15

*yetasmat jayate prano manah sarvendriyani ca
kham vayur jyotirapah prthivi visvasya dharini*

Meanings

yetasmat- From this (God), *jayate*-is born, *prano*-vital air, *manah* –mind, *sarva*-all, *indriyani*-senses, *ca*-also, *kham*-sky, *vayur*-air, *jyoti*-fire, *apah*-water, *prthivi* –earth, *visvasya*-the world, *dharini*-bears

Substance

From God are born the vital air, mind, all the senses and the sky, air, fire, water, and the earth that bears everything.

Commentary

For one who experiences the *akhanda bodha*, from this is born the vital air, mind, and all the senses.

yetasmat is a beautiful expression which is also found in the Taittiriya Upanishad where the description of the

creation is found. *yetasmat* means from this and here it means from God. *jayate* means born the breath, the mind and all the senses and the five elements of sky, air, fire, water and earth. A person, who is awakened with an unbroken consciousness of who he is, perceives everything to be born from God. The order goes from the subtle to the gross- from the vital air and mind to the senses and the five elements and an adjective is used for the earth as the support for all the creativity. Even within the body all the five elements are present as earth in the *muladhara*, water in the *svadhishtana*, fire in the *manipura*, air in the *anahata* and sky in the *vishuddha*-.all these are also coming from god.

PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

LOOKING INTO LAXMI'S EYES

Jyothi Bathina

Although we only met for a brief while and are now thousands of miles apart, Laxmi the elephant compels me with her liquid eyes and her raised trunk to tell her story. On a recent trip to India we visited Kerala, otherwise known as God's country, lush, green, tropical, filled with amazing scenic beauty and known for its loving and tolerant people, where mosque, temple and church stood side by side. Having visited the Periyar Tiger Reserve in the morning, we took a jeep ride to a spice plantation and then went to see the elephants. When my husband and I walked into the park on that sunny afternoon, we saw three elephants at a distance, each in their massive outdoor stalls, swaying their big bodies from side to side and grazing. I looked at all three and then suddenly found myself staring straight into the incredibly wise eyes of the third. The words "I love you" came unbidden to my lips and I repeated them to her across the distance. My husband immediately began chanting a prayer and she locked her gaze on us and for

what seemed an eternity, the three of us looked at each other, and then as I stood bewildered by the euphoria, excitement and wonder the encounter caused within me, Laxmi, as I later found the elephant was called, slowly lifted her trunk in a reverent motion that seemed to come from her very soul. "Namaste" she seemed to say. "My soul salutes the Divinity within you." Overwhelmed and feeling my heart burst with love for this creature, I grabbed my husband's arm, repeating "Did you see that, did you see that?" He had not only seen it but was murmuring a prayer at the time, equally overwhelmed by the encounter. It is a moment neither of us shall ever forget.

There were plenty of salutes later on, performances driven by the mahout's stick, shows of strength and obedience by all three elephants, carrying visitors on their backs, lifting giant tree branches in their mouths, lying down in the water so we could give them a bath, but while those were exciting to watch and experience, nothing could match the unsolicited,

completely spontaneous interaction between us, that little private moment when we looked into each other's eyes.

There was such wisdom in Laxmi's eyes. Her 17 years had taught her quite a bit. She wore a heavy chain around her left rear leg and I could see the skin was broken where the metal chafed day after day as she performed her duties, entertaining visitors. She worked without complaint, carrying the constant stream of visitors back and forth across the park, dragging huge tree trunks to demonstrate her strength. Laxmi, the guide told us, however, had a mind of her own. While she was obedient most of the time, she still liked stopping once in a while to investigate some new wonder on the road, nearly tipping her human load over in the process, or smiling with a wicked gleam in her eyes as she doused visitors who climbed on her back with streams of water from her trunk. She was happy to grab the fruits we fed her with her trunk, gobbling them up and coming back eagerly for more.

My husband and I refused to ride on the elephants, unwilling to burden them further, and waited patiently while the others ventured out, content to

feed them and then bathe them when they returned, to show our gratitude for their patient service.

When I asked the guide why these seemingly gentle creatures needed to wear chains, the guide told us that sometimes elephants would snap and attack tourists. When I thought of the elephant we had seen earlier at the temple, blessing hundreds of visitors within just a few hours, patting them on their heads and taking the money they offered, handing it obediently to his master, surrounded by the clamor of giant crowds, loudspeakers blaring religious music, the sun pounding fiercely down on his head and with no respite from the work he had to do, all the while chained and in pain, I was not surprised. What surprised me in fact was that these poor animals continued to tolerate our nonsense, and repay it with incredible loyalty. They cannot bear to see their mahouts in distress, the guide explained, often sensing their unhappiness and gently wiping away their tears with their trunks. This last bit of insight nearly reduced me to tears. What noble creatures these were, who repaid cruelty and exploitation with loyalty, hard work and affection! How could we

continue to treat them this way? I was glad when I thought of the Tiger Reserve we visited in the morning, where hundreds of wild elephants roamed free, untrammelled by chains and unfettered by hard labor. Much as we had hoped to get a glimpse of a tiger or an elephant that morning, all we had seen were the mounds of elephant dung from their earlier visits to the stream for water. Little wonder that they hid from our eyes, since humans spelled nothing but trouble.

The experience at the elephant park made me think anew about our relationship with all living creatures. We hunt wild animals for their tusks, or for their medicinal properties, or merely to have as trophies, we round up dolphins and kill them for sport, we club baby seals for their skin, we taunt and torture bulls for kicks, and the list of ways in which we exploit and abuse animals goes on, much longer than I care to imagine.

Perhaps it seems trivial to worry about animals when there are so many human beings suffering in the world, being exploited, being abused. But I don't think we can separate the two. I think all suffering is equally insufferable,

and all creatures equally worthy of love, compassion and respect.

My encounter with Laxmi came at the end of an incredibly intense and emotion filled trip where I reconnected with the beautiful children of Balashram, many of whom were once victims of exploitation, abuse and neglect themselves. Those children had blossomed and were now bursting with life and hope and vigor. We had celebrated the launch of their book of stories together. The children served for me as a testament to the power of love and compassion to reignite dignity and hope.

As I looked at Laxmi, who despite her captivity and burdened days, continued to find joy in little things, and continued to send out a steady flow of love and compassion, I was inspired to work hard and to find joy in my daily routine, to continue to love those I encountered, and to maintain my dignity in all circumstances. I was inspired as well to reconnect with all creatures around me from the birds in my garden to the dogs waiting for me back home, to the cows and the goats we saw wandering the streets of India, with a new level of respect and reverence.

Laxmi's solemn gaze had reminded me that all of us are one, fragments of the same Divinity, hidden in multiple forms. How can we treat any of those forms with anything less than the greatest respect?

They say elephants never forget. I fervently hope that they can forgive. We shall certainly never forget Laxmi, or the incredible moment when we gazed straight into each other's eyes and recognized the common Spirit within.



New Health Centre at Jagatpur, Cuttack, Odisha

THE SACRED COW

Go Seva, Go Samvardhana and Go Vijnana

Gavah Visvasya Matarah -

Since Vedic period cow is considered a Mother and the support of all Vedas. We were proud of our cattle wealth. About 20% of the world cow population is in India even today. The pure bred Indian cow yielded milk that was not only rich in nourishment but also had medicinal value in curing many diseases. Not just milk, but everything of the cow like ghee and curd made from cow's milk, even cow's urine, and cow dung are all edible and are of medicinal value.

Over time some developments in the cross-breeding and neglect of the Indian cows resulted in negative effects both for the cows and humanity.

Issue 1: Type of milk: Now there is increasing awareness in the world about the difference and effects of A1 and A2 cows and the milk products from them. The cows in USA and Europe ((Holstein / Jersey cows) are mostly A1 variety. Until recently most cows

in India and Africa are A2 type. Some countries (large suppliers of worlds dairy products) like New Zealand and Australia and some European countries like Denmark have started shifting to A2 cows and milk and we heard they are importing Indian cows/bulls and semen.

What is A2 milk? Dr Keith Woodward in 2009 published a book on this subject with the title (The Devil in the Milk). Milk is nature's best supplier of healthy protein. 95 percent of milk protein is casein and whey protein. In casein, beta casein has excellent balance of amino acids. Over years of mutation/cross breeding, beta casein A1 has become more predominant in the western cows (Holstein / Jersey) and passed on to all through the cross breeding (for improved yield). At an alarming rate (with systematic elimination of Indian bulls (some states even legalized it) for the high yielding Holstein / Jersey variety) milk in Indian markets is becoming A1 instead of the

beneficial A2 type. The difference between A1 and A2 type of casein is one amino acid in position 67 in the protein chain of 209 amino acids. A1 has histadine and A2 has proline. Proline in A2 is very stable, but histadine in A1 breaks easily causing the further degradation of beta casein into beta cosomorphine BCM7, the proven culprit of many health problems. A2 is stable.

Population which consumes beta casein A2 variety have a lower incidence of cardiovascular diseases and type 1 diabetes. A1 is also linked to coronary heart diseases, arteriosclerosis, sudden infant death syndrome, autism, schizophrenia etc. Research is still going on to validate these findings, but the panic has set in the world markets. Now A2 milk is available in Australia and New Zealand at 4 times the price of normal milk.

Issue 2: Neglect of older and unproductive cows.

Many of you have noticed cows standing or resting in the middle of the roads in India and is a very pathetic and dangerous practice of the cows owners to let them out there.

You cannot move them from there without causing a fight with the owners. When the cows become unproductive, they are sent to slaughter house. In an autopsy of a bull, that recently died several kilo grams of plastic waste was found in its stomach.

Issue 3: Utilization of cow products

It is not surprising that there is really no waste product from cows. Our ancient Hindu heritage has shown that every item from cow has been used for the well being of humanity. Now the Western countries have started research and commercializing their use for fertilizers, biogas etc. For example Denmark has started a plant in 2012 to process about half a million tons of biomass. Fair Oaks Farms in Fair Oaks, Indiana, USA has over 36,000 cows in about 30,000 acres of land (one of the largest in the world!) and of course millions of gallons of manure on site. They are seriously putting that to use and produce their own energy and fuel their 42 tractor trailers on site by Anaerobic Digestion. Manure is put in a sealed digester vessel, heated to 100 F at which the bacteria

produce methane and CO₂, which is called biogas. Cleaned to remove CO₂ using water and pressure to create the renewable biogas. It is estimated that there is about 1.5 to 2 trillion (million millions) of unclaimed cow manure in USA. There was an interesting seminar in USA in 2012 about the use of cow dung in India. Cow dung is used as cooking fuel, sanitizing cleaner, construction material, insulating and waterproofing walls in rural houses, in religious worship, production of organic compost and generating electricity.

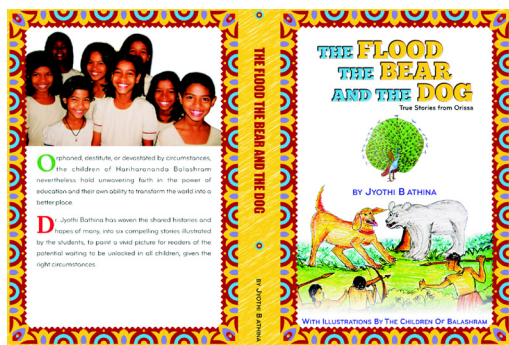
Cow urine is considered as an Alexir of life and is used as a natural remedy for liver and heart conditions, balancing physical and mental strength, balancing bile, mucous and air and so on. There is a growing list in the 101 uses of cow products. Our ancient Ayurvedic texts contained many useful products from cows. In Ahmedabad, with over 300 cows in one location, they are doing intensive research

developing health products from cow dung and urine.

Baba Prajnananandaji has taken up an intensive campaign to educate people of rural Orissa regarding Go Seva (spiritual significance of cows), Go Samvardhana (proper breeding and maintenance of cows) and Go Vijnana (cow product related research). Programs are organized to cover 34 places in the thirty districts of Odisha over a period of three months. The emphasis of the campaign is to encourage each village to have a model Go Shala on a small scale which can demonstrate the proper breeding, maintenance of the cows and full utilization of cow products at all stages of the cow's life. The above measures will be implemented in our asram goshala. In addition, a 10 acre land at the back of Hariharananda Gurukulam is designated as Go Abhayaranya (Cow Shelter) with plans to construct four sheds to accommodate 500 stray and abandoned cattle.

BALASHRAM NEWS

New Children's Book Release



On January 6th, 2014- a children's book of stories based on the personal narratives of impoverished children from Hariharananda Balashram was released by Dr. Jyothi Bathina of California State University. She has been working with Hariharananda Balashram for the past five years, training teachers and working with students to develop functional, academic and critical literacy. The hard cover book contains six short stories that are a compilation of several stories the children shared with the author regarding their individual journeys before coming to the school. Each story contains breathtaking full color illustrations by the children themselves. The poignant and heartbreaking stories of poverty,

struggle, and hardship all end with the hopeful outlook of children who have finally found a home in Balashram. Each child is now surrounded by love, comfort, spiritual guidance, and the opportunities provided by a rigorous education.

The event took place at Shailabala Women's College at Cuttack, Odisha, in the divine presence of Paramahansa Prajnanananda, the founder of Hariharananda Balashram. The Chief Guest was Shri Anup Kumar Patnaik, Chairman, Odisha Public Service Commission and the Guest of Honor was Sri Satyakam Mishra, Director of Higher Education. Principals and heads of many academic institutions attended the program.

EDUCATION OF THE MIND AND THE SOUL

(A Visit to Hariharananda Balashram, Odisha, India)

Karen DeVoogd

"There are some parts of the world that, once visited, get into your heart and won't go. For me, India is such a place. When I first visited, I was stunned by the richness of the land, by its lush beauty and exotic architecture, by its ability to overload the senses with the pure, concentrated intensity of its colors, smells, tastes, and sounds. I had been seeing the world in black & white and, when brought face-to-face with India, experienced everything re-rendered in brilliant technicolor."

Keith Bellows, National Geographic Society.

Keith Bellows has captured my reflection on my recent visit to India. I too was stunned by the richness and beauty of the land, the ancient architecture and the people. The beauty of the fabrics and grandeur of the temples were awe inspiring however, these are dwarfed when compared to the richness in the "the color" of the souls of many people we encountered. As I revisit our experiences and tell of our adventures, the stories that are more often told are of the spirit of kindness and humble generosity of our many hosts. I write this with some caution, hoping that this limited description will appropriately communicate the respect and

awe that I feel for those who welcomed us and shared their world so freely. To say the experiences were profoundly moving is an understatement and I'm surprised at how difficult it is to appropriately capture the full emotion and impact of the visit.

I had the good fortune to travel to India with colleagues from Fresno State to visit schools and teacher preparation programs in various cities. Dr. Jyothi Bathina arranged for the travels and visits. The highlight of the trip was when we got a glimpse into the work she had been doing with students who are attending a boarding school at the Hariharananda Balashram. Dr. Bathina had

collaborated with teachers and students there for a number of years and recently she published a book with students as part of her "Literate Voices" project, titled *The Flood, the Bear, and the Dog*. We got in on this most auspicious occasion when the book was presented to the young authors and teachers and other friends of the Balashram.

Our travels to Hariharananda Balashram from Bhubaneswar foreshadowed a day that would be unlike any other I had ever experienced. Our bus was diverted from the main highway as government Opposition Party supporters in the state of Odisha staged a strike, blocking the highway we needed to travel with many large transport trucks. Our bus was re-directed to go down a small road that ran near the main highway. It actually was a turn of tremendous good luck to have to take this detour. We got to see the beautiful villages along the way up much more closely. We watched people as they worked at harvesting rice and other tasks of tending fields and gardens. In one small village, we were greeted by local residents, who were curious about our large bus

passing through. One man stepped to the middle of the intersection and held up his hand bringing our bus to a halt. We assumed this was an act of solidarity with the others striking and blocking the main highway. The crowd began to grow around this man and a sort of standoff began. Our bus driver and guide attempted to negotiate with the man but he was not to be moved. He crossed his arms and stood his ground showing full commitment to keeping the bus from going through. There were suggestions made that someone might just pull the man to the side and we could carry on. Thankfully, this wasn't the solution. A young man with a knit hat and Hindu markings on his forehead emerged from the group and came directly and dramatically to the man who was standing in the road. The young man took the protester's face in his hands in a most gentle and loving way. Whatever was said caused the older man to step aside without anger and he let the bus continue. This was a profound and gentle moment. We had just witnessed an act of peacemaking unlike anything I have ever seen before.

The blessings only got larger that day. One of the Monks Swami Achalananda Giri, Secretary, Prajnana Mission, from the Hariharananda Balashram joined us along the way and provided an escort to our bus leading us from the back of a motorcycle. When we arrived at the ashram, we were greeted as dignitaries and esteemed guests. It quickly became evident that we were in an extraordinary place with extraordinary children working under the guidance and care of extraordinary leaders and teachers. We were taken into the company of the school's Principal and monks to see this oasis that was created to educate and love children from the area who are orphaned or desperately disadvantaged. The children and teachers we met transcend any glowing description I can offer! This was a place full of color and life and love. The children were beautiful in all ways possible. We saw very young children in kindergarten chanting and singing their English lessons. We saw teachers using technology to enhance their lessons with media. We saw studious and focused middle school students hard at the work

of algebra. These children did not look as if they bore the histories of abject poverty and pain that were told in Dr. Bathina's collection in *The Flood, the Bear, and the Dog*. They were thriving now! They learn three languages, they create beautiful art, dance and music. They have daily physical fitness and we even observed a marshal arts class in action. This is a place where the whole child is educated; mind, body, and soul. There was a grace and gentleness in the teachers and leaders that mirrored the peace we had seen on the road. This seems to stem from the mutual respect for all taught by the school founders, the monks.

The monks we had the honor to meet embodied a caring and love for the children that was full and genuine and gorgeous. The simplicity of the lives they live and spiritual depth they show is literally awe inspiring. These are the people that the children describe in their stories that showed them a full-hearted kindness that made the invitation to come to school irresistible. "Akash came closer, a little hesitant but attracted by the man's kind demeanor and gentle voice." I too was captured by the honest beauty

of these spiritual leaders. Their humble smiles and unavoidable warmth welcomes all. It is a charisma that is powerful and yet subtle and light. Dr. Bathina's parents are both monks and we had the excellent good fortune to see their ashram, Hariharananda gurukulam in Puri as well. They are the most beautiful couple I have ever met. Their possessions fit into a colorful sachel and yet they are the richest people I know. They are servant leaders and teachers, dedicated to the transformative power of education. It is an education of the heart and the head, the mind and the soul. It is not just about doing well academically, but doing good to make the lives of others better.

The experience of being in India was overwhelmingly large and I fear this writing is underwhelmingly small in capturing all that it was. I will always hold this time in my mind and soul. I feel as if I was among holy people, some of whom were four years old and some of whom were

advanced in age. You can't be among such beauty and not be transformed. The kindness we were shown was like new color on a pallet. I will stay with the task of making meaning for myself each time I describe the travels we took to others. We were challenged at the end of the trip by one of our colleagues to describe how our work will change because of our experiences. I'm grateful for this prompt as it forced me to synthesize the experience into future action. Here is my response: I will pass on a vision to future educators which challenges them to teach others in their lives, not just to do well, but to do good. I want them to see the full color of kindness, and to understand the power and potential for good in all of their students. I hope to share a bit of India with my students with this calling.

"I had been seeing the world in black & white and, when brought face-to-face with India, experienced everything re-rendered in brilliant technicolor."

Fresno State Faculty
Kremen School of Education
& Human Development

AROUND THE WORLD

INDIA

The months of October and November were busy at the gurukulam with the celebration of Navaratri, coping with cyclone Phailin and celebrating Kartika Purnima with the boat festival.

Boat Festival

The month of Kartika (falls between October and November) and is considered auspicious for the worship of Lord Shiva and also for other spiritual practices. It is also known for celebrating boat festival in Orissa. People of Orissa were doing trade with Middle Eastern islands voyaging over the sea with their merchandise. The boats returned to Orissa during the month of Kartika around the full moon day.

To commemorate this old tradition people of Orissa celebrate boat festival on the full moon day of this month.

Gurukulam celebrated the festival with a predawn

worship on the steps of our pond, Hariharananda Sarovara. A small symbolic boat beautifully constructed and decorated by Swami Nityapremanandaji was set to sail by Swami Aroopanandaji after lighting the lamps that were placed in the boat. The residents participated with chanting and kirtan as the boat gracefully went round the pond. The group later went to GuruMandir with devotional singing and bowed to Gurudev.

Bhagavatam and Go Seva Talks in Puri

Another significant event during this time was the seven day talks of Shri Rajendra Dash, Maluk Peetadhipati of Brindavan in Puri in connection with the punyatithi celebrations of a great saint. The residents of our ashram attended the talks. The opening talk was by Baba followed by many saints and sages who adorned the dais and who attended the program over the week. Our ashram also participated in visiting the

Jagannath temple along with Shri Rajendradashji and his group.

Rajendra Dasji talked of the love of Lord Krishna for the cows, the spiritual significance of cows and the present day need for the protection and service to the cows which are badly neglected. Most saints and sages attending the program also presented their views about this critical problem and how it should be dealt with.

Baba Prajnananandaji was encouraged to spread the Go seva movement in the state of Orissa as we have already taken the preliminary steps to have Goshala in our ashram and are creatively looking into different projects that would remedy the problem.

The Goseva and Goyajna project was taken up in 30 districts of Odisha under the direction of Baba Prajnananandaji.

Dec 1-3 Punyatithi Aradhana of Baba Hariharanandaji

The Mahasamadhi Anniversary of Gurudev was observed with a three day event from Dec 1-3 in the Divine

presence of Baba Prajnananandaji.

Dec 1 was the initiation day and 50 people took Kriya Yoga initiation.

Dec 2 there was Go puja in our Goshala. There was worship of the cows organized by Swami Muktipriyanandaji with chanting of Surabhi mantras. It was beautiful to see the cows dressed up with clothes on their backs and turmeric paste and sindur on their faces and the cows were fed with specially prepared food as per tradition. Then arati was rendered to the cows and Prasad distributed.

Dec 3 the actual day there was a Guru paduka puja at Guru Mandir which was attended by more than 400 disciples. Many ashram residents from our other local ashrams were also present. A havan with Guru Gayatri mantra and devotional singing followed. After the arati and Prasad distribution, all had a chance to bow to Gurudev. There was a guided short meditation at the Guru Mandir.

In the afternoon of Dec 3, a satsang was presided over

by Swami Samarpananandaji. Swamis Matrukrupanandaji, Gurupriyanandaji, Gurukrupanandaji and Yogacharyas Siddheshwar Sahu Baba and Kantha Rao Baba shared their experiences with Gurudev. This was followed by concluding talk of the three day series.

During the three day event each day there was a talk in the afternoon on Gurudev. The first day about Gurudev as a disciple and the qualification of a disciple, the 2nd day on Gurudev as a guru and the qualifications of a Guru and the last day about some significant events of Gurudev's life.

There was a Sadhu Bhandara in the evening with about 150 monks of different orders to commemorate the event. It was a great celebration and those present felt the presence and blessings of Gurudev.

Gita Jayanti

The Birthday of Bhagavad Gita was celebrated on the 15th of December at the Gurukulam with worship and chanting of the Gita.

Other Programs

Hyderabad Kriya Program

A program was held in Hyderabad, with Swami Samarpanananda Giri, Brahmachari Divyananda and Yogacharya Kantha Rao baba. The program was well attended and there were several First and second kriya initiations.

Balashram News

H a r i h a r a n a n d a Balashram, has entered into the 10th year of its operation. 400 students are currently on the rolls. The school is in the process of affiliation with CBSE. The students are flourishing in academics, arts and athletics competing in State level compeetions and winning prizes. Vocational and Basic Skills Development training is being imparted to students of Standard VIII in the areas of Computers & DTP, Plumbing, Tailoring, Bicycle Repair, Hair Cutting and Cooking.

15th IIKYS Jan 14-20

The International Intensive Kriya Yoga Seminar was held at the Gurukulam. The Seminar continued with guest speakers from other ashrams, the resident swamis

and yogacharyas. There was a discourse and a question answer session on each day along with guided meditations which enhanced the spiritual progress of the many participants who attended the seminar. Some of the guest speakers of the satsangs included prominent saints and the King of Puri Gajapati Maharaja. Balashram students presented a multi talented variety entertainment on the evening of Inauguration which was well appreciated. Cultural programs on other days included traditional and tribal Odishi dance and music as well as devotional singing and bhajans. There was also a Guru Purnima celebration during the Seminar which was a special event with Guru Paduka puja and meditation at the Guru Mandir. Both the birthday and the mahasamadhi day of Sannyal Mahashaya were also celebrated during the Seminar.

Foundation day of Matru Ashram – Arua, 31st January

Matru Ashram celebrated 5th foundation day with worship and fire ceremony in the morning and an evening satsang. Talks on Motherhood as an aspect of energy and the

great role of a mother in shaping the future of the country by the invited speakers were inspiring. The event was well attended by the communities of Arua and other villages. The third annual copy of Matru Prerana was released on this occasion.

Saraswati Puja - Feb 4

Saraswati Puja was celebrated on a grand scale at the Gurukulam and at Balashram.

Vishva Shanti Yajna at Ekam Kona Ashram

Our Annual Vishva Shanti Homa was held from 7th to 9th February

Prachi Parikrama Feb 19th -26th

Prachi Parikrama that was started two year back by Prachi Parikrama Charitable Trust supported by Prajnana Mission was held this year also.

Inauguration of the New Health Center

A New complex of Hariharananda Charitable Health Center was inaugurated at Jagatpur by His Holiness Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Govardhan Peeth, Puri Dham, Shri Nischalananda Saraswati

on the 15th of February at 4.30 pm, in the presence of Paramahansa Prajnananandaji and other members of Prajnana Mission. Many dignitaries of medical profession and eminent personalities of community were present who toured the facility.

Proposed and enhanced charitable health activities at the new complex of Hariharananda Charitable Health Center for the poor, deprived, neglected masses will include in addition to the general outpatient department, phase wise introduction of several other outpatient services in specialized fields like Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics, Gynecology and also super specialties' like Neurology, Cardiology and others.

The New Health Center hopes to serve several hundred people of the nearby communities each day with free medicines and treatment.

Gurudev's Bhagavad Gita translated into Odia

Prajnana Mission in collaboration with The Department of Sanskrit, Shailabala Women's College, Cuttack organized a state level seminar on 'Social and Moral Values of Shrimad Bhagavad

Gita' at 11.30 am on 16.02.2014 in Madhusudan Hall on the campus of Shailabala Women's College, Cuttack. During the seminar, a monumental literary work, a commentary on Shrimad Bhagavad Gita in Odia was released and dedicated to the lovers of Holy Gita. The work is a translation of the Bhagavad Gita in the Light of Kriya Yoga written by Paramahansa Hariharananda based on the teachings of Shri Lahiri Mahashaya and Shriyukteshar Giri and compiled by Paramahansa Prajnanananda. The event was attended by many luminaries of both spiritual and social fields.

Shiva Ratri Feb 27

Maha Shivaratri was celebrated at the Gurukulam on the night of 27th Feb with traditional worship of Lord Shiva and a night long vigil spent in worship, devotional singing and meditation at our Deva Mandir.

Upcoming Retreats

ASIA

May-21 to May-25, 2014

Kriya Yoga Retreat in Hariharananda Tapovan, Uttarkashi

Jun-04 to Jun-08, 2014

Kriya Yoga Retreat in
Hariharananda Tapovan,
Uttarkashi

AMERICAS

**9th to 13th April –Higher
Kriya Retreat**

Mother Center USA will
hold the Higher Kriya Retreat
with Swami Atmavidyananda
Giri and other Yogacharyas
from 9th -13 April.

Birthday Seminar May 23-27

Gurudev's Birthday
Seminar and commemoration of
40 years of his coming to West

will be held from 23rd to 27th
May at Mother Centre, USA.

**Inter Faith Conference-May
21 Florida International
University, Miami**

**Inter Faith Conference -
May 22 at Unity Church of
Fort Lauderdale.**

EUROPE

**Higher Kriya retreat
is held from April 26-May 1
May 30 - June 4**

**Seminar to
commemorate Gurudev
coming to West, at Mother
Center Tattendorf.**



Go Seva Project

Visit our web site:

www. prajnanamission.org

For current information.

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