

Sthita Prajna



Guru Vandana

*yo guruh sa shivah prokto yah sivah sa guruh smatau
vikalpam yastu kurveta sa naro gurutalpagah*

Understand that Guru is Shiva as Shiva is Guru. Any person
who differentiates is doing a great crime.

Guru Gita

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

FROM THE EDITORS :

“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 2014 was a year of great events. Celebration of Gurudev’s 40 years of coming to West ,Opening of a New ashram in USA and several other celebrations and retreats at the gurukulam and world wide. We move on to welcome year 2015, a very special year in the history of Puri, the year of Navakalebar of Lord Sri Jagannath.

“Message of the Master” talks of the significance of *maha mrityunjaya mantra* a beautiful mantra dedicated to the one who has conquered death.

“Prajnana Vani” talks of silence as yoga. Qualities of Wisdom talks of Ahimsa as the noblest of virtues.

Devi Mahatmya elaborates on mantras 29-42 of Devi Suktam.

Patanjali Yoga Sutras comment on Memory as recapitulation or comprehension of past experience.

Kaivalya Upanishad discusses the state of one who knows himself as different from the *triputi*, who lives like the *sakshi*-separate from the *triputi*.

Excerpts from some of Paramahansa Prajnanananda’s seminal works continue to elaborate on meditation. The significance of prayer before meals is commented upon.

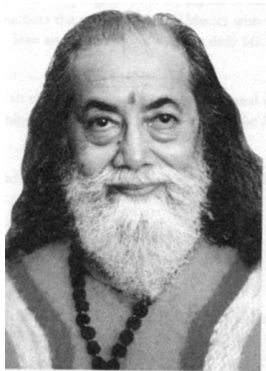
We bring you the Christmas and New Year message of Guruji and excerpts from other messages.

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

Sthita Prajna wishes the readers a happy and prosperous New Year and thanks the sponsors for their continued support.

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

MAHA MRITYUNJAYA MANTRA



The Vedas, in general, and the Upanishads in particular, contain countless mantras, hymns, and prayers. They speak of high spiritual truth that can be experienced through chanting and contemplating their meaning. It is also meditation when one can chant with deep love and remember these beautiful meanings. One of the most beautiful mantras is *maha mrityunjaya mantra*.

The literal meaning of the title of the mantra is that which makes you free from great danger and difficulties, such as death. Or it can also be explained as the mantra dedicated to the one who has conquered death.

People live with constant fear. The most common fear is

the fear of death. One who has conquered death is *mrityunjaya*. One who helps to get rid of this fear of death is also *mrityunjaya*. He is Lord Shiva. The *maha mrityunjaya mantra* is the mantra dedicated to Lord Shiva to dispel the fear of death and to grant immortality. The mantra is as follows:

*om trayambakam
yajamahe sugandhim
pushthivardhanam,
urvarukamiva bandhanat
mrityormukshiyamamritat*

“O Lord, You have three bodies.” Meaning: I worship and adore him with three eyes, who can give me nourishment and vitality. He will also, as the cucumber is detached from the creeper, make me detached and free from death. He is granting immortality.

Tryambakam: One who has three eyes. Who has three eyes? Ordinarily we think that we have two eyes. The two eyes represent the eyes of duality. We live in this world of duality, pleasure and pain, success and failure, loss and

gain, winter and summer, and so forth. We all have been blessed with the third eye, which is also called the spiritual eye. This eye allows the experience of unity. To be free or liberated, we must be free from all dualities, and we must experience unity everywhere. This is an epithet of Lord Shiva, Mother Kali, Durga, and so on, who have three eyes too.

Yajamahe: I love Thee: I want to love Thee. I want to know Thee. Here the mantra speaks of developing intense love for God. When one who loves God and perceives God everywhere, one is free from all miseries and suffering. *Yaj* in Sanskrit means to adore, to worship, and to express love and welcome. It is the art of love and welcoming God into life. When one establishes a relationship with God, then one's attachment decreases, one feels more loving, and thus free from fear. *Yaj* is the quality of a seeker or a devotee who brings and welcomes God into life. Thus, a person becomes one with God.

*S u g a n d h i m
pushtivardhanam:* One with fragrance and who gives nourishment. Human life

becomes more beautiful and fragrant with good and divine qualities of love, compassion, and kindness. When a fruit ripens or a flower blooms, its aroma develops and it is attractive to others. The ripe fruit is nourishes in every way and gives nourishment to others too. This part of the mantra speaks of human perfection. This is possible through living a disciplined life of prayer and meditation. One prays to God, O God, my Lord, You will remove my all evils, and I will remain in truth; only the fragrance will remain, and people will say that I am divine. I am divine. I am divine in three bodies. My life will be a complete life."

*Urvarukam iva
bandhanat mrityor
mukshiyamamritat :* I will be detached from the creeper like a cucumber, and I will be immortal, free from death. This cucumber is a special variety of cucumber. In India it is mostly used as a fruit from which a nice drink is prepared. While it grows on a tiny, thin creeper, the farmer covers it with straw to protect it. The only way to see whether it is ripe or not, is to see whether it

is detached from the creeper. “O Lord, just as the cucumber when it ripens into a fruit, detaches itself from the plant, you will separate me from evil and give me truth. Give me freedom.”

A cucumber is compared to a human life. The creeper is the world of attachment. We have to live in the world, where we grow, as the tiny cucumber grows on the creeper. Like the farmer who takes care of the cucumber, as well as the plant, the teachers help the students to grow and to be free from negatives.

U r v a r u k a m i v a bandhanat: bandhana is bondage. The fruit separates itself from the bondage of the tree. Similarly, each human being should try to be free from all sorts of emotional bondage and attachment in order to be truly liberated. “O Lord, make me detached from bondage. I will remain compassionately detached. I have compassion because I have a body, but I will remain detached.”

Mrityor mukshiya mamritat: “O Lord, I have a humble prayer. I know attachment is death, and detachment is liberation. So from my daily death of emotional attachment, make me free. Make me free from ignorance, because of which I am forgetting Thee. Lead me from death to immortality.” Immortality is *amrit*, derived from the root word *rita*. *Ri* means going. My talk is going. *Ta* means staying, *sthiti*, *gati*. Who is going? *Am* or soul is going from my mouth, entering through your ear, and staying in the brain. This is *am-rita* or immortality. “O Lord, please make me free, give me constant awareness of the inner-Self, and I will feel constant immortality and liberation.” This is the meaning of this beautiful mantra, when this mantra is practiced in the right manner, with proper contemplation of its meaning, one is free from misfortune, difficulties, accident, and diseases, and one perceives constant immortality.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR 2015

Loving and Divine Soul,

Let the choicest blessings
of God and the masters be upon
you all.

I pray for all of you while
the entire world celebrates
Christmas and prepares to
welcome the 2015 New Year.
Let these festive days create a
spirit of joy, peace, and love,
not only at this time, but during
every breath, for all time to
come. Remember that success
in life is possible due to sincere
effort and divine grace. The
grace of the Divine is more
available to those who dedicate
their lives to hard work with a
positive and prayerful attitude.
Gurudev often reminded us that
life is not an empty dream.

Discipline, dutifulness,
and devotion are the three
determinants of our success in
any field. As a regularly cleaned
copper pot shines brightly, in the
same way, when we work
sincerely and diligently, we
experience the crowning
achievements.

A beautiful verse in
Sanskrit says:

*pathato nasti murkhatvam
japato nasti patakam
jagratastu bhayam nasti
kalaho nasti mauninah*

“One who studies is free
from ignorance. One who
remembers God or chants the
divine name is free from
downfall. One who is always
alert is free from fear. One who
observes silence has no conflict
with others.”

In this verse, there is
insistence on practice, whether
it is study, japa, alertness, or
even observing silence.

1. Study is not an occasional
entertainment; it is a
regular habit. One who
studies knows. I have
seen my Gurudev with a
few scriptures next to his
pillow, which he could
read whenever he
wanted. Study also
includes meditation. Study
is the door to knowledge
that removes ignorance
from our lives. We should
study every day. A good
book is a good friend and
gives us good company.

2. Japa means chanting the divine name, praying, meditating, or practicing any other spiritual discipline. Japa is also observing the breath while giving thanks to God (ajapa japa). Someone who practices this will be free from downfall; the divine power will protect this person during difficulties. We should maintain our spiritual practices, especially observing the breath while giving thanks to the Lord.
3. Alertness or Vigilance: A proverb says, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Constant awareness of the inner Self ("who I am") produces an inner awakening and freedom from all fear, including the fear of death.
4. Silence is an art and a science. It is a dynamic philosophy in practice. Unknowingly, we observe silence every day during deep sleep. Knowingly, we practice it during meditation. One who is intelligent speaks

less and reflects more. Too much talk breeds conflict and confusion. We should use the special art of speaking in our daily lives to live better, more peaceful lives.

New Year is coming. We make many new resolutions, but as Gurudev said, "An ounce of practice is better than tons of theories." We must be regular and diligent in our practices. Time is constantly, incessantly flowing; it never waits for anyone. When we use time well, we have more opportunity. Let us live prayerful and vigilant lives. Let us be worthy instruments in the hands of the Lord.

This year in India two special events are going to occur: the Navakalevara of Lord Jagannath, when the forms of the Lord change, which hasn't happened for nineteen years, and the Kumbha Mela of Nasik, which hasn't occurred in twelve years.

On the occasion of Christmas and the New Year, I am sending my love and best wishes to all of you, and I am praying for all those in need in this creation.

With Love,

Prajnanananda

PRAJNANAVANI - THE VOICE OF WISDOM

THE ART OF SILENCE



*Chitram vata tarormule vridhdah sishyah gurur yuva
Gurostu mauna vyakhyanam sishyastu chinnah samsayah*

Beneath the Banyan tree the disciples are old and the guru preceptor is young. The guru is teaching in silence and the doubts of the disciples are disappearing.

One art of living is known as 'silence.' In the Bhagavad Gita (10:38), Lord Krishna says, *maunam chaivasmi guhyanam*: I am the silence among all secrets. So God is saying 'I am silence.' So what does silence mean? Does it mean not to speak? Does it mean to speak intelligently?

When we all were born, the tongue was the first sense organ to become active. Notice

how a newborn baby keeps the eyes closed most of the time and keeps the tongue active. The tongue is different in that it has a special quality. The eyes only have one action, which is to see. The ears only hear. The tongue has double the work, to taste and talk. In Sanskrit, there is a proverb:

*jihvyagre vardhate
laxmi* - Prosperity comes through your tongue.

jihvyagre mitra
bandhava - You get many
friends through your tongue

jihvyagre bandhan
praptah - You get many
enemies and difficulties through
your tongue.

jihvyagre mrityu
nischaya - Death might come
because of your tongue.

This tongue can give two
types of things: friends and
enemies; good health and
disease; bring prosperity and
death. To keep the tongue under
control, there is another Sanskrit
proverb:

so jihvya na vasir
yasya bhojane jalpane tatha:
one who does not keep one's
own tongue in control while
talking and while eating

bhavanti dukhino
nityam: always becomes
sorrowful and suffers a lot.

Keeping the tongue
under control is depicted in the
image of Kali, the Hindu
goddess, who is holding the
tongue with both teeth and
biting. Spiritual life is a life of
discipline and includes keeping
the tongue under control.

What is silence? Silence
in Sanskrit is *mauna*. The
simple meaning is not to speak.
But God has given us the mouth

to speak. When the child is
growing up, the child listens to
the sound from others,
especially from the mother. The
baby creates and imitates many
types of sound, just like we
might speak to a parrot.
Gradually the parrot remembers
and reproduces the sound. From
childhood till today, we have
been talking. Human beings are
considered as a talking and
thinking animal. We speak a lot,
from morning till night. Not only
that, some people also speak
while sleeping. When you
analyze your life, what type of
talk do you entertain day and
night? Is it really useful or do
you speak because of a habit?
If you analyze your life notice
that even if there is nobody
present, you start speaking.
When people look at a dog they
speak. They look at a picture
and speak. Then there is
speaking on the telephone.
People feel so helpless and
lonely if nobody is there to
speak with. We speak day and
night.

I remember a professor
of philosophy who was a very
popular speaker in Orissa. One
day he honestly confessed, "I
have spoken so much.
Everyday I have been invited
to give lectures. Sometimes,
two, three, four talks a day in

different parts of the State. I spoke a lot and people loved it. If my words would have been put in air balloons, they might have covered one ocean. But if I look within, I see my life is an empty life. I spoke a lot, people enjoyed a lot, but my achievement is nothing.” He said this nearly fifteen years ago when he was in his fifties. He said, “Looking at you, I compare myself and I see that you are on the right way and I was on the wrong way.” The purpose of telling this story is that we speak day and night, but what is the use? We created some friends, but more enemies and we repented, “Why did I speak like that? I could have stopped talking like that. I was foolish to speak like that.”

There is a proverb: after the thief is gone, man becomes intelligent. So we repent after committing a mistake. An intelligent person is one who stops committing mistakes. An average person is one who repents after the mistakes. The foolish one never repents that “I made a mistake.” Keep your tongue under control.

In our spiritual life the primary necessity is to have control over speech. Many great spiritual masters have

observed silence for long periods of time. Year after year they did not speak. There are some who have even stopped speaking for their entire life. I don’t say that you shouldn’t speak, nevertheless, you should bring discipline to your speaking.

We lose energy through every sense organ. Of all the sense organs, most of the energy is lost through the eyes and mouth. If you look a lot, the eyesight becomes weak. So, if you watch television and the computer a lot, your eyes will be weaker. If you listen a lot to music or loud talk, slowly you will find that the quality of your listening decreases. We also lose a lot of energy through speaking. The mouth, or the tongue, regulates two sense organs: The organs of speech and the genitals. Those who keep the tongue under control can easily regulate and bring moderation to these two sense organs.

Let us develop a habit of observing silence daily. Sometimes we do this during retreats, observing silence for two, three, or four days. In the beginning, people might feel a little restless because the tongue wants to talk. But those who observe it, at the end, they feel the benefit.

Mahatma Gandhi observed silence once a week. Even though he was a popular leader and he was working day and night, he still observed silence once in a week. If in our daily life, we can find the time once in a week to observe silence, it is very good.

Any discipline in our life needs determination. We must use our will power and have the attitude of: "I will not speak at any cost." In the beginning, you may find it a little difficult. But later on, you will find that everybody adjusts with you. Every day try to observe one or two hours of silence.

Those who are famous painters or poets, for example, are mostly contemplative. They observed silence and through it, discovered a new creation.

Silence is yoga. And if you want to be a yogi, you should know how to remain silent. There is a saying, that when we speak, because of the slip of tongue, we commit mistakes. To keep your tongue free from slips you must remember with whom you speak, on what you speak, when, how and where you speak.

Intelligent people speak less.

I remember when Gurudev was new to the West; somebody telephoned to have an appointment with him and asked how much money he had to pay for half an hour appointment. Baba said there was no need to pay and to just come. The man thanked him and hung up the telephone. But he didn't come. Then Baba asked his host why the man did not come. The host asked Baba what he had said and Baba replied that he told him to come and not worry about paying money. The host replied, "You made a mistake. Because you said there was no charge, that man thought that you had nothing to offer. If you had said that you were charging a lot of money, then that man would have thought that you were really valuable." This is the Western mind set. Without money, you have no value.

So, how can you use your tongue in the right way? Suppose you want to write something on a blackboard. First, you have to clean it. After you clean, it should be clear enough to write something. Similarly, in order to speak intelligently, try to know how to be silent. One who knows the art of silent living is the most

successful person. Ordinarily people react over little things. If there is a little less salt in the food, the tongue reacts. If the thing is not done in the right way, the mind reacts. Generally people live a life of reaction. People think they are tired because of work. But the tiredness is mostly because of their reaction. Actions make you active; reaction makes you reactive and ultimately tired.

When you work with whole-heartedness, when you work with love, when you work with dedication, when you work with devotion, even though you might have worked for hours and hours, you will not be tired. If you don't like something or you don't accept the surroundings, you will be easily tired and irritated. So, to live in the right way and to speak in the right way begins just like cleaning the blackboard, which is to know how to live silently.

We should all observe silence daily. Every day we can have one or two hours of silence. Even while living a family life and being at home one should decide not to speak for this amount of time. Create this understanding with family members so that you can

observe silence. You can even try to stay silent for half a day or a full day. When you attend retreats try to stay silent every day. It is an opportunity to see how you live when you don't talk.

When I was a boy of eleven or twelve years nobody taught me about silence. Reading the life of Gandhi, I decided not to eat and not to talk every Sunday. It was not an easy work. My brothers would try to motivate and tempt me to eat and to talk. It was a test. It was a test of will power, but I was successful. I continued to observe this kind of silence for about fifteen years. In the beginning my parents were worried because I was so thin, but they accepted it. If we really make a decision and convince others that we are doing this for a good reason, others will accept it.

We should try to transform our life with love. Observe silence daily for one or two hours. Observe silence for half a day or one day in the week. Observe silence occasionally in retreats. You can wear a label saying, "I am in Silence" and no one will talk to you.

This silence, *mauna*, comes from mind, *mana*. If you want to have control and discipline over your mind, observing silence is a good tool. Practicing *khechhari mudra* - keeping the tongue rolled up, helps us keep the tongue under control. Through this we conserve a lot of energy in the body and mind. There is a yogic belief, "Those who have control over their tongue, those who speak truth, they are established in truth. Whatever comes out of the mouth becomes true. It is a yogic *siddhi*- a success." When they say, "God bless you," people get the blessings. If they say, "Let you be healed," people are healed. Use the tongue in a truthful way. Observe silence daily.

Those who observe silence and keep the tongue under control, they are known as *muni*. *mana*, *mauna* and *muni* — they sound similar. *Muni* means the person of meditation, contemplation, and intelligence.

Starting from today speak less. Speak when it is necessary to ask something and speak quietly so that only the person to whom you speak can hear, not others. You can make

your life more beautiful by bringing self-discipline. In the following issue, we will discuss how silence helps in our daily life. Silence can increase our physical and mental strength, bring success in our life, and we can overcome troubles and difficulties in our life.

Life is a gift of God. God has given us a human body. God has given us ten sense organs — eyes to see, ears to hear, nose to smell, tongue to taste, skin to touch, mouth to speak, hands to give and take, the genitals for procreation and pleasure, feet for movement, anus for excretion. We also have four inner instruments — mind to think, intellect to decide, memory to remember, ego to think, "I am". These fourteen instruments should be properly utilized. We should utilize every sense organ moderately and with self-control. Keep the tongue under control. Observe silence. Speak less. Speak slowly. Speak truthfully. Speak with love. Do not bring ego into your life. Bring moderation and discipline yourself. We should think, speak, and work with love, in God consciousness.

(From the talks of Baba Prajnananandaji at Kriya Yoga Institute)

NAVAKALEBARA

This year is the Navakalebar year of Lord Sri Jagannath of Puri. This elaborate ritual of Navakalebara occurs when there is an extra month of ashadha (months of June – July) once in about 8, 11, or 19 years based on astrological calculations. The last Navakalebara occurred in the year 1996. Year 2015 marks the Navakalebara after 19 years in Jagannath Puri.

What is Navakalebara?

Navakalebara literally means a new body or new embodiment. During this elaborate ritual of three and a half months the old vigrahas (idols) along with their coverings are buried after taking out the holy divine object known as *brahma vastu* out of the idols and installing it in the new idols in a secret ritual by a daita sevak who is blind folded and whose hands are padded, so he does not perceive the hidden object. It is a complete renewal of the idols. New wood is collected and new idols are made following the observance and performance of specific rituals during the six week period beginning with snana purnima. The temple is closed for public during this time. The

formless Attributeless Brahma is imminent in all forms with attributes. The installation of worshipped Brahma sakti or brahmavastu of the old idol which is beyond touch, sight and knowledge in this special way is Navakalebara which is a very special festival of Srikshetra.

What does this Navakalebara signify?

The ritual symbolizes the death of the body and the transmigration of the soul. The body is subject to constant change and flux. The atoms, molecules and cells of the body are always changing. Within this ever changing and perishable body the imperishable and changeless soul is ever present.

Change and transformation of human being is Navakalebara. Along with darshan of Navakalebara or the new body of the Lord, if one realizes that every moment Navakalebara or new body is being formed in each one's life along with new thoughts one can change his life. By strong determination, with good company and sadhana every moment can be made God conscious. In every work one can realise Lord Jagannath as the sole doer.

THE QUALITIES OF WISDOM

In the previous issue we discussed *amanitvam* (absence of pride) and *adambhitvam* (absence of vanity or stubbornness) as described in the Bhagavad Gita, chapter 13 titled Kshetra Kshetajna Vibhaga Yoga (“the Yoga of Knowledge of the Body Field and its Knower”). In verses 7-11, the Lord offers practical teachings about how to grow in knowledge and understanding. The third quality that every individual could contemplate is *ahimsa* (non violence).

Creation is divine. It is God’s creation. Among all created beings humans are considered the best ; therefore every individual has great responsibility. Human beings should be cultured and well trained. Developing noble qualities such as love and compassion will result in peace and harmony everywhere.

Unfortunately, there is clear evidence of cruelty, anger, aggression and hatred in human conduct, both in individuals and on a collective level. As a result

peace is absent in people, families, and society. Every human being has a moral responsibility to preserve and protect creation. Humans have ample skill, knowledge, and opportunity to support creation instead of destroying nature and other living beings.

As a result of the temptation of the tongue, the greed in the mind, the desire to possess more, and the desire for pleasure, human beings exploit nature and kill many. Evidence of violence among humans toward nature and toward other living beings is everywhere. What is the solution?

Since time immemorial, saints and sages have advocated the practice of non violence. The Vedas and other ancient texts including the Yoga Sutra of Sage Patanjali and the Bhagavad Gita elaborately describe *ahimsa* (non violence). *Ahimsa* means we should not hurt, injure, or kill.

Ahimsa is a very practical and broad concept. It

does not refer only to physical violence; real *ahimsa* includes non violent thoughts, words and activity.

Let us think how we can practice *ahimsa* in a practical manner:

1. Our eating habits should minimize violence.
2. We should minimize unnecessary desires, which will minimize exploitation of nature and natural resources.
3. We should live simply so our greed and possessions can be regulated.
4. When speaking with others, we should use humble words and loving expressions.
5. In our thoughts we should not entertain

harmful feelings towards others.

6. We should respect the rights of animals.
7. We should speak less and reflect more.
8. We should practice love and compassion in daily life.
9. We should understand that all creation is one family, and we are all related to each other.
10. We should pray for peace in creation and live peacefully.

Ahimsa is the noblest of values and practicing it expands our hearts, minds, and thinking. It will create inner peace and spiritual emancipation.

(P a r a m a h a m s a
Prajnanananda's Message from
Kriya Yoga International)

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

Truth means not to allow any falsehood in thoughts, words or deeds.

Without patience one cannot progress on spiritual path

Srimat Sannyal Mahashaya

PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

SCRUBBING MY WAY TO LIBERATION

Jyothi Bathina

Long ago, when my parents would tell me cleanliness was next to godliness in an attempt to get me to clean my room, I would roll my eyes and stuff all my clothes into the closet, shoving loose papers and scattered toys under my bed. As I got older, and I had places to go and things to do, the piles would continue to build in my closet and the dust would gather on my neglected belongings. Once I was married and then a mother, the dishes would often pile up in the sink, and the laundry would be neglected as I attempted to put meals on the table and finish my degree, while taking care of my family.

As I've gotten older, I've resented the fact that once in a while, when the piles get too big and I can no longer find what I need, I have to take precious time from creative activities to clean and scrub and organize. I felt it was beneath me to do menial housework when I could better spend my time writing or teaching or conducting research. Eventually, when I could finally afford it, I hired a cleaning

service, so I would be freed from this burden and continue to have a clean home.

Last summer, tired of giving up my Friday mornings to the cleaners, who would arrive at 7:30 a.m. and take over the house for the next three hours, forcing me and the dogs to sit outside while they cleaned, and resentful of the fact that my husband and I often spent the night before rushing to get the house ready for cleaning, I decided that we would be better off cleaning our own house. My husband agreed to take over the vacuuming, while I took on the bathrooms and the kitchen, the mopping and the dusting.

While I dreaded the work at first, once I began, I found it strangely satisfying. As I went from room to room throwing out garbage, dusting the furniture, arranging the pillows, scrubbing the toilets and mopping the floors, I began to feel a wonderful sense of accomplishment. It was more than mere pride however, that made me feel so elated. I found that as I cleaned the house, I

felt a simultaneous inner cleansing. The more my bathrooms sparkled, the more light filled my own heart. As I scrubbed the shower on my hands and knees, reaching for every corner, working extra hard on the grout between the tiles, I felt that I was scrubbing away the dark spots in my soul as well, making them vanish, and leaving a spotless surface behind.

I remember reading long ago, in a book written by a Buddhist monk, that any job done with mindfulness is meditation. He described the act of washing dishes as a moment of bliss and joy. "Try it," he urged. "The next time you wash the dishes, be mindful of every sensation, the lovely warm water on your hands, the soft suds, the smooth plates, how can it be anything but pleasurable?" It's true. When one cleans mindfully, the act of cleaning takes on a significance and affords a deep inner pleasure that is otherwise missed.

It made me realize why there is so much pleasure in the rituals of worship as well, when we carefully wipe the altar, and clean the idols, when we adorn the frames with fresh flowers, and put a fresh cotton wick in the oil lamp, and when we bathe the idols with water and milk,

before we rinse them off and then decorate them with sandalwood paste and vermilion. It is that same process of inner cleansing that takes place as we immerse ourselves in cleaning the prayer room, an act that brings great peace and calm to the mind before we begin prayer and meditation.

It has been nearly six months since I have let my cleaners go. I have no intention of bringing them back. While it gets tough sometimes, when there are pressing deadlines or we have to travel every weekend, and I start to complain about my overwhelming workload, once I pick up that sponge and fill the bucket with Pine-sol, I forget my frustrations and immerse myself in the moment. Each swish of the mop wipes away another layer of greed or anger, each flick of the duster eliminates another flaw. It is an experience I refuse to sacrifice to the all-consuming need for more time. How many hours do I spend mindlessly surfing the internet, filling my mind with useless facts? How much more valuable is it to spend a few hours each week, cleaning my house and my mind, making them both spotless, and scrubbing my way to liberation?

VALUABLE VOLUMES



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

PRACTICE OF MEDITATION

(From *THE UNIVERSE WITHIN*)

The Weed-Covered Pond

There is a parable which illustrates the necessity for constant spiritual practice, and the easily camouflaged nature of spiritual endeavor.

In a certain village there was a big water pond. The water was covered with so many weeds, that it looked like solid ground. Someone who didn't realize this was about to walk across. Another person warned him about the water below and showed him what lay underneath by pushing the weeds aside with his hands. The moment he removed his hands, however, the weeds moved back into place and covered up the water again. The first man went on his way, thankful for his narrow escape.

Keeping the Channel Open

This temporary insight and then the return of illusion is exactly what occurs during spiritual practice. Even if we get some inner peace and happiness during meditation, the weeds of delusion quickly choke it up. Opening the *Sushumna* channel and more importantly keeping it open, are not physical processes. The *Sushumna* is a subtle pranic channel in the spine. Practicing meditation regularly helps keep the *Sushumna* open. Whenever we experience inner peace, joy and calmness, we need to recognize it as the opening of the *Sushumna* channel. The external sign of an open *Sushumna* is the even exhalation of the breath from

both nostrils. Normally, the breath changes from one nostril to another during the day. It changes from right to left and left to right in a cyclic way and there are brief periods in between when it is equal in both the nostrils. To keep this breath flowing through both the nostrils for a long period of time, meditation is crucial. But remember, any practice should be regular and continuous.

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, Mandhara Parvath. 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, and 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.

DATES TO REMEMBER

January - March, 2015

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| January 5 | : Birthday of Paramahansa Yogananda |
| January 14 to 20 | : IIKYS |
| January 18 | : Mahasamadhi of Sannyal Mahashaya |
| January 20 | : Birthday of Sannyal Mahashaya |
| January 24 | : Saraswati Puja |
| February 17 | : Maha Shivaratri |
| March 7 | : Mahasamadhi of Yogananda |
| March 9 | : Mahasamadhi of Shriyukteshwar |

Teachings of the Masters

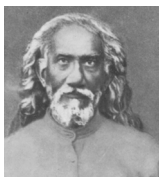
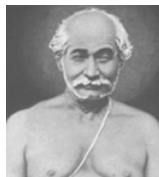


“The door of Kriya Yoga is open only to earnest seekers and sadhakas.”

Mahavatara Babaji

“Forget your past suffering and troubles. If you set your mind on selfrealization and work towards your spiritual upliftment, you will receive immense benefits.”

Lahiri Mahasaya



“Every day do regular swadhyaya coupled with meditation and study of spiritual books and scriptures.”

Swami Shriyukteshwar

“When one practices breath-control through Kriya, one enjoys a blissful state and one becomes free from ego.”

Sanyal Mahasaya

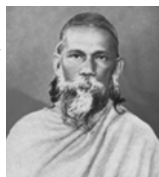


“Think and plan well before you take action, do not jump into anything at once.”

Paramahansa Yogananda

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

Swami Satyananda



“If while you work you feel that work is worship and the material world is the living presence of God, you will get liberation.”

Paramahansa Hariharananda

“Prayer is the expression of one’s love for God through the senses while in meditation all the senses are introvert.”

Paramahansa Prajnanananda



MYSTICISM OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS

PRAYER BEFORE MEALS

Religious people pray to God. Spiritual people do everything in love for God and offer every action to God. Food is a natural necessity of every living being. People who love God offer their food to God, and then eat. In the holy Bible, Jesus says, "Give us our daily bread." To wash yourself and to pray before eating are good habits. In cleaning the body, one must wash the hands, wash the feet if needed, wash the mouth, and then sit and eat. Cleaning your hands, feet and mouth brings a cooling effect to the body and mind.

When sitting to eat, always remember that it is not just time to eat, it is a time to pray. To eat in a peaceful mood, without tension, anxiety, or fear, and to eat with love is practical prayer. Before eating food, pray to God and offer the food to God. Food is brought from different sources and cooked by different people. The food is sanctified when you pray to God. With your thought, with your prayer, you invite positive

energy, which will give you all-round development. When praying to God, we pray to purify the body and food because the food not only nourishes the body, it also nourishes the mind and thoughts and gives us spiritual development.

In the Taittiriya Upanishad (3:2:1), it is said: *annam brahma iti vyajanat*, "Know food as God." You should eat food with prayer, and in every taste of food you should not ignore or forget God. During meals people talk, forgetting God; however, it is good to eat in silence and in a prayerful mood. In ancient times people sat on the floor and ate. Hindus used to practice praying before meals by taking water in their hands, and while praying to God, making a circle around the plate. This practice is known as *chalu*. When a circle is made around the plate, the insects that crawl on the ground usually will not come closer to the plate. It is a form of protection. When they eat, they offer a little of

the food to God at the side of the plate so that if there are any ants or other insects, with this food which is offered to God, they will take their share. So you also give a little food to them.

When you sip a little water before eating food, it lubricates the passageway, and you can eat easily. After the meal there is also a special prayer, and then water is sipped, which cleans the food passageway from the mouth to

the stomach. In this way no food will remain in the esophagus, it will go to the stomach; and when it is done with prayer, it brings more love and peace in life.

Avoid eating in between meals. Remember to pray and eat, even while drinking a glass of water. Offer it to God and drink. This offering is a beautiful practice and habit. Accepting everything through offering develops the attitude of surrender in the life of a seeker.

Do not be attached to the passing dreams of life. Live only for God and God alone.

As a mortal being you are limited but, as a child of god you are unlimited.

Calmness is the living breath of God's immortality with in you.

Paramahansa Yogananda

STORIES TO LIVE BY

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

When Alexander the Great set out to conquer the world, he first went to get the blessings of his master. His master blessed him and then expressed a wish to see a monk from India, asking him to please bring one back with him when he returned.

Alexander journeyed as far as modern day Pakistan and then he stopped to rest at a small kingdom. While there, he remembered that his master wanted to see a monk. So keeping his promise, Alexander set out to see if he could find one. After searching for many days to no avail, someone pointed to a monk who was sitting under a nearby tree. It was winter time and the golden sunlight illumined the monk's body, and he appeared the very essence of peace and serenity. Straightaway, Alexander went with his men and stood in front of the monk, obstructing the sunlight that so beautifully surrounded him. The monk gestured for him to move away,

then said to Alexander, "Why do you want to be an obstruction to someone's joy?" Alexander moved out of the way.

Speaking with a tone of authority, Alexander introduced himself as the conqueror of the whole world. Then he said it was his desire to take the monk with him. However, the monk did not consider that as an option. So Alexander tried to lure him into coming by offering him great wealth and royal honors. "You do not understand," said the monk. "I don't need anything and I will not go."

Alexander, who was not used to being defied, became enraged. "I am Alexander the Great," he said. "I am an emperor. If you do not follow my orders, I will cut you in two."

"You are lying," said the monk. "You cannot cut me in two. You are not an emperor; you are the slaves of my slaves."

Although Alexander felt insulted, at the same time he wanted to know why this monk was talking to him in such a bold manner. He demanded an explanation.

The monk calmly said, “I have conquered anger and anger is my slave. You yielded to your anger, becoming the slave of my slave. You said you will cut me into pieces. Anyone else in my place might have

trembled. But I know the truth – you cannot cut me. You can cut the body, but I am not the body. The body can die, but I am the soul, and I am eternal.”

Reflection

One who conquers the inner enemies like anger, greed, and desire, and knows his true identity, is greater than the great. One who knows the soul is immortal is not afraid of death.



Baba Prajnananandaji with Yogacharyas
at Denver Ashram Inauguration

THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

Message of Paramahansa Prajnanananda

Let the choicest blessings of God and the masters be upon you all. I take the opportunity to pray for you during this festival time.

Every year, the new moon in the month of October-November is the Deepavali Amavasya, the day of the Festival of Light. People in India decorate their houses, temples, and so forth with lamps.

Who does not love light? All living beings love light. Some can sleep well in daylight, then emerge to work in the dim light of night. Day and night are the play of light and life. If we look at a burning lamp or a candle, we will observe that the heat of the flame rises. The warmth is felt only right above the flame, but the light travels in all directions. The heat of the flame is the path of life, which should always be for our evolution; that is why it is moving up. The warmth of love, compassion, action, and knowledge, like the light, move in all directions, and depending

upon their strength, they expand. Knowledge, love, compassion, and action are the functions of the head, heart, and hands, and they are not limited; they are felt, seen, and manifest in all directions.

How should we live? It is said that we should live like a burning lamp. A burning lamp gives light to all and illuminates itself. A burning lamp can kindle other lamps with its flame. The beauty in life is to live for others with love, with caring and sharing, and as a result, goodness is spread in all directions.

A Sanskrit verse states:

*p a r o p a k a r a k a m
yesham jagartim hridaye
satam nashyanti vipadah
tesham sampadah syuh pade
pade*

“For those whose hearts are always eager to serve, difficulties are eradicated and prosperity arises in every step of life.”

We should learn to live for others. When we live for

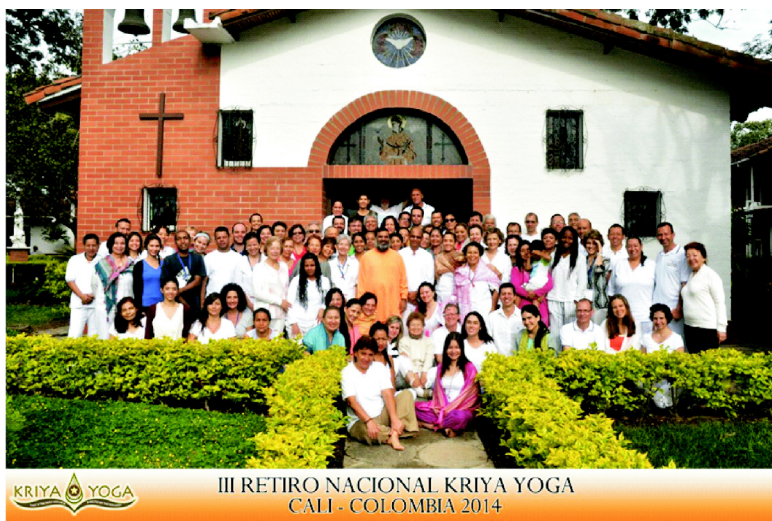
others, our hearts and minds are purified, and love and compassion flow more deeply. One who serves others seeks opportunities to help others.

When we walk at night with a lamp in hand, walking is easy, and we can help others see. When I was young, many people would walk to the local market and return in the evening with the help of a flashlight held by one person. There was no electricity, and many could not afford a flashlight. When I remember the evening walk of the village people, I remember how to live a life of sharing. Knowledge and

love multiply when shared. When a lamp lights many other lamps, a flood and festival of light ensues.

Just as we light lamps in our homes, let our body-houses be decorated with light. In every door of the body house, the sense organs, the inner chamber of the heart, the mind, let our lives be filled with knowledge, love, and actions that make our lives beautiful and productive.

During this time, let us all pray for world peace by cultivating inner peace, compassion, and lives of service.



National Kriya Yoga Retreat at Cali.

MYTHS AND METAPHORS

DEVI MAHATMYA



*ya devi sarvabhuteshu
chhaya rupena samsthita,
Namastasyai namastasyai
namastasyai namo namah*

//29-31//

Translation

Repeated salutations to the Devi who abides in all living beings in the form of reflection.

Metaphorical Explanation

O Divine Mother! We all bow to you as *chhaya*, present in all beings.

Chhaya is derived from the root verb *chho*, which means “to cut,” “to cut asunder,” “to mow,” and “to reap.” It is a

means to reduce something. *Chhaya* has multiple meanings including “shadow,” “image,” and “darkness”; metaphorically, this means ignorance.

1. *Chhaya* means “shadow” or “shade.” *Chiyati chhinatti surya-deh prakasham nashayati iti arthah*: “That which cuts or takes away the light of the sun or destroys brilliance and brightness is shadow.” The soul-sun is within, but ignorance covers the soul like a cloud.

2. *Chhaya* means “image,” like a reflection. An object is in the image. The Bible

(Genesis 1:27) says that God is the object, and creation, especially human beings, are images.

3. *Chhaya* means “darkness” (ignorance). *Chhaya* creates darkness or is darkness. Darkness has veiling power. Metaphorically, it is ignorance.

According to Shri Adi Shankara, *chhaya* is the *jiva*, the embodied being. However, all these meanings of *chhaya* are nothing but the presence of the Divine Mother. She is the creator and creation. She is the object and the image. She is knowledge and ignorance. She is everything. Like thousands of suns, she cannot be glanced at. Therefore, she is *chhaya*, shade, that allows a devotee, a child, to behold her presence.

O Seeker! Behold the glory of the Divine Mother. She is the soul within and the body. She is the entire creation. She is the creator of all. Gradually try to experience the Divine Mother, her beauty and love. Then you will be a worthy child.

*ya devi sarvabhuteshu
shakti rupena samsthita,
Namastasyai namastasyai
namastasyai namo namah.*

//32-34//

Translation

Repeated salutations to the Devi who is in the form of strength of all living beings.

Metaphorical Explanation

O Divine Mother! You are *shakti*, the power, strength, and ability in all beings, including us. We bow to you again and again with humility and love.

Shakti is derived from the root verb *shak*, which means “to be able” and “to be competent.” *Shakti* as power, ability, capability, strength, and energy. It can be classified as follows:

1. *Indriya shakti* (the power of the sense organs): O Divine Mother! When looking at the body in a contemplative way, it is found that the body is the play of energy. The ability to see, to hear, to smell, to taste, and to touch are the powers of perception (*jnana-indriya*). The ability to give and take (hands), the ability to move (legs), the power of speech (*vak-shakti*), and the power of excretion and pleasure are the powers of the organs of action (*karma-indriyas*). In the gross body, digestion, assimilation and circulation proceed. *Ya devi sarva-bhuteshu shakti rupa:*

“The Divine Mother who is the strength in all beings.” “O Divine Mother! I thought it was me, seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, and so forth. Now I realize, everything is done by you. I bow to you.

2. *Manasa-shakti* (mental power): The mind deliberates, cognizes, and confuses. The mind generates thought. Thought has tremendous effect on the body and life. This thought has the ability to keep a person calm or restless. O Divine Mother! You are thought. You are behind the mind. I bow to you again and again.

3. *Buddhi-shakti* (strength of intellect): *buddhir-yasya balam- tasya*: “One who has intelligence is powerful.” Intellect is the ability to make the right decision at the right time. O Divine Mother, you are *buddhi* in me. Please help me during every step of life.

4. *Ichchha-shakti* (willpower): Creation is the result of divine will. Every individual is blessed with this willpower. With willpower, we can achieve success in life. O Divine Mother, please guide this will within me.

5. *Kriya-shakti* (creative power): Every living being has creative power. A tiny sparrow can build a very delicate nest hanging from a palm tree. The beehive creates wonder. What about the creativity of human beings! Poetic ability (*kavitva-shakti*), scientific ability, or even the delicious food cooked by a mother are amazing. The Divine Mother is behind all these creative talents.

6. *Jnana-shakti* (power of knowledge): *jnanam asti samastasya*: “all have knowledge.” (Chandi I: 47) Rishi Medha declared that everyone is blessed with knowledge. This knowledge can be worldly or spiritual. It can bind you to the world or bless you with freedom. O Divine Mother, you are *jnanamayi*. You are the manifestation of divine knowledge. I bow to you again and again.

7. *Mantra-shakti* (power of mantra): Mantras or the mystic prayers are revealed to the rishis in deep meditation. The mantras, used properly, can grant desired results, either the fulfillment of material wishes or divine emancipation. The Divine Mother is *mantramayi*: “She is the mantras.”

8. *Sadhana-shakti* (power of *sadhana*, spiritual discipline): Every *sadhana* generates energy in the body, strength in the mind, and deep devotion.

9. *Maha-shakti* (the great power): The Divine Mother pervades this great universe; she is the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of the universe.

10. *Adi-shakti* (the primordial energy): Before creation and after dissolution, the power and energy that remains static and unmanifest is none but the Divine Mother.

11. *Para-shakti* (supreme power): Every seeker, through prayer and meditation, through love and devotion, realizes that there is nothing but the Divine Mother. She is *para-shakti*, the bestower of *para-vidya* (supreme knowledge) and *paravastha* (the supreme state of spirituality).

12. *Atma-shakti* (power of the soul): The soul, like the moon, reflects the power of the Divine Mother. The power of the soul makes the body beautiful, active, and energetic. The power of the soul is present in all beings.

13. *Jada-shakti* (energy in matter): Matter is nothing but the power of Divine Mother. Modern scientists, without realizing the presence of the Divine Mother, convert matter into energy such as thermal power, hydropower, atomic power, and so forth.

14. *Chetana-shakti* (power of consciousness, chit): Consciousness is continuously playing in many ways. *Chit-shakti-vilasha* (play of consciousness) manifests inside and outside the body and everywhere.

15. *Bhagavati-shakti* (glory or prowess of the Divine Mother): She is the source of all power. She is omnipotent. She is the cause behind every effect. I bow to *Bhagavati* as *shakti* or energy.

O Seeker! Watch in a contemplative mood. You will find only her presence everywhere. With little power and strength, people become egotistical. However, her power knows no bounds. With humility bow to her again and again, and surrender everything to her alone.

*ya devi sarvabhuteshu
trishna rupena samsthita,*

*Namastasyai namastasyai
namastasyai namo namah.*

//35-37//

Translation

Repeated salutations to the Devi who is in the form of desire or thirst in all living beings.

Metaphorical Explanation

O Divine Mother! You are *trishna* (thirst) in all living beings. We bow to you again and again with devotion.

Trishna is *trishyati akamkshati iti*: “*Trishna* is thirst or desire.” It is derived from the verb *trish* meaning “to be thirsty,” “to wish,” “wish excessively,” or “to be eager or greedy.” Hence, *trishna* is also “greedy,” “strong desire,” and “desire for gain.” The ordinary meaning of *trishna* is thirst; it is associated with desire to drink. Plants, insects, animals, humans, and even celestials have thirst.

Unfulfilled wishes are present everywhere. Everyone is craving fulfillment. Life after life, there is fulfillment, but unfulfilled desires accumulate as well. It seems impossible to fulfill all the wishes. It is like a burning fire that cannot be extinguished by adding fuel to

it. O Divine Mother! The thirst for material fulfillment is unending. Realizing this, I have only one thirst, to have you as my loving mother. I do not want to be separate from you, distracted by playing with toys of worldly pleasure. Please bless me; I bow to you again and again.

O Seeker! Cherishing worldly desires and greed, you have been crushed with torture and turmoil for how many lives! Be careful. Be sincere. Watch the Divine Mother who is thirst herself. If she is pleased, she can quench your thirst. Seek realization and nothing else. Bow to her again and again.

*ya devi sarvabhuteshu
kshanti rupena samsthita,
Namastasyai namastasyai
namastasyai namo namah.*

//38- 40//

Translation

Repeated salutations to the Devi who is in the form of forgiveness and patience in all living beings.

Metaphorical Explanation

O Divine Mother! You are *kshama* (forgiveness and patience). We bow to you repeatedly.

Kshanti ksham bhave iti is derived from the root verb *ksham*, which means “to suffer,” “to pardon,” “to forgive,” “to be patient,” and “to endure.” *Kshama* and *kshanti* are similar, implying patience, forgiveness, the earth, number one, an epithet of Durga, forbearance, and the state of saintly quality. In the Bhagavad Gita, *kshama* is used three times (10:4, 34; 16:3), and *kshanti* is used two times (13:7; 18:42). *The Argala Stotram* (verse 2) says, *durga shiva kshama dhatri*: “You are Durga, Shiva, Kshama, and Dhatri.” *Kshama* (forgiveness) is the willingness to not harm an enemy, in spite of the ability and opportunity.

O Divine Mother! In every living being you are present in the form of forgiveness, more or less. It is the ability to silently forbear and tolerate the wrongdoing of others, without retaliation. We usually tolerate our relatives and near and dear ones, but a seeker expands the domain of forgiveness with patience. Keep us as the image of *kshama* on your lap. Let us not react. Let your forgiveness expand to envelop the entire creation.

O Divine Mother! Not to mention earlier lives, in this life I have neglected your love and kindness. O ever-forgiving Mother of mine! You are always watching me with your unblinking eyes. Still, I commit mistakes. When will I be free from my mistakes? There is no end of your forgiveness. Bless me to constantly perceive you everywhere.

O Seeker! Bow to the Divine Mother, who personifies forgiveness and patience. You must cultivate forgiveness. Forgive, forbear, and forget the wrongdoings of others. Intensify your love and devotion for the Divine Mother. Do not be ungrateful to her.

*ya devi sarvabhuteshu
jati rupena samsthita,
Namastasyai namastasyai
namastasyai namo namah.*

//41- 43//

Translation

Repeated salutations to the Devi who is in the form of the genus and gender in all living beings.

Metaphorical Explanation

O Divine Mother, You are in the form of *jati* (genus and gender). We bow to you with utmost love and devotion.

Jati is derived from the root verb *jan*, which means “to be born.” Thus, one who is born has a *jati*. What is *jati*?

1. *Jati* is birth: Anyone who is born (*jata*) has a *jati*. O Divine Mother! You have given birth to everything. You have created names for everything that is born. You are present as everything that has been born.

2. *Jati* is race, family, and lineage: When we are born, we receive a particular family according to the law of karma that speaks a particular language, and has a specific culture and nationality. All multiplicity and distinctions are the play of the Divine Mother.

3. *Jati* is gender: In natural creation plants and animals have gender. Humans and even celestials have gender. It is all due to the law of karma and the process of creation.

4. *Jati* is the castes of the Hindus. In Sanatana Dharma, four primary castes exist: the *brahmins* (the intellectuals), the *kshatriyas* (the warriors and rulers), the *vaishyas* (the farmers and businessmen), and the *shudras* (the attendants performing services).

5. *Jati* is class, genus, species. In biological nomenclature, living things such as plants, animals, and human beings are classified.

6. *Jati* is the jasmine flower. The flower of aroma and fragrance is dear to the Divine Mother.

O Divine Mother! You manifest in all these names and forms. Just as I am the child of my loving Mother, I am also male or female, *brahmin* or *shudra*, and so on, but these terms are only for self-identification: O Loving Mother, you hold all forms in your lap. I bow to thee with love and adoration.

O Seeker! Consider creation. There is distinction and difference. Differences should not create a sense of inferiority or superiority in you. Let there be no trace of ego. Everything is the divine play of the loving Mother. Behold her in your heart. Experience this identity within.

*ya devi sarvabhuteshu
lajja rupena samsthita,
Namastasyai namastasyai
namastasyai namo namah.*

// 44-46//

Translation

Repeated salutations to the Devi who is in the form of modesty and shyness in all living beings.

Metaphorical Explanation

O Divine Mother! You manifest as *lajja* (shyness and modesty) in the hearts of others. We bow to you again and again.

Lajja in Sanskrit is derived from the verb *lasj vridane*, which means “to be ashamed of,” “to appear or shine,” and “to cover or conceal.” Hence *lajja* is shyness, modesty, glamour, concealing, and covering up. Let us look further at these different meanings.

Shyness: Every human being endowed with shyness to some extent. Shyness is a virtue as well as a vice. The feeling of shyness frees us from temptation to do blemishing activities, thus making us better. On the other hand, shyness can be weakness, a fear of expressing feelings or experiences. Exploitation may be the result. When shyness

refrains from negative and immoral activities, it is a protection from the Divine Mother.

Modesty and glamour: It is an aspect of beauty that makes a person more appreciated. It creates self-discipline, self-control, speaking little but with propriety, and appreciated behavior.

Covering up: It is the nature of creation to conceal. Truth is covered up with the dazzling nature of names and forms. However, we should have a vision of freedom, with nothing to hide, nothing secret.

O Divine Mother! Even in worldly life, there might be something to hide, but give us the strength to reveal everything to you. You are in the form of *lajja* (shyness and modesty). Free us from restlessness and temptation.

O Seeker, do not feel ashamed to state your weakness to the guru-preceptor. Do not feel shy near him. Be near and clear to him.

THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI

Sutra 11 - Memory

*anubhûta vishayâsam
pramoshah smruti* ||11||

Word Meaning

anubhûta experienced;
vishayâ – any object or topic;
asampramoshah - not
forgotten, not lost, not stolen,
elimination; *smruti* - memory

Translation

When experienced
objects or thoughts are not
forgotten and come back to life
or mind, it is [called] memory.

Commentary by Shri Lahiri Mahasaya

Memory is recapitulation
or comprehension of past
experience.

Metaphorical Explanation

The eleventh sutra
highlights the fifth *vritti* – the
thought wave defining memory
– *smriti*. Not being free from
the impression of an
experienced object or topic is
memory: the remembrance of
past things, experiences, or
events.

To understand this sutra
clearly, one must first
understand *asampramoshah*
clearly. *A-sam-pra-mosha*: *a* is
“not,” *sam* is *samyak*, or
“completely,” *pra* is *prakrishta*,
or “nicely,” *mosha* is “to take
away, to steal.” Thus, the
meaning of *asampramoshah* is
not complete elimination, not
completely stolen.

Why is the verb “to
steal” used in this sutra? The
mind is a playground of thoughts
and desires. Every moment
there is a flow of thoughts in
most people. One thought
appears, then at the next
moment, as if that thought is
stolen away by someone, a new
thought appears. Again under
the proper conditions and
factors of place, people, and
time, it comes back into the
screen of *chitta* (mind-stuff).
When a thought disappears, it
does not mean that these
thoughts are eliminated
completely. The impression of
experience remains in a very
subtle state in the midbrain. It
is stored or deposited in the

memory bank without the knowledge of the person. To explain this condition, the word *asampramoshah* (not stolen away), is used. From the memory bank, at various times, different thoughts arise. This memory is always nurtured by our experiences and activities.

There are two types of *smriti* (memory): memory of the wakeful state and memory of the dream state. In the memory of the wakeful state, all things either heard or seen through direct experience or imagination are stored up. Such memory might consist of likes and dislikes (which are discussed in Sutras 7 and 8 in the second part of this book) and provoke painful feelings and painful feelings create painful memories. Many dreams are caused because of past memories. Not only is the experience of the dream clearly reflected in the physical body during sleep, the effect of the dream is remembered often in the wakeful state. Thus, memory plays a vital part in the experience of the wakeful and dream states.

All these *vruttis* are classified into five types. Except in the state of yoga and meditation, the witnessing consciousness (soul) is merged in all the *vruttis*. Ordinary people forgot this state of separation. The soul can exist without thoughts, but thoughts cannot exist without the soul; the ocean can remain without waves, but waves have no separate existence without the ocean.

O Seeker! See the presence of the soul in every thought and disposition. In the *Devi Mahatmya*, *Durga Saptashati* (chapter four), there is a prayer to the Divine Mother who remains in every being in the form of thought waves. Out of these five *vruttis*, or thought waves, only the last two, *nidra* (sleep) and *smriti* (memory) are directly considered part of the Divine Mother's play. Through sleep, the soul pulls our mind towards the experience of *Samadhi*. Through *smriti* (memory), it brings us the remembrance of "who I am."

ATMA-VIDYA

PURSuing SELF-KNOWLEDGE

KAIVALYOPANISHAD

Mantra 18

*trishu dhamasu yad bhogyam bhokta bhogasca yadbhavet
tebhyo vilakshanam sakshi cinmatroham sada sivam*

Meaning

trishu -three, *dhamasu*-in the abodes, *yad*-that, *bhogyam*-enjoyable, *bhoktah*-enjoyer, *bhogasca*-the enjoyment, *yad* -that, *bhavet*-becomes, *tebhyah*-from them *vilakshanam*-different, *sakshi*- witness, *cinmatra*-awareness, *aham*-I am, *sada*-always, *sivam*-auspicious

Substance

What is enjoyable, enjoyer and the enjoyment in the three abodes, I am different from them, I am the witness, the pure awareness and the eternal auspiciousness

Commentary

What are the three *dhamas* or abodes? People talk of *svarga* , *martya* and *patala* – heaven, earth and Netherlands. It can also be the three parts of the body –from the midpoint of the eyebrows to the top of the head, from the

midpoint of the eyebrows to the navel and the portion below the navel. The three abodes can also be the three *avasthas* of wakeful, dream and deep sleep states.

Here there are three words used, *bhogyam*-the object of enjoyment, *bhokta*-the enjoyer, and *bhogah*-enjoyment. In the Vedanta language this is known as the *triputi*- Suppose one is looking at a flower- we have the flower-the object of enjoyment,, the one who is seeing the flower- the enjoyer, and the art of seeing- the enjoyment - Seer, seen and the sight. Whatever we see in this world it is always these three. In the three planes of existence, in the three states of being, in the three abodes we have the *triputi*.

When one is in deep meditation when there is no body, no mind and no senses

one is completely merged. But one will not stay in that state long, one will come down. One who knows himself as *tebhya vilakshana* - different from the *triputi*, comes to the body level and perceives everything how does he act? He lives like the *sakshi*- separate from the *triputi*, like a special witness, observing everything as a witness. For example the food is on the table. The eyes are seeing the food, the nose is smelling the food, the hands are touching the food and taking them to the mouth, the teeth are chewing the food, the stomach is digesting the food and the intestines are assimilating the food – now tell me who is enjoying the food? The realized person only observes everything with a witnessing consciousness. One retains that in the wakeful state also.

There are two approaches to life. I do everything and I enjoy everything is the egocentric approach. Because of ego and attachment we suffer. With little success the ego multiplies and with little failure I become unhappy and sad. A person with ego never takes the

responsibility to oneself and always blames the others for his failure. The spiritual attitude is I am not doing anything, everything is going on and I am only a witness. This is a higher level of consciousness. It does not mean a state of inaction. In this state the ego is diminished and the mind is tranquil. In this state everything will be accomplished nicely. Food will be there and one will enjoy food observing every taste and every bit and observing who is enjoying. The thought will go on but one will observe how the thought is coming and communicated through words. This is the *sakshi bhava* and *sakshi chaitanya* observing everything, even the movement of the body. At this stage one is identified with the consciousness. Spiritual life is not a life of inaction but perfection in action. It is only possible when ego is less and love is more.

The three planes of existence –can be the gross, astral and causal worlds in which the soul exists every day. The three can also be explained as the past present and the future. Whatever is there to be enjoyed, enjoyer and enjoyment

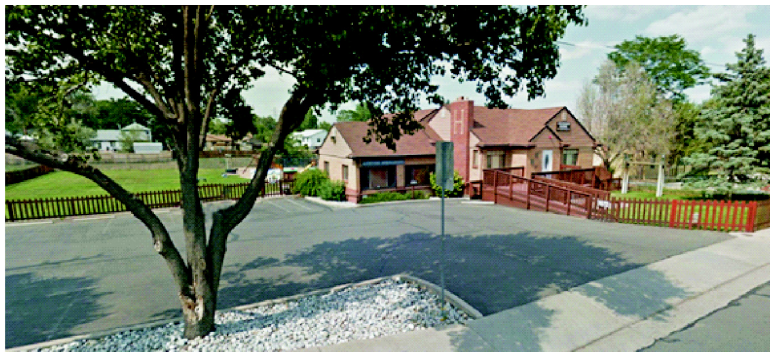
are all coming from one. To develop that attitude of witness, observing with a sense of detachment. During meditation instead of following a thought just observe the thought and then it will not take you out. One definition of *sakshi* is *nishedhavadhi sakshi*- that which remains after everything is removed is *sakshi* . *sakshi* does not have the qualities of

what it is witnessing and a witness does not get involved. This *sakshi bhava* gives calmness and love and consciousness expands. In spiritual life one should expand from individual to family to society and eventually to cosmic consciousness. Expansion is life and contraction is death.



Inauguration of EYE OPD
at Hariharananda Charitable Health Centre, Jagatpur

TEMPLE OF PEACE- NEW ASHRAM INAUGURATED IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION



A new ashram, The Temple of Peace, (5925, W 1st Ave ,Lakewood ,CO 80226) was inaugurated on the 3rd of October on the auspicious Vijaya Dashami day (the day of victory following Navaratri the 9 day festival of divine Mother. Paramahansa Prajnananandaji was present for the occasion.

In the year 2008 Baba expressed his wish to have four New Ashrams – Midwest, Rocky Mountain area, Dallas Austin area in Texas and the West Coast in addition to the Mother Center in Miami.

The Midwest Ashram became a reality in 20...when Kriya Vedanta Gurukulam or Temple of Harmony was

founded in Joliet Illinois which just completed its – foundation day in July 2014.

Now the Mountain region ashram has come into being following the vision of Guruji. The three day celebration was of great festivity which brought together disciples from all over the country and even from Europe to participate and be in the divine company of the Master.

The event started with Peace Invocations and a havan on the morning of Vijayadashami conducted by Swami Atmavidyananda Giri. Propitiating Lord Ganesha , the 9 planets , the lineage of the Gurus and Mother Gayatri – the goddess of wisdom to promote

peace and for the well being of the ashram. Several Yogacharyas and monks from the Miami and Joliet ashrams were present. The days were filled with guided meditations three times a day, spiritual discourses, Question and answer sessions and devotional singing and Bhajans. The discourses of Baba Prajnananandaji were enlightening and instructive.

A public program was hosted by the Temple of Peace at the Lakewood Recreation center . The theme was - Practical Peace: how Individuals Promote Peace. The panel of speakers of the Denver area consisted of Professor Ved P. Nanda of University of Denver – International Law, Dr Olixin Adams who spoke of Peace from a medical perspective, Jim Reuteler of

Habitat for Humanity of Metro Denver and , Kim Grogan from Animal Assisted Therapy programs of Colorado. Swami Atmavidyananda Giri of Kriya Yoga Institute spoke on The Impact of Meditation on Peace. Each of the speakers gave unique presentation of Promoting Peace in their own perspectives. A question and answer session followed.

In his closing comments Baba Prajnananandaji commented on how each of us can do our share by commitment to any one ideal to promote peace. But most of all he said, to be understanding and accepting each other with a smile is the greatest way to promote peace.

It was a great event and well organized by the Denver disciples who did a great job of hosting the event.

If man does not remain in God, his down fall is imminent.

Control of senses through KarmaYoga or Kriya Yoga is preferable to indifference towards the senses.

The life of householders should be like that of a river serving others

Swami Shriyukteshwar

PEACE FROM A MEDICAL PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Olixin Adams

To find the Health in the patient is the osteopathic physician's highest calling and his primary duty. This is the most fundamental and essential principle in osteopathy. To find health should be the object of the doctor. Anyone can find disease.

The Health that we should find is much more than the absence of disease and symptoms. The Health in osteopathy is our indwelling natural state of perfection. It is a living presence - a loving wisdom and intelligence present in all mankind that maintains balance, harmony and homeostasis. Without the Health we could not exist.

The art of osteopathic medicine begins when the physician learns to recognize, feel and sense the Health in himself and his patients. Over time the osteopath learns the language of the Health as it speaks to him moment to moment. He then co-operates with the Health and follows a

treatment plan that emerges from the deepest wisdom with in the patient, a treatment plan that is unique to each individual patient.

The language of the Health is known to all but often goes unrecognized. It is a language that is nearly incomprehensible to the logical mind but is very natural to the heart, for the language emerges from the wholeness of life and demands that we see life and our patients with a sense of wholeness. It is a language where pauses, stillness and silence carry great meaning and potency. As we gain sensitivity to the rhythms of nature, and her natural pauses, and we become more comfortable with stillness and silence the language of the Health begins to have greater meaning in our life. It is only then that our insight and understanding into the true nature of holistic medicine, that is a medicine that moves the patient towards wholeness is no longer

intellectualized but is actually given to us through the language of the Health.

The idea of the Health as a living principle and phenomenon that can be palpated and accessed as a therapeutic force is unique to osteopathy.

The Health is always present, in all, as an intelligent and precise movement Dr. Still called life. It is a therapeutic force alive in the patient. Without the presence of the Health healing would not be possible, for the Health is a wisdom and intelligence that maintains harmony and homeostasis, it keeps all physiologic functions in balance, it heals a cut finger or injured bone to perfection, restoring the original form. Much of osteopathy is dependent upon our capacity to feel and follow the intention of this intelligent therapeutic force we call the Health.

It is a natural inherent skill, that may be dormant but

never atrophied. The skill required to synchronize with the health is actually given to us in the moment, by the Health its self. What is required of us is a willingness and a desire to feel it.

.....This requires a continual state of humility as we must approach each moment and each patient as a beginner. Without a state of humility we will never see the true nature of the Health, without humility we will be left with nothing but our own projections and limitations of the personal and limited mind. This blinds us to the splendor and true nature of the Health.

(Dr. Olixin Adams is a practicing osteopath, also a longtime kriyavan. The above is an excerpt from a book he is writing part of which was his talk at the Community event during the Inauguration of Our Ashram – Temple of Peace at Denver.)

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA

December 2, 2014

*A d v a i t h a m r u t a
varshinim bhagavatim ashta
dashadhyayinim*

*amba tvam
anusandhadhami bhagavad
gite bhavahdveshinim.*

“O Divine Mother, Bhagavad Gita, who is giving out the nectar of non-duality, consisting of eighteen chapters, I invoke and meditate on you repeatedly for your divine blessings. Through your grace, I will be free from delusive force of nature”.

Every year on Margasira Sukla Ekadashi we celebrate the birthday of the holy book Srimad Bhagavad Gita. We celebrate by reading and chanting of the Gita

What is Bhagavad Gita? Is it only a historic episode or a mythological story? Was this real or the poetic imagination of a saint? It is story, history and mystery all together. It is the story of each one's life. There is a constant struggle and a constant friction going on in each one of us. The Gita

discusses how to be successful in that struggle of inner life.

Life is the Gita - the divine song, sing it. When a child is restless and crying, the mother pacifies the child by taking it into her lap and singing. Then the child and the mother are both happy. God is singing the eternal song, the Song Divine, Bhagavad Gita. This has to be listened to with a concentrated mind. This song has to be heard in deep meditation. This song is the *anahata dhvani* the uninterrupted divine sound. God is eternal, His song is eternal. God is infinite and His song is infinite. The song is there before creation and is continuously going on. When one meditates, one hears this song. When one listens to the song in deep meditation, one forgets his own existence, the mind becomes calm and quiet with no restlessness. All the desires of the mind are gone and it becomes pure and concentrated.

AROUND THE WORLD

INDIA

Prajnana Mission Activities

Kriya Yoga Programs

Kriya Yoga programs were held in close to 40 different places in centres all over the country during the last year.

Prajnana Mission organized regular monthly Kriya Yoga meditation classes (sadhana shibir) at various places in Odisha. Authorized Yogacharyas and monastic disciples of the Mission led the meditation classes in each of these centres.

Kriya Yoga Programs were conducted in Dubai, Kriya Yoga Centre Tattendorf, Vienna in Austria, St. Katharine's Parmoor and London in UK, Kriya Yoga Centrum Sterksel in Holland, Adelaide, Perth, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Brisbane in Australia, Auckland and Wellington in New Zealand, Fiji Islands and in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Health Center Activities

Hariharananda Charitable Health centres continue with addition of extra facilities

capable of handling more specialised fields of medicine and serving more people.

Inauguration of Ophthalmology Department

The latest is the inauguration of an Ophthalmology department serving patients on an out patient basis. Hariharananda Charitable Health Center managed by Prajnana Mission has added an Ophthalmolgy Department to the health Center at Jagatpur, Cuttack. The Ophthalmology Department was inaugurated on August 30, 2014. The added facility would be serving patients on an outpatient basis. On the day of inauguration more than 40 patients were examined and given medical advice by Dr. Debabrata Sahani. Present on the occasion were Swami Samarpanananda Giri, Vice president Prajnana Mission, Swami Achalananda Giri, Secretary Prajnana Mission and Chandrakantha Mishra, Coordinator, Hand in Hand.

Balashram Activity

Balashram with 438 students last year is progressing

on all fronts under the guidance of the Principal, Mr. P. P. Singh. This academic year (2013-14) audio visual learning system was introduced which encourages the teachers and students to integrate information and communication technology in their teaching-learning process.

Students have participated in sports as well as arts and crafts competitions in house as well as by out side organisations and have won many prizes.

The school has introduced vocational training for the students of Stds. VIII & IX. The courses are Plumbing, Tailoring, and Maintenance & Assembly of Computer Hardware, Electrical House Wiring, Desktop Publishing and Go-Vijnana which is making of cow-based products.

The students are also required to select one of the following basic skill courses such as Cycle Repair, Hair Dressing, Cooking, Standard First Aid and Exposure to Public Service Utilities.

Indian Institute of Technology – Professors from IIT visited the school and

interacted with the students and teachers. They encouraged creative ideas among the students and shared their ideas with teachers and students motivating them to develop technical projects and skills.

Kremen School of Education and Human Development, California State University, Fresno

A group of professors led by Dr. Jyothi Bathina visited Balashram on 7th January 2014. They met with the Principal and discussed on various academic issues. They also visited the classrooms, interacted with the students and observed the teaching-learning process in the school and were very impressed with the progress of the school.

Balashram Children's Book Released

The book titled - *The Flood, The Bear and The Dog*, of real stories narrated and illustrated by the students of Balashram and compiled and published by Dr. Jyothi Bathina was released by the Chairman of Education Dept of the Kremen school in the presence of Baba Prajnananandaji and other Mission members at a large gathering at The SB Women's College at Cuttack.

Retreats at the Gurukulam

Retreats are organised at the Hariharananda gurukulam from time to time on chosen topics to inspire and motivate disciples in their sadhana, to participate in group meditation and question and answer sessions to clear their doubts and enhance their practice.

A retreat was held from August 13 – 17. The theme was Sadhana Panchakam of Adi Shankara. Two discourses of an hour each were given each day along with chanting and guided meditations and the evening arati at Deva Mandir.

Another retreat was held in the month of October on the same lines.

New Delhi Programme - 7th - 9th November

Kriyayoga programme was held in New Delhi with Paramahansa Prajnananandaji. 81 people were initiated.

The 12th Punyatithi Aradhana Divas

The Punyatithi aradhana divas of our beloved Gurudev, Parampujya Paramahansa Hariharananda Maharaj was celebrated with Gurupaduka Puja, havan and meditation from 1st to 3rd December, 2014.

IIKYS

The 16th International Intensive Kriya Yoga Seminar (IIKYS) will be held from 14th to 20th January, 2015.

AMERICAS

Mother Center USA was blessed to celebrate the Foundation day in the Divine presence of Guruji Paramahansa Prajnananandaji.

K r i y a V e d a n t a Gurukulam, our Joliet Ashram organized a Community havan during the Navaratri festival. Over 200 people participated in the havan conducted by Swami Atmavidyanandaji and other monks and brahmacharis in the divine presence of Paramahansa Prajnananandaji.

Denver Ashram - A new ashram was inaugurated on October 3rd, the day of Vijayadashami in the presence of Paramahansa Prajnananandaji.

The National Kriya Yoga Reteat held in Cali, Colombia by Swami Atmavidyananda Giri was well attended. 94 new initiations took place during the program.
