

Sthita Prajna



Guru Vandana

*yatha nijasvabhavena karpurah kunkumadikam
sitoshnadi svabhavena yatha brahma sasvatam
gurudhyanat tatha nityam dehi brahmamaya bhavet
pinde pade tatha rupe muktaste natra samsayah*

Just as smell is inherent and natural to camphor and flowers, and heat and cold is natural to fire and ice, similarly eternity is natural for Brahman. In the same manner, meditating on the guru preceptor, one becomes brahmamaya (all-pervading Brahman). There is no doubt that such a person is the liberated one, in body, breath, and beauty (panda, pada, and rupa).

– Guru Gita Verse 100

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FROM THE EDITORS :

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

Paramahansa Prajnanananda

Year 2013 was a year of great events. Celebration of Gurudev’s 75 years of coming to Puri, the Goyajna at the Gurukulam, the Navaratri Celebrations at the Gurukulam and many events and kriya programs in the ashrams and centers around the world. We had also coped with the flood of Mother Ganga during the Uttara Kashi Retreat and the Cyclone Phailini at Balighai during the Navaratri celebrations. By the Grace of God and gurus we move on to welcome year 2014, to bring more growth in kriya activities, spirituality, love and wisdom under the guidance of our gurus.

“Message of the Master” defines kriya as watching the soul in every breath. With Maha Shivaratri approaching “Prajnana Vani” talks of the divine qualities of Lord Shiva and their inner significance which helps in meditation.

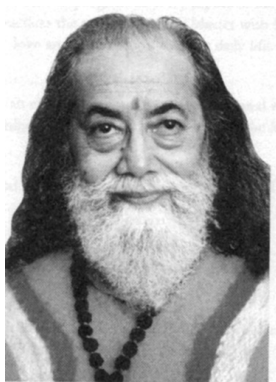
The article on The Tradition of Lord Jagannatha continues bringing to light many unique features of this age old tradition.

Devi Mahatmya elaborates on Divine Motherhood in different religions and the different scriptures on Divine Mother. Patanjali Yoga Sutras comment on three aspects of knowledge. Kaivalya Upanishad discusses the state of continuous awareness that is the substratum of divine bliss.

Excerpts from some of Paramahansa Prajnanananda’s seminal works continue to elaborate on chakras and the body and mind.

We bring you the Christmas and New Year message of Guruji and excerpts from other messages. Around the world covers the happenings and highlights of ashrams across the world and upcoming events. Sthita Prajna wishes the readers a happy and prosperous New Year and thanks the sponsors for their continued support.

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER METAPHYSICS OF KRIYA YOGA



Kriya yoga is a short cut technique for Self- realization (God realization). Kriya can be split into two words: *kri* and *ya*. Any work you are doing is *kri* and that work is done by the power of God (ie indwelling self, *ya*).

Because the power of God is inside your body, constantly inhaling since your birthday, your body remains alive. Because your body is alive, you are able to do some work. So all work you do is really done by the power of God.

It is written in the Bible (Genesis 1:27; 2.7) that God made men and women in His own image and breathed the breath of life into the nostrils

of every human being. So every human being is a living image of God. But we ignore him. We ignore his presence within us. We have to give love to Him. In every breath to watch Him, to feel that the power of God is activating our every action is constant liberation.

The Almighty Lord, having created everything entered into them. In Taittiriya Upanishad (2:6:3) it is written *tat srishtya tadeva anupravishat*. The Almighty Lord is hiding in every human being and is constantly inhaling, thus making us alive. So we are able to perform some actions. Through every action (*kri*) we ought to watch the real doer of the action (*ya*).

The person who thinks he does nothing – although he sees, hears, touches, smells, eats, walks, sleeps, breaths, answers the calls of nature, grasps, opens and closes the eyes, but instead realizes that the power of God does everything is certainly a better person. (see B.G 5:8-9)

Many people do many types of work. But without the soul, without breath, one can do nothing. So to watch the soul in every breath is kriya.

Hinduism has four castes: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. If we analyze subtly, we can find in each being all the four of these castes. A Vedic hymn *Purusha Sukta* 13 declares

*brahmanasyamukhamasit
bahuhrajanyahkrtah*

*urutathasya yad vaisyah
padbhyagm sudrah ajayatah*

brahmanasyamukhamasit – means –above the neck region a person is Brahmin. The mind, intellect, consciousness which leads to super consciousness, cosmic consciousness and wisdom state, remain inside the brain. So the head of each person represents Brahmin.

*Brahmajanati iti
brahmana* –When one's mind is completely merged with the Absolute wisdom by the practice of meditation, one is Brahmin.

bahuhrajanyahkrtah – the hands of a person represent Kshatriya because by the help of the two hands one does work

*urutathasya yad
vaisyah* – The thighs enable a person to walk wherever he wants. So the thighs represent Vaishya or a business man who performs many types of actions by moving around to wherever he wants

*padbhyagm sudrah
ajayatah* - The feet represent Shudra as the feet serve the whole body of a person. Shudra serves the other three classes.

It is quite evident from the above explanation that there are not four different types of castes. These four types of work are being done in one human body by the Almighty Lord (ya). A dead person cannot do any work. A person works because the breath is going on constantly. The breath is inhaled by the power of god ya, the indwelling Self who is hiding in every living being.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR, 2014

Loving and Divine Souls,

God bless you all.

Year after year, we celebrate these holy days and we wait for them to arrive. We remember our near and dear ones, wish them all the best, and expect the same from them. We make many resolutions for the New Year and dream to achieve a lot. But if we look back, what has happened? It is an annual drama. We repeatedly go back to the old life with a little or no change. Who is responsible for this?

If we analyze carefully, our own weakness of mind and slack efforts cause us to miss opportunities. Time and tide do not wait for anyone. Time passes so fast. If we really want success, we should be careful and cautious during every moment and every breath and every step of our lives.

Planning our lives and using sincere effort, regular prayer and meditation, self-analysis, and determination in spite of occasional failure, we

can without a doubt thrive and achieve success.

Procrastination, laziness, and irregular effort will not lead us to reach the desired goal of life. We know our weaknesses and strengths. We must stand up and progress on the path without delay. Who knows what is going to happen tomorrow? Wise people say that if something is a good thing to do, do it now; if it is not a good thing, keep it for tomorrow.

These holy days are a time for prayer and contemplation. I am praying for each one of you not to waste time and to be tactful in daily life so that each day will be productive.

Please meditate nicely. Pray regularly. Study and contemplate carefully. Do your duty and do not procrastinate. Wishing you a happy, spiritual, and successful new year in every aspect.

My love and prayers are for you forever and ever. Let the blessings of God, Jesus, and the masters always be with you.

With Love,
Prajnanananda

PRAJNANAVANI - THE VOICE OF WISDOM

MEDITATION ON QUALITIES OF LORD SHIVA



*sthitva sthane saroje pranavamayamarut kundale sukshmamarge
shante svante praline prakatita vibhave jyotirupe parakhye
lingajne brahmavakye sakalatanugatam shankaram na smarami
kshantavyo me paradhah shiva shiva shiva bho srimahadeva shambho*

Never did I sit in a place, assuming the lotus posture and send the *kundalini*, and the breath, which is of the form of *pranava*, through the subtle path of *sushumna*, to reach the ever-shining *parabrahma* and never did I calm my mind, and meditate on Paramashiva, I did not listen to divine instruction and could not see Shankara hiding in every body.

Therefore, O Shiva, O Mahadeva, O Shambho, please forgive my sins (forgive my forgetfulness).

Sivaparadha Kshamapana Stotra Verse 9

Metaphorical Explanation

Let us look at the first line: *sthitva sthane saroje pranavamayamarutkumbhake*

(kundale) sukshma marge.

The root word for *saroje* is *saroja*, which means “one who is born in the pond.” A lotus is

born in a pond. *Saroje* means “in lotus,” *sthana* means “the place” or “the position,” and *sthitva* means “being seated.” Thus, this refers to sitting in the lotus posture, as yogis usually do. If your body permits you to sit in the lotus position, it is fine, but many have difficulty with it. The best position to sit is the one that is comfortable for you; however, the legs should not be putting any pressure on each other. Both legs should be free. I saw a great yogi who sat for hours in the lotus posture, and as a result, he lost both of his legs. The circulation decreases and slowly the legs become numb damaging the circulatory and nervous system. Eventually, the lower part of one’s body can become paralyzed.

Meditation On The Chakras

Earlier it was mentioned that there are seven lotuses in the seven chakras. The words in verse nine refer to sitting in the lotus posture, or going where the lotus is present. The next three concepts in the first line are correlated. One deals with sitting in a comfortable lotus posture or concentrating in a lotus such as the lotus of the *muladhara*, the four petal lotus, or the lotus of the

svadhisthana, the six petal lotus. How does one get to the lotus? Through *pranava maya marut*: *marut* means “breath” or “air” and *pranava* means “om” or “God.”

In the Yoga Sutra, Sage Patanjali says,

tasya vachaka pranavah, “*Pranava* is the symbol, the representation of divinity, *om*.” The words *pranava maya* mean the breath itself is becoming *om*. The breath becomes *om* by inhaling and exhaling *om* while concentrating in a particular chakra; the same result can be achieved by listening to the *om* sound.

Kundale or *kumbhake sukshma marge* means “the subtle path of the *sushumna*.” It is not referring to the *ida* or *pingala* channel. *Ida* makes you lazy and *pingala* makes you restless. However, the *sushumna* makes you calm and quiet. When the breath is going in the left nostril, it is *ida*. When the breath is going in the right nostril, it is *pingala*. When the breath is flowing equally in both the nostrils, it is *sushumna*.

Now we will look at the meanings of the words *kumbhake* and *kundale*. *Kumbhake* means “retaining the

breath,” such as when you hold the breath and remain in the lotus. *Kundale* refers to *kundalini*, or being in a coiled form: not straight. *Kundalini* is unmanifested divine power that is remaining in the power of coiled energy. When the snake is resting or playing, it remains in a coiled position. If the snake is active, it is straight. Similarly, the energy that is resting in you is in the coiled form and is static energy. When it becomes kinetic or active, it is straightened.

The next line is *shante swante praline prakatita vibhave jyoti rupe parakhye*. *Shante* is derived from the word *shanta*, which means “peaceful state.” When you sit in a comfortable posture and calmly concentrate in the lotuses in your spine or brain, observing your breath, combining it with *om* and retaining it a little, your breath will become very slow, and you will undoubtedly become peaceful.

The word *swante* means “the end of yourself.” That is, until now you thought of yourself as “this or that,” and all of a sudden it ended: I am no longer a doctor, engineer, scientist, husband, wife, father

or mother. Hence, this is referring to the end of all of you limitation.

The words *swante praline* refers to the four inner instruments of mind, intellect, ego and memory, and *praline* means “dissolved.” Thus, there is no play of the mind, intellect, ego, nor memory of worldly things. The next words, *prakatita* (manifested) and *vibhave* (your glory and wealth) ask when your body consciousness goes, when the play of mind disappears, and when your ego dissolves, what happens? Your real glory manifests. What is the real glory? What is your wealth? Knowledge is your wealth. Bliss is your wealth. Peace is your wealth. This wealth manifests itself. How does it manifest?

Jyoti rupe means “in the form of light” (divine light). Here Shri Adi Shankara is completely referring to meditation. Previously, he spoke a little bit about ritual, but now he is entirely speaking about meditation and how to practice it through methods such as closing the eyes, introverting the mind, seeing the light, and regulating the breath.

If we dissect the word *parakhye*, we see that *akhye* means “has been told or described” and *para* means “the Supreme or *parabrahma*,” which is the state of Brahman, the state of the Absolute, and the state of perfect divinity, which has been described. Here Shri Shankara says, “If I would have done these things, I would be in all the following states: *lingajne brahma vakye sakala tanu gatam shankaram na smarami*.” *Linga* means the subtle, divine, and formless state. Thus, he said he did not contemplate or become a *lingajna*: Shiva or divinity. One who knows Shiva is called a *lingajna*.

Next, *brahma vakye* means the teachings of a realized master. Shri Shankara says, “I did not listen to the divine instructions of the realized masters.” If one listens to realized masters and meditates, what happens to them? *sakala tanu gatam shankaram na smarami*: *sakala* means “in every,” *tanu* means “body,” and *gatam* means “hiding.” Thus, because he did not do all these things, he could not see Shankara,

Lord Shiva, who is hiding in everybody.

What is my life if I do not see God in all, if I forget the Lord who is hiding within? *Smarami* means “to remember.” He is saying, “I did not remember, I did not feel, and I did not accept that God is in all. I lived a life of duality. I lived a life of multiplicity. I lived a life of conflict. I lived a life of ego, never remembering that each and every person is divine. I could not feel that God is within.”

Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa told a story about a holy man who was walking down the road one morning and accidentally hit someone with his feet. Sometimes holy men have been known to behave like crazy people. The other person became so upset that he gave him many blows, left and right. He beat the holy man so badly that he was almost unconscious.

Another man, who saw what happened, quickly came to take care of him, putting a little water and a cold pack on his body. Slowly the holy man regained consciousness, and the man serving him said, “Baba, look at me, who am I?”

Without looking at him, the holy man said, "The one who was beating me is the same one who is serving me."

The other man said, "No, no, Baba, I was not the one who beat you."

"The One who was in that person, the same God, is in you. I saw God when he was hitting me. I saw God in you when you were serving me."

Imagine for a moment how much love was in this man's heart: "I saw only God hitting me, and I saw only God serving me." Just think, if somebody is humiliating us, do we still remember God? "O God, you came in this form today, and You are humiliating me. It is only Your play." Unfortunately most people would say, "Swamiji, it may be possible for you to be so detached, but it is not possible for me. If somebody is humiliating me, I should humiliate him double! An eye for an eye; tit for tat!"

When Swami Vivekananda was in the USA, he was speaking to a man, and Swamiji said, "Sir, Jesus once said, 'If someone gives you a slap on one cheek, show your

other cheek.' Now, if after hitting you once, a man wants to give you another slap, what would you do?"

The young man thought a little, and said, "I only have two cheeks, why let him hit both of them?"

Then Swamiji said, "Indeed, if it were me I would give him a big blow." What does this mean? Be humble, but do not allow yourself to be exploited, tortured, or manipulated by others. This was Swami Vivekananda's message.

A disciple gave me a beautiful interpretation of that verse. He said, "Swamiji, you know Lord Jesus said if anyone gives you a slap on the cheek, show you other cheek. But I was thinking, suppose if I am standing in front of you, and I give you a slap using my right hand. I can only hit your left cheek. Therefore, if I am to then give you a slap on your other cheek, which would be your right cheek, I won't be able to slap you!" This means, be intelligent!

Spiritual people are really intelligent. Somebody once asked Shri Ramakrishna

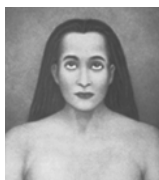
Paramahansa, “Why do you say that spiritual people are intelligent?”

He replied, “It is because they give more time to spiritual practice and self-inquiry than keeping busy in worldly activities and forgetting God. A snake is intelligent in that it does not build its own home, but rather, it finds a mouse hole or another similar place.” There is a proverb in English, “Fools construct a house and wise men live there.” Spiritual people are intelligent and enjoy life as it is. In fact, they enjoy life even more than others. Others waste their lives in worries, anger, dislike, anxiety, unhappiness, hatred, ego and occasionally they have a little enjoyment. Spiritual people see everything as good. For example, they perceive food that is good as good, and also food that is not good as good. They enjoy life entirely.

In his prayer, Shri Adi Shankara says, “I could not remember You in everybody.” When he says this, he is not only talking about seeing God in human beings, he is talking about *each* and *every* living being. “Previously, when I looked at the plant, I did not remember You. However, my Lord, from this day forth, I will not forget You.” Look at the flower, and think of God. Look at fruit, and think of God. Whatever you see, think, “O God, You are here.” The Upanishads say, *yatra yatra mano yati, brahmanas tatra chintanath*: “Whatever the mind perceives, know it to be the presence of God.” Omnipresent God is everywhere and in all. “O Beloved Lord, please forgive me. Although You are present in each and every form, yet still I forget you.”



Teachings of the Masters

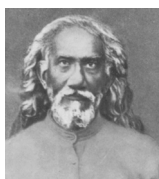
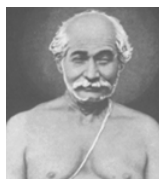


"To serve a saint is sacred and brings great spiritual gain."

Mahavatara Babaji

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

Lahiri Mahasaya



"According to Kriya Yoga one will surely reach the ultimate goal if one keeps one's inspiration fixed on the ideal and one's attention completely absorbed in the soul."

Swami Shriyukteshwar

"Never create a sense of fear in others. Refrain from using harsh words."

Sanyal Mahasaya

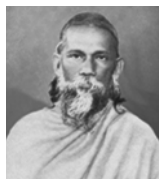


"Suffering is a good teacher to those who are quick and willing to learn from it."

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



"Stay calm but active and remain compassionately detached."

Paramahansa Hariharananda

"When the wave merges back into the ocean becoming one with the ocean, it will attain perfection."

Paramahansa Prajnanananda



THE TRADITION OF LORD JAGANNATHA

GAJAPATI MAHARAJA DIBYASINGHA DEB

(Contd from last issue of Oct 2013)

Esoteric And Religious Significance

According to the Puranas, as mentioned above, the Lord originally manifested in Purusottama-Kshetra as *nilamani vigraha* (sapphire gem-stone) - Neelamadhava. After the disappearance of Neelamadhava, the Lord re-manifested in His present *Chaturdha-Vigraha daru* form. The significance of the Lord's manifestation in wooden form is revealed by Lord Brahma. At the time of consecration of the *Chaturdha-Vigrahas*, Lord Brahma proclaimed that the wooden images are '*parama brahmakriti*' (the form of the Supreme Being) and He instructed King Indradyumna in the following manner:

"Thinking it is a wooden image, O pre-eminent King, let there not be the idea in you that this is a mere image; this is verily the form of Supreme Brahman. As

Parama Brahman (the Supreme Lord) takes away all sorrows and confers eternal bliss. He is known as Daru. According to the four Vedas, therefore, the Lord is manifest in the form of daru (sacred wood). He is the creator of the entire universe. He has also created Himself."

– Adhyaya XXVIII-39-41

It may be pertinent to mention here some of the unique and distinctive aspects of the tradition in so far as the *vigrahas* are concerned. Neem (Margosa) wood is used for making the images. Scriptures such as *Bhavishya-Purana* and *Vaikhyanasagama*, mention that neem wood is the best and most auspicious material for Vishnu image. However, the injunction in the scripture ('Purusottama-Kshetra mahatmya', Adhyaya XIX-19 to 27) strictly lays down that the wooden form must not be seen by any one and should be covered by silk cloth, resin,

sandal-paste, perfumed oil etc; and these coverings are to be changed from year to year. Accordingly, every year during the fifteen days commencing from Jyestha-Purnima tithi (which falls in the month of June or July and which is the auspicious tithi when the Lord first manifested in *Chaturdha-Vigraha* form) the Lords are kept in a closed chamber and the outer coverings are changed by *Daita-pati sevakas* who are the descendents of the original *Savara* (tribal) worshippers of Lord Neelamadhave. This special ritual is known as *Anasara-vidhi*.

Another distinctive feature of the tradition is *Navakalevara* which involves elaborate rites and rituals spread over nearly three and half months during which period the *Chaturdha-Vigraha murtis* undergo a complete renewal. This extraordinary event takes place whenever there is an extra month (*mala-masa*) in the month of *Asadha* (called *Purusottama-masa*) which can occur in golden image of Lord Krishna. Seen in the above light, Lord Jagannatha is Shri Krishna who is worshipped on the *Ratnasahasana* along with

His elder brother Shri Balarama (Balabhadra), sister Subhadra and His Chakra Sudarshana. Similarly, during festivals connected with Lord Rama, such as *Shri Ramanavami*, Lord Jagannatha is adorned and worshipped as Lord Rama, Balabhadra as Shri Lakshmana and Subhadra as Devi Sita.

In Adhyaya XXVIII of 'Purusottama - Kshetra mahatmya', it is stated that after the holy consecration and installation of the *Chaturdha-Vigrahas* in the temple built by King Indradyumna, the *Vigrahas*, for some time, assumed the form of Lord Nrisimha. Further, in all rituals during each *Navakalevara* including the *prana-pratistha*, the Lord is invoked with the thirty-two syllabic '*mantraraja Nrisimha mantra*.'

According to Saiva tradition, on the other hand, Lord Jagannatha is worshipped as *Siva-Bhairava-Ekapada*, Lord Balabhadra as *Ananta Naga* or *Sesha Naga* and Devi Subhadra as *Shakti*. We also find elements of *Shakta* and *Tantra* worship in the tradition of Lord Jagannatha wherein Lord Jagannatha is identified with *Mahabhairava*, Lord

Balabhadra with *Rudra* and Devi Subhadra with *Durga*. In the daily worship, Devi Subhadra is invoked with *Bhuvanesvari mantra*. The *panchamakara puja*, which is an integral part of *tantra upasana*, is performed daily in the sanctum-sanctorum of the temple, though in a *sattvika* form. The shrine of Goddess Vimala located within the inner compound of Shri Jagannatha Temple is regarded as one of the most sacred *Tantra-shakti peethas* of India; and during sixteen days of *Sharadiya Durga Puja* in the month of October, full-fledged *tantra upasana* is performed in this *peetha*. Devi Vimala is regarded as *bhairavi* and Lord Jagannatha as *bhairava* in Tantrika texts (“*Vimala Bhairavi yatra Jagannathastu Bhairava*”); and Lord Jagannatha is himself referred to also as *Dakshinakali*.

In the twelfth century AD. Shri Ramanujacharya (the founder of Shri *Sampradaya* and *Vishistadvaita* school) visited Puri and invoked Lord Jagannatha as *Shri Krishna*, Lord Balabhadra as *Siva*, Devi Subhadra as *Ekanamsa Durga* and Chakra Sudarshana as

Nrisimha, as per the *pancharatra* tradition. According to the *panchadevata upasana*, on the other hand, Lord Jagannatha himself assumes the five distinct forms, namely, that of Narayana when on the *Ratnasinghasana*, Rudra during *Navakalevara*, Gajanana during *Snana-yatra*, Surya-Narayana during *Ratha-yatra* and Durga during *Sayana-yatra*. The *Chaturdha-Vigrahas*, as mentioned in the *Skanda Purana*, also symbolizes the four parts of the *Pranava (Om-kara)* and represent the four Vedas: Lord Balabhadra symbolizing Rigveda, Devi Subhadra Yajurveda, Lord Jagannatha Samaveda and Chakra Sudarshana Atharva Veda.

The great Acharyas and founders of the different Vedic *sampradayas*, namely, Adi Shankaracharya, Shri Ramanujacharya, Shri Madhvacharya, Shri Nimbarkacharya, Shri Vishnu Swami and Shri Chaitanya – all of them visited Puri and invoked Lord Jagannatha according to the tradition of their own *sampradayas*. We thus find here a confluence of

the various schools of Vedanta, namely, *Advaita*, *Vishishtadvaita*, *Dvaita*, *Shuddhadvaita*, *Dvaita-advaita* and *Achintyabhedabheda*. The *Chaturdha-Vigrahas* are invoked as *Saguna Sakara* or *Nirguna Sakara* or even as *Nirguna Nirakara* depending upon the religious inclination of the devotee. The founder of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak, and Sufi Saint Kabir also visited Puri and invoked Lord Jagannatha in their own tradition.

Furthermore, the tradition of Lord Jagannatha (as we have seen earlier) extends beyond the Vedic fold to include tribal traditions in ample measure. The Puranas have stated that the Savara tribals were the original worshippers of Lord Jagannatha in His earlier manifestation as Lord Neelamadhava. Even today, as per ancient custom, descendants of this tribal community, namely, *Daita-pati sevakas* have a special place in the Temple's ritual system; and during *Anasara* and *Navakalevara* they directly worship and make offerings to the Lord according to tribal traditions and perform secret *seva* which no other person is authorized to perform.

Lord Jagannatha is also worshipped by Buddhists and Jains. Some scholars have identified the *Chaturdha-Vigrahas* with the Buddhist *Triratna*, namely, Lord Jagannatha as *Buddha*, Lord Balabhadra as *Dharma* and Devi Subhadra as *Sangha*. It is pertinent to mention here that from the time of Emperor Ashoka (third century BC) till the fourth century AD, i.e., for nearly seven hundred years, Buddhism was a prominent religion of Orissa. There is also a view that the sacred tooth-relic of Buddha was kept in Puri before being taken to Ceylon in the fourth century AD. In eighth century AD, King Indrabhuti of Oddiyan (Orissa), proponent of Vajrayana Buddhism, invoked 'Jagannatha' in his famous work *Jnana-siddhi* (seven hundred seventeen AD). In *Dharma puja vidhana*, a text of Dharma School of Buddhism by Ramai Pandit, Lord Jagannatha is identified with Buddha. Renowned saints of Orissa in the fifteenth-sixteenth AD, such as Sarala Das, and the famous *pancha-shakhas* of Shri Chaitanya, namely, Jagannatha Das, Balarama Das, Ananta Das, Yasovanta Das

and Achyutananda Das, in their various writings have invoked Lord Jagannatha as *Adi-Buddha*. Moreover, in the *Dasavatara* panel inside the *Jagamohan* of Shri Jagannatha Temple. Buddha is depicted as the ninth incarnation of the Lord.

Some other scholars have identified the *Chaturdha-Vigrahas* with the Jain *Triratna*, namely, *Samyakgyana*, *Samyakcharitra* and *Samyakdrishti*. *Abhidhana Chintamani*, a Jain work by Hemachandra refers to Lord Neelamadhava and Lord Purusottama as *Tirthankara*.

We thus find that Lord Jagannatha is invoked and worshipped by virtually all the diverse religious *sampradayas*; each in their own way. This universal all-inclusive dimension of the tradition of Lord Jagannatha is a salutary reiteration of the famous declaration of Rigveda – *Ekam sat vipah bahudha vadanti* (Truth is one; the wise speak of it in various names). In the ‘*Purusottama-kshetra mahatmya*’ of *Skanda Purana*. Lord Brahma at the time of the consecration of *Chaturdha-Vigrahas* reveals to King Indradyumna the real

identity of the Lord in the following words:

“*Thus, O King, the division and non-difference of Lord Jagannatha have been told to you. Whichever way your mind is pleased, with devotion act according to that. This Lord pervades all forms and permeates all mantras. In whatever way He is worshipped by anyone, accordingly does He confer fruits on him, O King, just as well-purified gold when shaped according to one’s choice gets this or that name in this world and brings about this or that satisfaction. O King, with such glory the Lord has become manifest here.*”

.....Adhyaya XXVIII

– 47 to 50

These words are reminiscent of the famous proclamation of Lord Krishna in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* – *ye yatha mam prapadyante* etc (Adhyaya IV -2). It will be relevant to note here that Lord Jagannatha is also known as *Purusottama*. As explained in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* (Adhyaya XIV -17, 18) by the Lord Himself, He is called *Purusottama* (the Supreme

Purusha) as He transcends *kshara* (the perishable) as well as *akshara* (the Imperishable); and this Purusottama is called as *Paramatma* (Supreme Self) and *Avyayah Isvarah* (the Indestructible Lord) and He pervades and sustains the three worlds. Some scholars also point out that the rather unusual form of Lord Jagannatha (viz, that He is without hands, legs, ears, etc) is a manifestation of Vedic conception of the Supreme Being (*purusam mahantam*) as revealed in *Shvetashvatara Upanishad* (*apanipado javanogrihita etc* – Adhyaya III -19).

From the above, it is evident that the tradition of Lord Jagannatha is a wonderful manifestation of *Sanatana Dharma*, the ancient and glorious heritage of our sacred Bharatavarsha. Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, through his own direct spiritual experiences, reiterated the fundamental tenets of Sanatana-Dharma, viz, that although the Ultimate Reality is One, it manifests in many forms and can be attained through many paths. This essential truth is vividly demonstrated in the tradition of Lord Jagannatha.

Swami Vivekananda, speaking on 'The ideal of Universal Religion', said:

'We must learn that truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways, and that each of these ways is true as far as it goes. We must learn that the same thing can be viewed from a hundred different standpoints and yet be the same thing' (*Complete Works*, Vol. 2, p.383).

On another occasion, speaking at a club in Pasadena (California) on 3 February 1900, Swami Vivekananda aptly stated as follows:

'Man has an idea that there can be only one religion, that there can be only one Prophet, and that there can be only one Incarnation; but that idea is not true. By studying the lives of all these great Messengers we find that each, as it were, was destined to play a part and a part only, that the harmony consists in the sum total and not in one note....The sum total is the great harmony' (*Complete Works*, Vol. 4, p. 120 -121).

It is indeed this '*great harmony*' which the tradition of Lord Jagannatha so clearly

represents; and this is the vital wisdom message the world humanity is in dire need of today. When much of the strife and conflict around the world is prompted by communal or religious differences, the underlying principles of the tradition of Lord Jagannatha, (nay, of Sanatana-Dharma) that God is one and that He can be invoked in myriad, infinite ways and that (irrespective of differences in caste, color, religion, nationality etc) we are all children of the One Divine Father (vasudhaiva

kutumbakam) and co-travelers on the path to Divinity – these verily are the eternal and fundamental truths that have to be well understood and imbibed by mankind today, if peace, harmony and prosperity is to reign on this beautiful planet of ours.

(Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb, Chaiman, Sri Jagannatha Temple Managing Committee, delivered this Swami Sankarananda Memorial Lecture at the Institute on 22 May 2004.)



Chariot Festival of Lord Jagannath at Puri

MYTHS AND METAPHORS

DEVI MAHATMYA



GLORY TO GOD, THE DIVINE MOTHER

Truth is God. Scientists are eager to discover truth through scientific experiments, using the five sense organs along with the mind and intellect. Philosophers try to justify truth with their logical interpretations and inferences; however, seekers, through contemplation, devotion, and meditation, have tried to unveil truth through direct experience while in extreme states of calm and tranquility.

Truth is one, but people name it differently. Through their inquiry, scientists have

spoken about elemental particles, such as the electron, or described the finest state of matter as invisible energy. The philosophers have called it transcendental reality. Spiritual seekers have referred to it as consciousness, Brahman, Supreme Self, God, Mahashakti, Mahadevi, and so on.

The traditional description of *Brahman* or *paramatman* is neutral in gender. However, Bhagavan and Ishwara are masculine and Bhagavati, Mahadevi, Mahashakti, and Parameshwari are feminine.

What, then, is the gender of God: feminine, masculine, or Truth is God. Scientists are eager to discover truth through scientific experiments, using the five sense organs along with the mind and intellect. Philosophers try to justify truth with their logical interpretations and inferences; however, seekers, through contemplation, devotion, and meditation, have tried to unveil truth neutral? In the Shvetashvatara Upanishad, there are descriptions of divinity's gender. At one place (Chandi 5:10), it says:

*naiva stri na pumanesa
na caivayam napumsakah*

“Neither feminine, nor masculine, even not neutral.” At another place (4:3), it says: *tvam stri tvam pumanasi tvam kumara utava kumari*

“You are feminine, masculine, boy as well as virgin.”

Scientists have eliminated the difference between energy and matter; they call it mutual presence, a matter of transformation. In the Shvetashvatara Upanishad (6:8) it is said :

*na tasya karyam karanam ca vidyate
na tat samascabhyadhikasca drsyate*

*parasya saktivividhaiva Sruyate
svabhaviki jnanabalakriya ca*

“There is no action and no organ of His to be found. There is not seen His equal or His better. His high power is revealed to be various, indeed. The working of His intelligence and strength is inherent (in Him).”

In reality, *paramatma* (the supreme Self) or Brahman is *mahashakti*, the supreme power, the cosmic energy. In an absolute sense, they are one and the same. The Sun and its power are one and inseparable. Fire and its capacity to burn are also inseparable. It is for the *sadhaka* (the seeker) to consider the specific approach to the Divine for his or her personal *sadhana*. Jesus prayed to God referring and relating to Him as “Father,” while Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa worshipped God as the Divine Mother. The goal is the same, but the paths appear to be different.

A common opinion of Vedic spiritual practices follows:

*ekam sat viprah
bahudha vadanti*

“Truth is one, but the wise people speak of it in different ways.”

Brahman is *nirguna*, formless, without any attributes, like energy. Brahman is *saguna*, with attributes: when manifested, it is like matter with many names and forms.

Initially, a seeker, one who treads on the path of Truth needs clear and tangible support to proceed. In the name of Jesus or Mother Mary, Buddha or Tara Devi, Krishna or Kali, people can sometimes acquire a concrete or strong foundation for their spiritual progress. When a seeker establishes a relationship with the Lord, based on the attribute that God is love, Allah is merciful, and so forth, the seeker is accepting a particular quality or multiple qualities. Love, mercy, and other such qualities are more feminine than masculine. Yet, in all this seeming distinction, it is all truly indistinguishable; in all diversity there is only unity. For pure consciousness is not matter; it is dynamism with transcendence.

When a seeker follows the approach as a child, like Jesus (the Son of God), his or her adored One is the Father or the Mother. Saints and sages have shown that on the spiritual path, seekers have different

relationships with God such as friend, companion, mother, father, lord, or beloved. For example, *tvam eva mata* means “Thou art my Mother.”

As is the attitude, so is the experience. Therefore the seeker’s approach depends upon their attitude, guidance received, and gradual experience. The Divine can be she, he, or sometimes both. She like Durga, Kali, or Lakshmi. He like Shiva, Narayana, or Krishna. Both like Shiva-Parvati, Lakshmi-Narayana, Sita-Rama, or Radha-Krishna. In the tantric path of spirituality, she is the Absolute. From her came everything. A similar idea is explained in the Devi Atharvashirsha Upanishad.

Although she is love, kindness, compassion, mercy, and forgiveness, she is also sometimes strong, powerful, and ready to punish. She has two aspects: soft and tender like a flower, strong and firm like a thunderbolt. She is the strength of the weak. She is the protector of all. She is, in brief, everything.

Divine Motherhood in Different Religions

In addition to Hinduism, other religions also love and

highly regard Divine Motherhood. For example, in many Jain temples, including the famous one in Mount Abu, one can find idols of the Divine Mother. They love the Divine Mother as Shashana Devi. In a later era, in Buddhism, Tantra and tantric practices were introduced in which there is also the use of mantras and prayers to the Divine Mother. The common and well-known goddess in Tibetan Buddhism is Tara Devi. In Christianity, especially in Catholic practice, people love, pray to, and adore Mother Mary. This shows a natural love towards divinity, perfection, and purity as is depicted in many different religions, scriptures, and practices.

Different Scriptures on the Divine Mother

How old is the worship of the Divine Mother, the feminine aspect of God? History has no such concrete record. However, from different scriptures we not only find references to the Divine Mother and her worship, but also, we find references to different places of worship, temples, and even different forms and aspects of the Divine Mother,

thus elaborating upon her significance and glory.

Among all the scriptures, the Vedas are considered the most ancient. In the Rig Veda, there are two *suktas* (hymns): the *Devi Sukta* and *Ratri Sukta*. In addition, *Shri Sukta*, *Prithvi Sukta*, *Durga Sukta*, *Bhu Sukta*, and *Saraswati Sukta* are Vedic hymns that sing the glory of the Divine Mother in her different aspects.

The *Devi Sukta* is comprised of eight beautiful mantras that were revealed to the great Rishi Ambhrina's daughter Vak, who herself was a realized young woman. She realized this power of Brahman, the Divine Mother, as the Soul.

There are a few Upanishads that speak directly of the Divine Mother: Kena Upanishad, Mahanarayana Upanishad, Yajnika Upanishad, Devi Atharvashirsha Upanishad, and Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad. In the Kena Upanishad of Sama Veda, there is a story in which a clear declaration of identity between Brahman and his power (*Brahma-shakti*) is given. The story is as follows: In the battle between the *devas* and *asuras*, by the power of Brahman, the

devas, considering themselves victorious by their own strength, became proud. To take away their false pride and vanity, Brahman appeared in front of them as a *yaksha* (celestial being), who was difficult to recognize. When the *devas*, not recognizing her, sent the god of fire to her, Brahman asked the fire, “What is your name? What is your strength?” The fire replied, “I am Agni (fire). I can burn everything on this earth.” Brahman gave a blade of grass and told him to burn it. With all of his strength, Agni was unable to burn the grass. Being ashamed, he returned to the *devas* with his head downcast. Then Vayu (the wind god) came forward in an attempt to blow away the grass, but he was also unsuccessful and left feeling ashamed. Thereafter, when Indra came to Brahman, who was in disguise, he disappeared and Indra saw the beautiful form of Haimavati Uma in the sky. She told Indra that only the power of Brahman (*Brahma-shakti*) makes the *devas* powerful and that she alone made their victory over the *asuras* possible.

In the Mahanarayana Upanishad (5:3), there is a popular mantra:

*tam agnivarṇam tapasa jvalantim
vairochanim karmaphalesu justam
durgam devīm saram aham prapadye
sutarasitarase namah*

“I am taking refuge in Mother Durga, who is Vairochani, of fire color, able to subdue the enemies with her own strength and who is the bestower of the fruit of karma (action). O the One who can help to cross the *samsara*, I bow to You.”

In Yajnika Upanishad (1:33), there is the Durga Gayatri:

*om katyayanaya vidmahe
kanyakumari dhimahi tanno
durgih prachodayat*

“May we realize Katyayani, the *Shakti*. Let us meditate on Kanyakumari, the virgin goddess and may Durga enlighten us.”

The Devi Atharvashirsha Upanishad, like other Atharvashirshas, proclaims that the Divine Mother is the Supreme and the Absolute.

In the Mahabharata Virata Parva (Chapter 6), Yudhishtira prays to Durga. The Divine Mother appears and blesses him with victory. In the Harivamsha Purana (chapters 95, 166), there is a beautiful prayer to the Divine Mother.

In the Devi Bhagavata (3:27), there is a description of the virgins as the manifestation of Divine Mother. The Vamana Purana describes the terror of Mahishasura (chapter 18), and includes the narration of Chanda and Munda as well as others (chapter 19). In the Brahma Vaivarta Purana, there

is an elaborate description of the Divine Mother being manifesting from Lord Krishna.

In the Kalika Purana, the Devi Purana, the Matsya Purana, and the Brihat Nandikeshwar Purana, there is an exhaustive and systematic description of *Durga Puja*, the worship of the Divine Mother.

(from “Only Her Grace” by Paramahansa Prajnanananda)



Visit of Mangalapeethadhishwar Gadyacharya
Shri Madhavacharyaji Maharaj

THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI

Sutra 7

Knowledge Through Direct Perception

*pratyaksha-anumana-
agamah pramanani*

Word Meaning

pratyaksha – direct cognition, direct perception; *anumana* – inference; *agamah* – verbal testimony, scriptural revelation; *pramanani* – means of knowledge.

Commentary by Shri Lahiri Mahasaya

Direct perception, inference, and scriptures (i.e., experiences through the sense organs) are called *pramana* (path of knowledge).

Metaphorical Explanation

In this sutra, the first set of the five *vruttis* (thought waves) is discussed. In Sanskrit, *pramana* is defined as *prama karanam pramanam*. *Prama* means “knowledge.” *Pramana* means “the path to knowledge.” *Pramana* also indicates confirmed knowledge. These are three aspects of it.

Pratyaksha Pramana

The first concept of *pramana* is *pratyaksha*

pramana, direct knowledge. Every person has five organs of perception (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin) and five objects of perception (sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch). When a particular sense object comes in contact with the sense organ, with the cooperation of the mind, a person gains direct knowledge of the material world.

Pratyaksha comes from *prati* + *aksha*. *Aksha* means “eye,” “instruments,” or “organs of perception.” Depending on the health and the capability of the sense organs, sense perception may be illusory. A person with jaundiced eyes sees everything as yellow. A diseased and defective instrument results in defective information.

In *pratyaksha*, there must be a *drashta* (seer). In the Katha Upanishad (1:3:4), we learn, *atma-indriya-mano yuktam bhoktetyahur manisinah*: In every sense perception (*pratyaksha*), there is a need for the soul, the mind, and the sense organs to work together, to perceive or enjoy the sense object. In *pratyaksha*, or direct

perception, there is *triputi*, the threefold aspect of seer, sight and seen.

Anumana Pramana

The second aspect of *pramana* (path of knowledge) is *anumana pramana*, knowledge or conclusion drawn through inference. Ordinarily, *anumana* (inference) is based upon some indication, as exemplified in the proverb, “Where there is smoke, there is fire.” Smoke is the indicator of fire. Looking at smoke from a long distance, one may draw the conclusion that there is fire. But, in some cases it may not always be true. To see smoke is direct perception. But smoke cannot always be associated with fire. In a mirage, people may see water far away, which may enable them to draw the conclusion that there is a lake in the distance, however, it is nothing but an illusion. *Anumana* (inference) may be the cause of wrong conclusions.

When one practices meditation, one enters the domain of direct perception. Spiritual life is not a romantic state of dream, imagination, or hallucination. It is the state of inner tranquility in which a person perceives peace, bliss,

joy, happiness, and at the same time is able to have many divine experiences – such as hearing the *om* sound and perceiving divine illumination. These perceptions are not conveyed through the sense organs; they are supernatural experiences directly perceived by the person who practices meditation techniques like Kriya Yoga. This is *pratyaksha pramana*, direct experience in meditation.

Along with it, when a student looks at his spiritual teacher, he may infer (*anumana*) the result of meditation from the life of the teacher. The calmness, love, peace, and divinity reflected in the life of the teacher become the cause of the inference that meditation transforms human life.

Agama Pramana

The third aspect of inference is *agama pramana*, or scriptural inferences. The scriptures consist of all the holy books of different religions, such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Puranas, Yoga Sutra, Smritis, Itihas for the Hindus, the Torah for the Jews, the Old and New Testament for the Christians, the Tripitakas and the Dhammapada for the

Buddhists, the Zenda Vesta for the Zoroastrians, the Holy Quran for the Muslims, the Guru Granth Sahib for the Sikhs, and so forth. All scriptures contain the essence of spiritual life. People must have insight to realize the inner meaning of the scriptures.

The scriptures are the treasure house of spiritual wisdom, born out of the experience of deep meditation and the sincere spiritual discipline of saints, sages, seers, prophets, messengers, and realized persons. These scriptural instructions and injunctions are the third path of knowledge, *agama pramana*.

The *rishis*, *munis*, sages, and saints have preserved their divine wisdom for us out of their extreme love for humankind. The scriptures, properly understood, give enough encouragement to us to lead a self-disciplined life.

Going Beyond Pramana Vrittis

Pramana means “intellect.” This intellect is not the ordinary material, worldly intelligence, but the pure intellect that leads a person to enter into the realm of higher

spiritual experiences. These three aspects of knowledge – *pratyaksha pramana*, *anumana pramana*, and *agama pramana* – may be compared to three eyes, ready to help one enter the divine kingdom of God-realization. *Pramana vrittis*, the thought waves arising to confirm knowledge, are initially helpful, but ultimately one must leave all thought waves and enter the state of no thought.

Truth is beyond the reach of mind, intellect, and thoughts. A statue of salt cannot measure the depth of the ocean. What happens to the salt statue in the ocean? It becomes one with the ocean. When a person meditates and slowly enters into a deep state of spiritual ecstasy, his thought waves dissolve and he becomes merged in a state of superconsciousness. At that time, Truth reveals itself. Truth does not need any medium. Truth is self-effulgent. Truth is self-explanatory. Truth is the ultimate. Truth is a transcendental experience. Truth is God. Such a state of direct experience is possible through deep meditation and going beyond the *vrittis* (thought waves).

O Seeker! Instead of wasting valuable time opening the pages of the vast scriptures, which are so intricate to assimilate, instead of roaming here and there, please sit silently. Go deep into yourself, merge in the inner Self of spiritual awareness. Learn to be the master of your own breath. You will enter into the state of divine experience.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Birthday of Yogananda	: January 5
IIKYS	: January 14 –20
Mahasamadhi of Bhupendranath Sanyal	: January 18
Birthday of Bhupendranath Sanyal	: January 20
Saraswati Puja	: February 4
Birthday of Swami Brahmanandaji	: Feb 8
Maha Shivaratri	: Feb 27
Mahasamadhi of Yogananda	: March 7
Mahasamadhi of Shriyukteswar	: March 9

Guru-preceptor has to come back on earth – voluntarily until all his disciples are completely liberated.

– Paramahansa Yogananda

Chitta (memory) must be free from impurities and imbalances through practice of meditation, so that one can comprehend subtle spiritual truth and enter into the state of realization.

– Shri Bhupendranath Sannyal

VALUABLE VOLUMES



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

MEDITATION AND ITS BENEFITS

(From *THE UNIVERSE WITHIN*)

The Physical Benefits

If we have time, we should practice morning, noon, and evening. When we concentrate on each *chakra*, the endocrine glands function more efficiently. When we concentrate in the fontanel, the pineal gland becomes activated. The pituitary gland is energized by concentrating in the soul center. Concentration in the throat center activates the thyroid and parathyroid glands, the heart center stimulates the thymus, the navel center energizes the liver, spleen and pancreas and the sacral and coccygial centers benefits the gonads. *Chakra* meditation keeps the entire human system healthy. When we suffer from any endocrine dysfunction, concentrating in the

corresponding *chakra* helps to remedy the imbalance.

When the mind is extremely restless while trying to meditate, we can look at a picture which we love and repeat or sing the name of God. This is a temporary solution like taking a medicine. But we must not be too attached to the form or the mantra. When we focus our attention on the light and sound, slowly other things will come. Meditation is not visualization or imagination. Through our concentration, our experience gets deeper. When we meditate for extended periods, our breathing becomes very light and we experience inner tranquility. The experience of meditation cannot be described in words.

Indescribable Joy

Each individual experience is completely personal and cannot be expressed. It is like feeding a mute man with delicious food and asking him to describe the taste. Although he cannot describe it, his face shows his enjoyment. Similarly our face shows whether we are meditating or not. We are the witness of our own experience. Our transformation is the visible result of our experience and we are the inner judges of our own progress. To maintain this experience is another task. To get wealth may be easy but to protect it is extremely difficult. The only way to maintain what we gain is to continue practicing steadily.

What is gained through scriptural study is only indirect knowledge. By practicing meditation we gain direct knowledge which is then transformed through experience into wisdom. The study of the *chakras* helps us to understand our own activities and emotions better. It also helps us to systematically go beyond them.

The Ocean And The Waves

One who strives through self-effort is the real spiritual

seeker. Spiritual life is not for dreamers. Spiritual treasures are hard-earned and are harder to maintain. The joy and bliss we get through them cannot be taken away by anyone. We all are formless, yet dreaming that we have a form. We are like the waves of the divine ocean. There are big waves and small waves, gentle waves and crashing waves, but all of them are really a part of the ocean. Our human egos tell us we are separate entities when in fact we are destined to merge with the Absolute. To experience who we are, is to experience God.

The Four Stages of Spiritual Evolution

There can be four stages of evolution.

1. When the creative knot of the *Brahmagranthi* is crossed (when one gets control over the lower three centers) we begin to see the presence of God everywhere.
2. When we go a little higher, we can perceive God's presence with eyes open or eyes closed.
3. Finally when we reach the summit, we realize

that we are already always united with God. There is no separation.

4. When we go even beyond that, we attain the state of Nirvikalpa. When we attain this state, we become free from all inward attachments and live in the world like a free soul. Is our individuality lost in that state? On the contrary real individuality is gained. We discover who we are.

Churning the Ocean Of Life,

Once the devas or gods and the asuras or demons decided to churn the ocean of milk in order to obtain the nectar of immortality which lay buried deep within its waters. To do this they needed a strong base on which their churning rod could rest and so they prayed to Lord Vishnu for help. He agreed to serve as the base by taking the form of a giant turtle, and resting on the bottom of the ocean. For the rod they used the highest mountain, Mandara parvata. Next the Devas and Asuras needed something strong enough and large enough to serve as the churning rope. They approached

the giant snake Vasuki, who agreed to help them. The gods on one side and the demons on the other, began churning the rope in unison. Beautiful rare and incredible riches began emerging from the waters. Kamadhenu, the cow who gave endless milk, and even Laxmi, the goddess of wealth rose glittering from the foaming waves. Still the devas and asuras churned, intent upon the final reward of Amrita, which was far superior to these. At last the Amrita or Nectar of Immortality and Bliss emerged and the devas and asuras lined up to receive it. They soon fell to fighting among themselves, greedy to get the largest share until once again Lord Vishnu came to the rescue by taking the form of a celestial nymph Mohini and arousing the demons' lust and destroying them so that only the devas were allowed to drink the nectar and achieve eternal bliss.

Churning of the ocean is, like most stories from Hindu myth, about the self and its quest for realization. The giant turtle represents the ability to withdraw the sense organs, for only turtles can withdraw their limbs at approaching danger.

The senses too, should be withdrawn from the dangers and distractions of Maya or illusion. Mountain is the spine which is used as the churning rod to churn the life with the rope of breath. The mind turns this way and that toward the devas, who are good propensities and then toward the asuras who are evil propensities. Turning first one way, then another, the mind begins spewing venom, and the churning brings forth the poison which lies at the surface, years of bad habits, thoughts, impulses begin to be churned to the surface and released. In the initial stages of meditation, just

such a cleansing occurs and the release of toxic impulses and desires can often be a painful and disturbing experience. It is only after the surface dirt is cleared, that we begin to find priceless treasures within. Wealth, prosperity, material satisfaction, comfort and luxury, name and fame and many powers may come to us, but like the devas we should not be distracted but continue with our labor until at last we obtain the nectar of bliss or self-realization. We should be careful at that final moment not to feed the demons of our evil propensities but to strengthen the good and emerge victorious.



Garden Tour
Foundation Day at Mother Centre, Miami

COCONUT OR SRIPHALA

(From *MYSTICISM OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS*)

The coconut, *shriphala*, is used widely in many different religious practices in India. *Shri* means divine, success, and prosperity. *Phala* means fruit or the “result.” The fruit of success and prosperity are represented in this divine fruit.

This coconut sits atop *kalasha*, the water pot. The coconut used in a fire ceremony is burned; and on many occasions the coconut is broken into two pieces. The coconut is covered with thick, fibrous skin, and when the outer skin is removed there is a strong shell. When you break it, there is delicious water inside. The water of green and tender coconuts is also offered in *puja* or ritualistic practices. The coconut is compared with the human head.

If you remove all the covering from the coconut shell you will find three circular spots, known as the three eyes of the coconut. But of the three eyes, only through one does the

sprout come. The coconut is a yogic symbol of the human head with its three eyes. Two eyes are open; they are extroverted, but they are not spiritually useful. The third eye, the eye of wisdom, the eye of knowledge, the spiritual eye, is the real eye through which divinity will sprout. The two eyes are extroverted, focusing on duality, but the third eye sees unity. That is why in the Bible it is said: “If therefore the eye is single, thy whole body shall be full of light.”

So the coconut, symbolizing the human head, is placed on *kalasha* or *purnakumbha*. This “head” bears tremendous power to sprout divinity, to sprout good thought, good ideas, but still these are unmanifested.

Many times it happens that we develop ego with our intelligence, and ego manifests from the head, goes to the heart, and permeates the whole body. Eliminating ego is symbolized by breaking or burning the coconut.

The human head, that is the brain, is the storehouse of all memories and impressions from our life until now. To eliminate all memories and impressions from our head, we symbolically burn or break the coconut. When you break the coconut, when your ego is broken or

eliminated, you can see the beauty of life, the sweetness of life. If you break or eliminate your ego, success will come; open your third eye, and success and prosperity will come. You will become spiritually enlightened and a person of wisdom.



Foundation Day at Mother Centre, Miami

STORIES TO LIVE BY

THE PROVIDER OF OUR NEEDS

One day a holy man traveled to Puri, the city of Lord Jagannath, and where Divine Mother Lakshmi, the presiding goddess of food and prosperity, resides. In fact, it is often said that no one remains unfed in Puri. Determined to put that statement to test, this holy man sat outside the Jagganath Temple with his eyes closed, to see whether or not God really provides food. Throughout the day, he could hear many different activities going around him, but slowly the noises began to fade as the afternoon ended and people returned to their homes. Before long, evening had come and gone; and night time was approaching.

He had been sitting there all day, patiently waiting for that moment when someone would arrive and give him a meal, but instead he was just left with the stillness of night. Suddenly, in the distance, he heard the sound of footsteps approaching, and then he became aware of someone standing near him. "Hey, there is something I am setting down by you. Keep it. I will return a little later." He was sure it was the voice of an old woman.

Without opening his eyes

he said, "Ok, put it down. I will take care of it."

Soon he had sensed that the person had gone. Then, all of a sudden he started smelling the delicious, aroma of scrumptious food. He wondered if perhaps it was his imagination, but then he thought that the smell was so divinely aromatic it had to be real. No longer to be able to control himself, he opened his eyes. There sitting in front of him was a heavenly feast, food from the temple, all warm and freshly prepared and covered with a piece of cloth. Quickly he removed the cloth, and then he stopped. He realized how foolish he was. "Surely the one who brought the food was the Divine Mother. But I was too stubborn to even open my eyes. I wanted to test God."

Reflection

This happens in our lives. God provides each one of us with everything we need, but unfortunately we do not know how to use it. We doubt and do not have faith. Many people profess to have faith, but before they put their trust in God, they want Him to first prove to them why they should. This story illustrates how God cares for us, so we need never to worry.

A TRIP TO UJJAIN AND INDORE

(Continued from last issue)

Bhagavata Katha

The day we arrived in Indore we had another special bonus. There was Bhagavata Pravachan of Sri Rajendra Dasji. Rajendra Dasji is well known for his Satsang. Guruji and Baba Shuddhanandaji know him well and he had visited our Balighai ashram sometimes. We were invited on to the stage to participate in the satang program. His Bhagavatha Katha inspires love for Krishna in the heart of anyone who listened. After satsang we had the privilege of meeting him and his followers in their temporary quarters and received some Prasad.

Omkareshwar & Mamaleshwar

Next morning we left for Omkareshwar. Many disciples joined us in the trip from Indore and Bhopal as they did not want to miss the opportunity of going to these holy places in the company of monks. They made excellent arrangements and organized the program. We left early for the two hour drive. Breakfast was on the way and we had the famous poha

namkeen of Malwa along with jalebi and kachori. All along the way River Narmada follows you. Soon we were at Omkareshwar. We crossed the bridge to the other side and first went to see a yogi on the banks of Narmada. We then took a boat to the bathing ghat. Narmada is the least polluted river here. It narrows between the mountains and this section is compared to the waist of a lady. We had a really exhilarating bath in the cool waters of Narmada. Had to drag ourselves out, it was so beautiful. I, who was at first hesitant to take a bath in the river with other people, now got the hang of how to manage and was really looking forward to bathe in the river wherever possible. After bath we had to cross another huge bridge to get to the Omkareshwar Mandir. It is a huge temple with a few floors. But the main mandir itself is rather small. There is the Omkareshwar who is also known as the Mukti Linga and Mother parvati is there in the back. We were all allowed to pour water on Lord Shiva and

offer flowers and bilva patra to the Lord and Mother Parvati. When we were done we went and sat in a side verandah from where we could see the sanctum. Soon a couple of priests came to where we were and chanted the rudram and distributed coconuts to all of us as prasad. Then we moved to another floor and sat around reciting Shiva Mahimna stotra. A couple of people in the group were real good singers and sang nice bhajans in which the others followed. Then we went back across the bridge and went to see Mameshwar another Jyotir Linga. The priest did a nice puja and we could all touch our heads to the lingam and pray. As we sat in the outer temple the priests came and again recited the rudram.

After that we went back to Gajanan ashram and had lunch there. After a short break we left around 2 pm and drove to a small village where Shiva lingams are shaped out of the natural stones from the banks of Narmada. It was interesting to walk through the small narrow mountain roads sometimes going down and sometimes up. We ended up at a small place which was half

filled with Lingas of many shapes and sizes and they all looked beautiful and one of a kind. After much deliberation Shuddhanandaji bought a lingam for a swami in Cuttack.

Maheshwar

From there it was a long drive to Maheshwar. The road was not good for quite a distance which made it even more time consuming. We finally reached the place at dusk. The temple was on the banks of Narmada. We all headed for a bath which was cool and refreshing. After the bath we visited the Shiva temple and Shuddhanandaji related an incident that happened a few years back. They had stopped at the same spot during their Narmada Parikrama and while preparing food a monk from nowhere visited them and asked them for food. They said the food was being prepared and said they would call him when it was ready and he said he would be in a small temple nearby. When the food was ready they did not find him. Others who were around said they did not see any one leave. It is still a mystery to this day who this was.

We then went up a hill to see a temple complex built by Rani Ahalya Bai. It was quiet and peaceful and the temples were beautiful. Ahalya Bai was the queen of Malwa territory and is responsible for making Indore, a small town, into a well built big city. Her own capital though was Maheshwar a small place on the banks of Narmada. Where she built a temple complex and performed worship on special occasions. She was a devotee of Lord Shiva and built many temples.

There is a beautiful Ganesh temple, a Shiva temple and also a temple of Sahasrabahu Arjuna who was an emperor who ruled with his capital at Maheshwar also.

Then we walked down to another level of the mountain where there was another Shiva temple with huge linga. The singers in our group started singing bhajans of Lord Shiva. We all joined in the chorus of *Mahadeva, sadashiva*. It was an ecstatic moment and felt like a climax to the day's events and one could really feel the presence of Lord Shiva on the mountains. We returned back to Indore at midnight. It was a hectic but memorable trip.

Chamunda Temple

Next day was a trip to Devas, famous for the Chamunda temple. Someone said it is a hard climb to the top of the mountain and I might have trouble climbing up as I had a broken ankle the year before which sometimes still would give trouble. I decided to go anyway and was praying that there should be some way for me to have darshan as I really wanted to see this temple after all the stories I had heard about the temple. I had a pleasant surprise waiting for me. By the grace of the Divine Mother we came to know that now there is a road that went all the way up and there was no need to use the walking path. As we waited for the second car to approach we bought a huge garland for the goddess.

The first temple we visited was of Tulja Devi which is also a beautiful temple. These temples are carved out of the mountain rocks and the deity is also a carved stone figure.

The face is painted red with very large and powerful eyes. Our singers sang a beautiful bhajan on Durga. Then

we went around the side of the hill to the Chamunda temple. It was a huge form carved out of the mountain rock and the goddess was seated on a lion in her full splendor holding many weapons. The priest garlanded her with our flower garland and offered puja. There was also a Kalabhairava temple in the premises.

Ashram of Swami Shivom Tirtha

From there we went to the Ashram of Shivom Tirtha. We had heard of this Swami and were also reading his book on sadhana at the Miami ashram and so it was very special to be able to visit this ashram. The place was beautiful, right on the banks of Narmada. The resident Swamis

welcomed us with great love and we were treated to a nice lunch. Before we left the Swami also gave us dakshina (a token gift of money) as is the custom of respect when other monks visit. After lunch we went back to Indore and left for the airport. We returned to Hyderabad via Raipur.

Indore Program

A very memorable trip in great company. It was also nice to attend the Kriya program at Indore and meet the disciples from both Indore and Bhopal. Their love and commitment to Gurudev and Kriya and the extraordinary love and care they treated us with and the excellent arrangements made for the whole trip were really commendable.



At the temple of Omkareshwar

ATMA-VIDYA

SELF KNOWLEDGE

KAIVALYOPANISHAD

Mantra 14

*punasca janmāntarakarmayogāt
sa eva jīvaḥ svapiti prabuddhaḥ
puratraye kṛīdati yasca jīve
tatastu jātam sakalam vicitram
ādhāra mānanda makhanda bodham
yasmin layam yāti puratrayam ca*

Meanings

punah-again, *ca*-also, *janma* –birth *antara*-other, *karma*-action, *yogat*-association *sa*-that *eva*-indeed, *jīvaḥ*-individual, *svapiti*-dreams *prabuddha*-awakened *pura*-city, *traye*-three, *kṛīdati*-plays, *yah*- that, *ca*-also, *jīvaḥ*- individual, *tatah*-to him, *tu*-alone, *jatah*- born, *sakalam*-everything, *vicitram*-various or colorful, *adharam*-substratum or support, *anandam*- bliss, *akhanda*-unbroken, *bodham*-consciousness, *yasmin*-from where, *layam*- dissolution, *yati*-attains, *puratrayam*-three cities, *ca*-also

Substance

Again due to actions the individual goes from life to life

as if awakened from sleep. From the individual who plays in the three bodies of gross astral and causal is born the colorful world. In the unbroken awareness that is the substratum of bliss the three bodies are dissolved.

Commentary-

The three cities are the three bodies- the gross, astral and the causal. In the wakeful state we play with the gross body, in the dream state we play with the astral body and in the deep sleep state it is the causal body. Because of karma, the individual goes from one life to another just like getting up from a dream. The past life becomes like a dream and the present life becomes reality. This type of life goes on life after life and an ordinary person enjoys the

pleasures and pains but the spiritual person who is awakened maintains unbroken consciousness. We should be in that unbroken, continuous consciousness. Ordinary people go to a higher level of consciousness during prayer and meditation but it comes down again and so is not an *akhanda bodha* and it becomes *khanda* or broken. Ramakrishna Paramahansa gave the example of a beautiful pond covered with weeds. You cannot see the water. When you put your hand in and move

the weeds you can see clear water below but when you take out your hand the water is covered up with weeds in no time. In human life when we meditate and pray the mind is elevated but when you are away again the mind is down. This unbroken awareness is the substratum or support of the bliss. For one in that state of awareness the three bodies do not exist any more. Staying there, he watches what is going on but does not get associated with it.



Navaratri at Gurukulam

PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

FAITH IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

Jyothi Bathina

There have been a spate of natural disasters lately. Cyclone Phailin devastated Odisha, affecting thousands, and as we go to press, the staggering numbers are coming in from the Phillippines. 10,000 people dead in one city alone. Hundreds more across the islands. Bodies hanging from trees and splayed across sidewalks. As I read the comments online, among the many voices of sympathy and prayer, there are voices of doubt.

“How can you believe in God, when He let’s this happen?”

“God didn’t stop the typhoon, so why will He help them now?”

Tragedies like this always make me stop and think. They do seem terribly cruel and brutal. How does one answer the doubters, those who either have no faith in a God that allows suffering, or quickly lose that faith when they are subjected to suffering themselves?

In thinking about the extreme weather events, it seems to me that global warming is increasing the intensity of natural weather patterns and that it is not God but Man that is to blame, at least in part. Natural disasters are of course a part of life here on Earth, as our long-suffering planet shifts and moves and adjusts her orbit. But many of them could be preventable if we took better care of her and didn’t contribute to her destruction. There are those who will say, however, that if God was truly merciful, then He would intervene and keep such events from happening.

This is where I have to disagree. God may be merciful, He may be kind, but He is no babysitter or nursemaid, who constantly watches our every move and takes action to prevent us from falling or hurting ourselves.

You see, God has faith in us, His children. He trusts, like a good parent, that we have the sense to eventually do what

is right. He knows that if He constantly intervenes, we will never understand the consequences of our behavior. He set the world in motion, providing us with earth, wind, sky, fire and water, giving us food and resources, the capacity to love, and a brain that is capable of rational thought and continuous invention. Given every opportunity, we are asked only to have faith and to live well, preserving the world and its flora and fauna, with which we have been entrusted, being kind to one another, and finding our way back home to a sphere where the vagaries of nature and human nature can never affect us.

Surely the innocent victims in Odisha and the Phillippines did not ask for such punishment. They are not the ones polluting the earth, increasing emissions, destroying the ozone layer and creating global warming. Unfortunately, we all bear the burden whether or not we actively take part in the destruction. The earth can only take so much abuse before she succumbs to the ill effects of our reckless behavior. And when she does, then everyone suffers, including the innocent.

So what can we do? Rather than lashing out at a God who has faith in us, we need to have faith in Him. We need to relish each day we are granted and all the gifts it brings, using every resource we are given to make our community, country and world more habitable and hospitable for our fellow human beings. Reducing our footprint, recycling, reducing waste, being charitable, insignificant as these actions may seem, they add up and when many participate, they make an impact. More and more, we are becoming aware of the damage we have done and we are trying to make amends. We are looking around us for the first time, examining where our food comes from, where our goods are made, advocating for fair trade, and for the rights of those who labor so we may thrive. Change has been slow in coming, but it is surely coming.

Whatever name we call Him by, we need to understand that despite all our fumbling mistakes, God continues to love and provide for us. We need to be grateful for the opportunity to correct those mistakes, to help each other in times of distress, and for the

faith He continues to place in us despite everything. A faith that He sees being justified in the fact that we are finally awakening and advocating for change. How do we repay the strong, unwavering faith God places in us, his unruly children? By marching forward with an equally reciprocal faith in Him, through the tragedies we have brought upon ourselves, as well as those which strike us unaware. It is during such events that heroism, sacrifice and compassion thrive. God is not absent on such occasions, nor does He sit coldly by and

allow us to suffer. He appears in the form of the volunteers who help the fallen. He is the good Samaritan who offers to share his meal when his neighbor is starving or swims out to sea to grab a floundering child. He is in the countless acts of kindness, big and small, the many proofs of courage and selflessness that surround each disaster or tragedy. This is how we repay each other and the loving God who allows those qualities to come to the fore, by hanging onto faith, even in the eye of the storm.



After effects of Cyclone Phailin

CYCLONE PHAILIN HITS ODISHA

On the 12th of October, Odisha was hit by cyclone Phailin which was classified as a very severe cyclone. It made land fall near Gopalpur, which is about 120 kilometers from Balighai.

Several hundred thousand people have lost their homes due to the cyclone. The devastation is most severe in Ganjam and in adjacent districts. After the cyclone there have been terrible floods in some parts of Odisha, especially in the districts of Balasore and Baripada. However, the worst affected in this cyclone are the trees. Even in our ashram campus in Balighai more than one hundred trees are either uprooted or badly affected.

Our ashrams in Odisha and Balashram were well prepared to house the local people and to provide food if needed. At our Balashram and Dhyana Mandir in Pattamundai we housed a few hundred villagers on the deadly night, and the next day they went back to their homes.

Baba Prajnananandaji was present at Balighai during the cyclone and sends his message to all of us to offer a kind and compassionate hand to serve those who are suffering whenever and wherever possible.

Relief Efforts by Prajnana Mission

Health Relief Camps were held at Odamber, Balasore

4 doctors, technical staff and 6 volunteers were present and treated hundreds of flood victims.

Veterinary Health camps were held at different villages of Mayurbhanj where several hundred cows, goats and chicken were treated.

- 100 bags of cow feed were procured for Baripada. cow feed for Balasore will be procured. Allopathic medicines and veterinary medicines will be procured from Cuttack
- Prajnana Mission is sending some monks and brahmacharis to stay in

Baripada and Balasore to help with the relief work. Many kriyavans also assisted.

- The Scout team of Balashram students has also participated in the relief work at Kendrapada

The mission also plans to undertake massive tree plantation programs in affected areas and provide study materials and financial assistance to students. Financial assistance was also provided to the Chief Minister Relief fund by the Mission



Prajnana Mission presenting cheque to Chief Minister, Odisha



Medical Camps and Food Distribution

AROUND THE WORLD

INDIA

Navaratri at Gurukulam

Oct 5-15

Navaratri or the Nine day festival of the Divine Mother is celebrated during the sharad ritu – the autumn season (Month of Sept – Oct). This year the Navaratri begins on the 5th of October ending on the 13th and Vijaya Dashami or the 10th day of victory is celebrated on the 14th of October. Mother is traditionally worshipped as Nava Durga in all her nine special forms. The festival is also connected to Lord Rama who is said to have performed the worship of the Divine Mother before his war with Ravana and gained victory in the battle

A more than life size idol of Mother Durga was created through the devotion and loving art work of Swami Nityapremanandaji with the assistance of other Brahmacharis of the Ashram. The transformation of Mrinmayee (idol of Mother Durga made of Mud) into Chinmayee (a Living form of light and knowledge) over night

was spectacular. Enclosed in a specially created mandir within the premises of Deva Mandir, Mother Durga holding weapons in her ten hands and depicted as riding on a lion and slaying Demon Mahishasura was complete with all ornaments and crown and looked at once beautiful and compassionate offering protection to her devotees and at the same time fierce in disciplining the demons (our negative qualities).

The morning of the 5th started out with the adhivasa program under the expert guidance of Swami Muktipriyananda assisted by Priests well versed in the worship of Mother Durga. The ceremony took more than three hours which included the invocation of the Mother in all her splendor by elaborate worship and pranapratishta (invoking of the life principle).

The evening puja started at 7.30 under the guidance of Swami Muktipriyanandaji, with Durga ashtottara satanama archana (chanting of the 108 names of Mother Durga) and Shodasha upachara puja (offering of sixteen special

modes of worship.) This was followed by the Sapta sati (Chandi) Parayana (reading of the seven hundred shlokas in praise of the glory the Divine Mother). The ceremony concluded with arati. All Ashram residents and many devotees attended the program and felt blessed by Mother Durga.

An additional feature for these nine days is the recitation of Ramacharitamanasa (the story of Lord Rama narrated by Goswami Tulasi Dasji). The recitation was conducted by Swami Srikrishnanandaji in his melodious and powerful voice which inspired the audience with devotion to Lord Rama.

On the Mahashtami day (day 8) Chandi homa was conducted in the morning under the direction of Swami Muktipriyananda with Swami Matrukrupananda, Br. Prasanna and Swami Gurupriyananda. The Purnahuti of the homa was done on the Mahanavami day (Day 9). On the day of Vijaya (10th day) after the morning puja the Divine Mother was given a grand send off. The visarjana ceremony took place with the idol being taken in procession with sankirtan to the pond on the backside of the ashram

where it was immersed in waters as per the tradition. In spite of the inclement weather on the last two days Navaratri was completed successfully with the blessing of the Divine Mother and Gurudev. May the blessings of God and Guru be upon us all.

Dec 1-3

Gurudev's Mahasamadhi Anniversary was celebrated at Hariharananda Gurukulam with special worship and meditation.

Initiation Programs and Meditation Camps

Regular monthly meditation camps, and initiation programs were held at Cuttack and Bhubaneshwar.

Initiation programs were conducted in several centers of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu with Swami Samarpanananda.

Up Coming Programs

Jan 7-9

Gita Jnana Yajna and Initiation Program at Bhubaneshwar

Jan 10-12

Gita Jnana yajna and Initiation Program at Cuttack

Jan 14-20 IIKYS

The International Intensive Kriya Yoga Seminar will be held with the Monks

and Yogacharyas of Hariharananda Gurukulam.

Inauguration of the Health Center

The construction of the new Hariharananda charitable health center near Jagatpur is progressing rapidly and the inauguration is planned for the 4th of Feb - on the auspicious day of Sripanchami (Saraswati Puja)

AMERICAS

Kriya Yoga Fall Retreat at Mother Center- Sept 19-24, 2012

The Mother Center USA celebrated the 16th Foundation Day with Swami Atmavidyanandaji and several of our Yogacharyas. The 5 day Seminar was well attended by disciples from USA, South America and Canada. The theme for the seminar was the Practice of Yoga. The topic of swami Atmavidyanandajis talks was "Verses from Hatha Yoga Pradipika"

Foundation Day of Homestead - Ashram Sept 22, 2012

Mother Center was blessed with a surprise visit of Paramahansa Prajnananada for the 16th foundation day. Baba continued to be in silence

except for a brief talk on the foundation day. On September 22nd, the Foundation Day of the ashram was observed with an early morning havan and Guru puja & a Garden tour in the afternoon. The evening was celebrated with talks by Yogacharyas and longtime disciples of Gurudev involved from the very beginnings of the ashram.

In his message Baba Prajnananandaji said, "This is a special day. On this day sixteen years ago our beloved Gurudev established this ashram and dedicated it to all sincere seekers. He created a beautiful garden and wanted every seeker to cultivate their inner sanctuaries, clearing away the weeds and pests, to create a real garden of God consciousness, which is in our hearts. Please care for Gurudev's ashram and your inner lives.

I am happy that Gurudev's work is carried out by many sincere sevakas, disciples, and devotees all over the world.

I am praying for each one of you and the entire creation."

Several initiation programs and intensive

programs were held at most centers during the months of October through December.

Special Programs and Celebrations

Dec 3-5 Mahasamadhi Seminar, Homestead, with Swami Atmavidyanandaji, FL.

Dec 24-25 Holy Days Seminar Homestead, FL

Dec 30-Jan1 NewYear Seminar Homestead, FL.

SOUTH AMERICA

Initiation programs were held in Brazil, Columbia and Argentina.

Aug 15-19

A retreat was held in Baranquilla, Columbia

Dec 9-16

A retreat was held in Brasilia, Brazil.

EUROPE

Initiation programs were conducted in several centers in Germany and in Vienna, Holland, Hungary, France, England, and Spain,

Nov 13-17

The Annual International Retreat was held in Frankfurt, Germany

Dec 3, Special Event

Gurudev's Mahasamadhi commemoration

Dec 23- Jan 1

New Year Seminar at Sterskel, Holland



Baranquilla Retreat,
South America



New Guest House at Kriya
Vedanta Gurukulam, Joliet

Visit our web site:

www. prajnanamission.org

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