

Sthita Prajna



Guru Vandana

*Gururdevo gururdharmo guroishtha param tapah
Guroh parataram nasti nastitatvam guroh param*

This affirmation I will repeat to you three times. The Guru is God. The Guru is dharma. It is supreme austerity to have firm faith in the guru. There is nothing superior to the guru and no greater truth than the guru.

Guru Gita verse 100

CONTENTS

VOLUME 14

ISSUE 1

Sub	Page No.
• GURU VANDANA	3
• EDITORIAL	5
• MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER	6
• PRAJNANAVANI	10
• THE NEED OF A TEACHER	15
• GURU PURNIMA MESSAGE	18
• PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY – WHEN DOES DUTY END?	20
• DATES TO REMEMBER	23
• TEACHINGS OF THE MASTERS	24
• MYTHS AND METAPHORS – DEVI MAHATMYA	25
• THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI	28
• VALUABLE VOLUMES – AKSHARA TATTVA	31
• EPISODES FROM MAHABHARATHA	36
• STORIES TO LIVE BY – ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE	40
• INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA	42
• YOGA FOR A PERFECT LIFE	43
• ATMA-VIDYA—PURSUING SELF KNOWLEDGE	49
• PRAJNANA MISSION – SPECIAL EVENTS	51
• AROUND THE WORLD	53

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FROM THE EDITORS :

“Whatever comes from guru is direct message of God, for which Guru is the medium.”

Paramahansa Prajnanananda

Message of the Master elaborates on the Guru Disciple relationship as eternal and the guru’s responsibility until a sincere disciple attains liberation.

Prajnanavani beautifully differentiates between darshan and sudershan and describes real darshan as realization.

Practical spirituality ponders over duty as the path to perfection.

The many forms of the Divine Mother are metaphorically explained as different aspects of human personality in Devi Mahatmya.

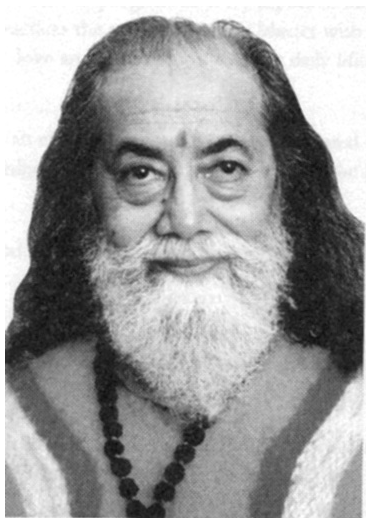
In this issue we also introduce a new serial – Episodes from Mahabharata. Patanjali Yoga Sutras and Kaivalyopanishad continue to teach us the intricacies of spiritual path.

Guru Purnima celebrations coincided with the Rathayatra festival this year, making the celebrations more festive and the Gurukulam was filled to capacity with disciples from many countries. Baba Prajnananandaji’s birthday was celebrated around the world with great love and reverence.

We bring you the inspiring messages of the Masters on these special occasion, and the Kriya activities of Prajnana Mission worldwide.

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

THE ROLE OF GURU



A guru, or preceptor, is indispensable for any spiritual practice. The scriptures say that the guru is Brahma, the creator; Vishnu, the preserver; and Shiva, the destroyer. The guru creates new *samaskaras*, the longing for *moksha* (liberation). The guru preserves the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of the disciple, and destroys the effects of bad karma and base desires and leads the disciple towards light. The guru is God in His manifest and personal aspect. *Gu* means the Invisible (i.e., God), while *ru* means the visible. The Invisible uses the visible as its instrument. The relationship between the guru

and the disciple is eternal. He is responsible for his disciples until they attain *moksha* (liberation).

Indian culture puts special emphasis on the guru-disciple relationship. The would-be disciple seeks access to the guru through humility, love, and service. The real guru is one who has attained Self-realization, which means complete mastery over the pulseless and breathless state (i.e., *Samadhi*). Only then will one be fit for the role of a guru, not because one speaks elegantly or has a large following. If a person sincerely seeks enlightenment, God sees that he gets a true guru. Most people fail to find the Truth because they become lost in the forest of theology and travel from one thicket of theory to another. True religious principles are found in good books, but their full meaning cannot be grasped until their manifestation is seen in the life of a guru. Such an enlightened person can help his disciples, provided the latter are attuned to him. After that, the physical presence of the master

is not necessary for guidance. The real guru is God himself. The human guru is only His instrument or agent.

The aspirant who seeks to know God must first rise above the consciousness of the body and material existence. By the practice of the great yogic method discovered by the sages of India, we can easily rise above the limited consciousness of the body. We can then feel our identity with God. We can feel that our own existence is spirit. We are the beginning and end of all. We can feel that we work through all hands and think through all minds, that our hearts throb through all hearts. We will feel our presence in everything and perceive that the stars are but the ornaments of our vast body. We are spreading over the stars, twinkling through their luminosity and creation is floating on the ocean of eternal existence.

Body and mind are but two forms of spirit. Spirit manifested as matter is still spirit. The spiritual tradition of India teaches how to realize that this spirit is living within us. The divine memory of the soul has to be awakened, as it has forgotten its real nature due to

the bondage of body and matter. Then we will find that we are God, everything is God, and nothing exists but God. This is the treasure of India that can be acquired by the technique of Kriya Yoga. The profound and ultimate truth will be realized.

All true gurus are alive, regardless of whether they have retained their physical forms or not. In the beginning of the spiritual search, we may have many teachers, but there can be only one guru. They are 'disciples' who come to the guru for an eternal relationship. The guru is the living embodiment of spiritual truth. When the devotee's heart has been purified, God sends the guru; it is easier to follow a living embodiment of Truth than to live on abstractions. No book, however noble, can substitute for the guru. The question is, how to know who is fit for the role of guru in the path of Self-realization. Shri Shankara says, "A real teacher is he who is well-versed in the Vedas, sinless, unsmitten by desire, and the best among the knower's of Brahman, who has withdrawn himself into Brahman, is calm like fire that

has consumed its fuel, who is a boundless reservoir of mercy (i.e., ineffable and a friend of all good people that prostrate themselves before him)” (Viveka Chudamani 33).

In Bhagavad Gita (2:56) says that the person whose mind remains unperturbed in sorrow, whose thirst for pleasure has altogether disappeared and who is free from passion, fear, and anger is of stable mind. A liberated sage is free from desire, selfishness, egoism, “I-ness,” attachment, greed, and hatred. He is full of pure love, compassion, and mercy, and is a powerhouse of spiritual energy. It is a rare fortune indeed to come in contact with such a sage or *sad-guru*. God always sends His representatives to those who earnestly seek Him. Only a few have attained *nirvikalpa Samadhi*. But one must seek a true guru, if there is genuine desire for spiritual progress. Of course, a yogi advanced in spiritual practice can also guide an aspirant, but only a realized master can lead him to the goal.

A *sad-guru* (or realized master) can purify the body of the disciple at the time of initiation by infusing spiritual

power into the disciple. By purifying the spine at the six spiritual centers, the untapped spiritual energy, the cosmic force latent in the human body is awakened. As a result of this, the disciple gets the triple divine qualities: light, sound, and vibration. These six spinal centers keep man attached to the material world in accordance with his karma and do not allow him to transcend animality and rationality. If a disciple, under the guidance of the guru, can control the six spinal centers through the technique of Kriya Yoga and establish God-consciousness there, he will overcome all vices and evolve into a divine being. Then ignorance disappears and the light of wisdom shines upon him.

A Sanskrit maxim says, “Worship God after becoming God.” Unless a person raises the latent spiritual force present in the coccygeal center to the brain, after passing it through the different centers of the spine, he cannot become spiritual. Prayers worship, and rituals are of no avail. They produce no change either in his consciousness or in his heart. Only a realized master can

rouse the latent cosmic power, the *kundalini*. Direct association with a guru is, therefore, essential.

Shri Shankara says, “There are three things which are rare indeed and they are attained only by the grace of God. These are: a human birth, desire for liberation, and the protecting care of a perfect sage” (Viveka Chudamani 3). Anyone and everyone cannot be a guru. In every age, God incarnates Himself as the guru to teach humanity. *Sat-cit-ananda* alone is the guru. The guru is only one, but *upa-gurus* may be many. An *upa-guru* is one from whom anything is learned. The great Avadhuta, a monk mentioned in the Bhagavatam, had twenty-four *upa-gurus*. God sends the *sad-guru* or realized master only to the earnest disciples.

P a r a m a h a m s a Yoganandaji says that spiritualism cannot be bought in the market. The father and mother give the physical birth. But it is the guru who gives the spiritual birth and leads the disciples to the shore of Self-realization. The disciple has to follow the instructions of the guru faithfully and sincerely, and practice meditation regularly to gain full benefit from the contact with the guru. Words cannot do justice to the soul-revealing power of Kriya Yoga. It is not necessary to be familiar with the theory of Kriya Yoga in order to progress in it. Only concentration and sincerity are required. A true guru is a nominee of God, through whom God teaches the devotees so that they may realize their real Self.



Guru Purnima at Hariharananda Gurukulam

PRAJNANAVANI - THE VOICE OF WISDOM

DARSHAN AND SUDARSHAN



Jagannathah swami nayanapathagami bhavatume

May that Jagannatha swami be the object of my vision.

The meaning of *darshan* is “to see”, “to behold,” or “to have a vision.” Darshan is also otherwise known as a philosophy and a means of knowledge. People full of devotion and love come to Puri to see Lord Jagannath. Withstanding many difficulties and spending a lot of time and money, people come to Puri to attain that ultimate state of knowledge. But do they obtain real *darshan*? It is interesting to note that on the extreme left of Lord Jagannath is a

columnar form of sudarshan, which literally means , “perfect vision.”

Many years ago, I had the rare opportunity to visit Swami Harihar Tirth Maharaj, a renowned saint who lived in the Kailash ashram at Risikesh. He was known to have attained God-realization. It was evening time and nobody was there. I sat near him after touching his feet. He asked, “Son, from where have you come?”

I answered, “From Puri, Lord Jagannath Puri.”

People from outside Odisha and other countries used to refer to Piuri as Jagannath Puri.

Then he asked with a smile, “Have you had the *darshan* of Lord Jagannath?”

I pondered what answer to give. If the answer is in the affirmative, then it means I have seen the image of Lord Jagannath. If the answer is in the negative, then also it will not be correct. Real *darshan* is realization. With humility, I answered, “Maharajji, I have been to the temple several times, but I cannot say that I have really gotten the *darshan* of the Lord.”

Hearing this he smiled and blessed, “My child, surely you have realization.” Many people go to the temple and repent their past sins and mistakes. Once they come out of the temple, the same people do the same mistakes without any noticeable change. Where is the change? Why is there not change?

Real change is not possible only by *darshan*. What is needed is *sudarshan* or perfect vision. Seeing or reading theories of philosophy and discussing any *tattva* will

not yield spiritual dividends. One has to become *sudarshan*, which also means “beautiful.”

What is *sudarshan*? It implies seeing beautiful and complete *darshan*. An example will help illustrate the meaning. Seeing food will not satiate one’s hunger; rather it increases appetite. By eating food, the desire for food disappears, the body grows more lustrous and stronger and its longevity increases. Seeing food is *darshan* while eating food and being one with food is *sudarshan*. External hunger comes again and again, but once the spiritual hunger of life is satiated, it never comes again. The real hunger of one’s life is self-realization or seeing the self, the realization of Lord Jagannath. The Bhagavad Gita says ,

*Yam labhdva caparam labham
manyate nadhikam tatah
Yasmin sthito na duhkkena
gurunapi vichalyate*

Having realized the self he does not think there is any other greater gain. Such a mind is not affected by even great sorrow.

The Shandilya Upanishad (2) says,

*Yasminvijñate sarvamidam
vijñatam bhavati*

“Knowing whom everything else is known.”

In other words Self knowledge brings the ability of seeing divinity in all. Shri Shankaracharya states in the Devi Kshamapana stotram (10):

*Kshuda trisharta jananim
smaranti*

Feeling the urge of hunger and thirst, the child remembers and cries for the mother.

Similarly, the thirst for self realization of the people desiring liberation is satiated by the help of a mother, like a guru, who helps in realizing Lord Sri Jagannath consciousness. Once this thirst is satiated, the state of *sudarshan* is attained.

In the temple of Lord Jagannath, on the main altar, *Sudarshan* is seen on the northern corner, near Lord Jagannath. *Sudarshan* is formless, without any attributes, and beyond ordinary comprehension. This formless and attribute less state is attained by meditation. On the attainment of this state, one is not enthralled by joy nor perturbed by sorrows, which is

described in the Bhagavad Gita (2:56) as

*dukheshu anudvigna manah
sukheshu vigataprihah:*

“unperturbed with sorrows and suffering and no clinging for joy or happiness.”

It is a state of freedom, *vitaraḡabhaya krodhah* (Bhagavad Gita 2:56), free from passion, fear, and anger. This state is referred to as the state of stillness: complete tranquility. Lord Jagannath is also called immovable and steady. Lord Jagannath is in the pituitary of the body (*kutastha*), still and firm (*dhruva*). He is the omnipresent, all pervading Brahman, ever existent in this moving and active world. Among all the visible ones, He is the real vision. Among all objects, He is the true object. In all seeing, He is *sudarshan*. There is no need for books, scriptures, and discussion of philosophy to attain this state. One has to begin constant practice with a heart filled with alacrity. People are busy in debates and discussions of scriptures lacking the real interest to realize God or attain the state of *sudarshan*.

How can one achieve such a state? The Bhagavad Gita

(8; 12) says, *sarva dvarani samyamya*, that is “by controlling all nine doors of the body,” and by focusing the mind on the *sahasrara* or fontanel, one can attain the state of Sudarshan or the state of divine vision.

Nabakalebara

Nabakalebara is a unique ceremony observed in the temple of Jagannath in Puri. On the occasion of Nabakalebara, he leaves behind the old form and adopts a new form. Nabakalebara literally means having a new body, a new embodiment. On this occasion, a new set of idols is fashioned and consecrated for worship. The old set is interred within the temple precincts,

It is amazing to think of the renewal of the form of the Lord. He assumes a form as a part of His cosmic play to kindle unending yearning for God realization in the hearts of devotees, in order to open the channels of Self realization in them.

The body in which we all live is perishable and changeable and is always in the process of decay. Subject to the inexorable laws of cause and

effect, this body is eroding every moment. Through our eyes we see only the physical form of the body. In reality the human body has three distinct forms interwoven like outer and inner garments – the gross (physical), the subtle (astral) and the causal forms. Brahman is present in all these three bodies. With pure and refined vision, one sees everything as Brahman. One believes that the body is manifestation. *sarvam brahmamaya jagat* – “Everything is nothing but Brahman.”

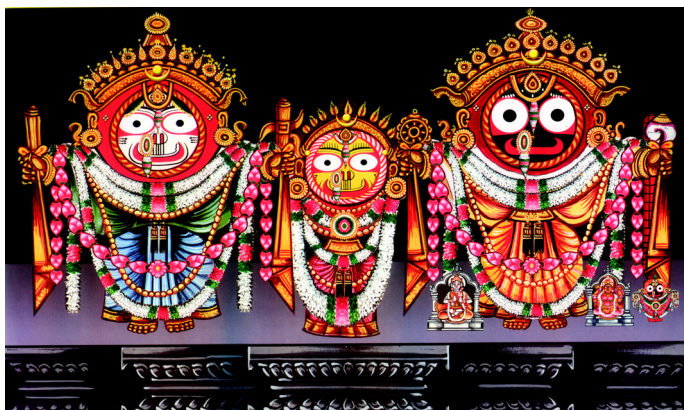
On the occasion of Nabakalebara, Lord Jagannath renews the wooden form in which he is present. A deeply sacred and unknown material object called (*Brahma vastu*) is kept concealed at the naval of the wooden deity. This sacred object is literally transferred from the old wooden form to the new wooden form; the former is then interred while the latter is consecrated for worship on the altar in the temple. This transfer of the *Brahma vastu* is a highly guarded ceremony marked by considerable mystery and is performed by specially designated families of priests who perform the ritual,

generation after generation. The ritual takes place at midnight of the new moon day of the Navakalebara.

If while having the darshan of Lord Jagannath people do not feel the power of God immanent in all their body parts and ever active, and perceive that his body is the universe and the soul is Lord Jagannath, then they cannot reap the dividends of the darshan of Lord Jagannath.

N a b a k a l e b a r a celebration occurs in the temple, but a seeker should try to perceive it in his or her life. In every breath the Navakalebara of a person is being performed. Change and transformation of human nature, habit, and life is

Navakalebara. Along with the darshan or vision of Nabakalebara (the renewed form of the Lord) every human being can change their life. If we realize the Nava kalebara is ever occurring in every moment of our life: then we can crown our life with perfection. Through strong determination, invincible will, good company every moment can be made God conscious. In every work Lord Jagannath , the sole doer can be realized. Then every work will be divine. The Bhgavad Gita (3:15) says, karma brahmodbhavam viddi : “All actions originate from Brahman or divinity.” This realization is the real darshan of NavaKalebara.



Rajarajeswari Besa

THE NEED OF A TEACHER ON THE SPIRITUAL PATH

Seek therefore the company of a sage who is steadfast, learned, wise, devoted and noble. Follow the example of such a good and wise being, as the moon knows the path of the stars.

The Dhammapada

For evolution in spiritual life and manifestation of love in our heart and activities, we need a guide.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* Aurjna says,

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

Just as an instructor is needed to learn anything in life, a teacher is essential in spiritual life. How to Choose the Right Teacher?

There are two types of knowledge described in the Mundaka Upanishad (1.1.4);

“Two kinds of knowledge are to be known, as, indeed, those who know Brahman, declare the higher as well as lower”.

Similarly, there are two types of teachers, College and University teachers, who are intellectuals, with sharp minds and good teaching skills, and spiritual teachers whose necessary ingredient is love and over whelming purity. A spiritual teacher, who does not have implicit love and purity from the beginning to end, will face difficulties. That is why one has to be extra careful in choosing a spiritual teacher. With the teachers in schools and colleges our contact is limited. Most often the bond is of respect rather than love.

In spirituality the Guru - disciple relationship is very special. In olden days it was easier to choose as the teacher and the student lived together during the student's apprenticeship, which gave ample opportunity to know each other. That is why Lahiri

Mahasaya insisted that one should live with the guru at least for one month every year. Ramakrishna Paramahansa said, "See the teacher by day and by night." One may be very attractive and fascinating outwardly but appearances are deceptive. Jesus warned about false teachers. Basic human nature does not change. From the time of the *Vedas*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana* or the *Bible* until modern times the human nature remains unchanged. People may have progressed in their grasp of worldly matters but all their habits like doubt, hatred and jealousy still thrive.

The spiritual teacher should have a good grasp of the Holy Scriptures and be able to communicate this profound knowledge to his disciples. Besides his spiritual knowledge, the guru should exercise great self-control and possess a heart rich in love. The primary essential quality of a spiritual teacher is love. When someone has not experienced love within, it is impossible to give love to others. If he is not rich in love, he cannot distribute love. A realized Master is in love with the whole universe. He spreads

knowledge to sincere seekers who are earnest in their quest for truth. A true master has surrendered himself to God. My own guru Paramahansa Hariharananda, is such a teacher. We must prove worthy of receiving the all encompassing knowledge from our teacher.

The disciple is one who is ready to receive that love from the teacher.

In the *Taittiriya Upaniśad* the guru as he addresses his students at the end of their studies says,

*yāni anavadyani
karmani tani sevitanī na
itarani*

*yani asmakam
sucharitanī tani tvayopasyani
na itarani*

"My children, you have stayed here with me and you have learnt many things. We are all human. The teacher teaches, but if you have not learned in the right way or if you have not understood the teacher in the right way, it could have caused you some pain. Leave all negative feelings or pain here, and take only with you the positive nourishing things."

The Guru-disciple relationship is a very critical one. We live in a modern society and we have a tendency to believe that we know everything. If you know everything then there is no need of going to a guru. If you have come to learn something, then be humble and have a possible attitude to learn many beneficial things that may have escaped you. Do not be overly critical. What you perceive depends on your frame of mind. Always be in a receptive mood. Even Jesus was misunderstood by many but simple people trusted and loved him and thus learnt far more from him than those that believed themselves to be very sophisticated. It is good to be intelligent but do not be analytical about spirituality.

When looking at the same flower, a botanist may be intrigued by its structure, a poet may be imbibed in its beauty, and a devotee would probably appreciate its purity. The botanist while analyzing the floral structure may miss both the beauty and the purity of the flower. The poet immersed only in his emotions would also miss the essence of the flower. When

we examine the lives of Great Incarnations, we find again and again, that they have a propensity for being misunderstood, since they are usually far beyond their time. If you are unable to understand your teacher, pray to God to give you the right form of understanding. Remember that you are searching for truth and love, so pray that there will be no obstacles in the path of learning.

Even metaphorically if one has to reach God in the fontanel, one must first pass through the *ajna cakra*, or the soul center. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you know my Father."

Through self confidence and self control, one progresses in the path of self realization. With the help of the guru, the disciple gets up from the slumber of ignorance. The Guru is a guide who leads the disciple with all caution and extreme care. The Guru helps the disciple to overcome all obstacles step by step.

GURU PURNIMA MESSAGE

Loving and Divine Soul,

Let the choicest blessings of God and the masters be upon all of you. I take the opportunity to pray for you as we celebrate Guru Purnima, the Master's Day, July 31, 2015.

Although the full moon in July is celebrated as Guru Purnima, this year we have the rare occasion of a blue moon, that is, the second of two full moons in one month. The first full moon is not considered auspicious. In the Vedic calendar, this year has one extra lunar month with full moons falling on July 2 and July 31. In the Vedic language it is called purushottama masa (the month of the Supreme Lord) or adhika masa (extra lunar month). This extra month is for more prayer and meditation. The end of this extra month of sadhana will conclude with the special occasion of Guru Purnima. During this extra lunar month in Puri, the forms of Lord Jagannath were renewed. This renewal is symbolic of our life quest to transform our attitudes, thought

patterns, lifestyles, and habits. We must change ourselves. No one can do it for us.

When we celebrate Guru Purnima, a verse from the Guru Gita comes to my mind that reflects upon the nature of a disciple. To his beloved companion and disciple Parvati, Lord Shiva explained the duty of a sincere seeker even before initiation:

*duhsamgam ca parityajya
papakarma parityajet
cittacihnamidam yasya tasya
diksha vidhiyate*

- Guru Gita (308)

"One who has renounced bad company and abandoned sinful acts, who maintains impressions of purity in the heart and mind, can be ordained for initiation by the guru-preceptor."

The above verse says three things:

1. Renounce bad company: Sincere seekers should be strict about the company they keep. Not just the people we contact, but also our food, habits, thoughts, reading, and nowa-

days electronic gadgets. Our lives should be simple, active, productive, and dedicated to God and God's creation.

2. Eliminate sinful acts and thoughts: The mind is not only a playground, but also a master player. The mind prompts, motivates, and lulls us into indulgences and impure thoughts and deeds. A seeker must be strict and disciplined. If the mind is sanctified, it can be a good friend and guide.

3. Maintain purity in mind and heart: Without inner purity, no spiritual attainment is possible. We should try to keep the mind and heart pure and clean. Sincere practice of disciplined prayer, meditation, self-study, good company, and selfless service make it possible.

After a seeker meets these three conditions, Lord Shiva says a seeker may be ini-

tiated into the spiritual path. We must ask ourselves, have we achieved these prerequisites? Ever-compassionate masters initiate us and help us along our path. But how sincere are we?

Our duty is to follow the path faithfully. Modern humans are not only somewhat lazy, but also highly ambitious. We want good results without sincere effort. We have no patience or perseverance. We must cultivate these qualities. Time is passing and waits for no one. We must make good use of our precious time.

During this special year with a blue moon in July, I pray to God and the masters to bless each one of us on our path. We should not neglect this divine opportunity to be worthy instruments and attain the higher purpose of life.

With Love,
Prajnanananda



PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

WHEN DOES DUTY END?

Jyothi Bathina

Recently six of us women began a Gita study group, which I blog about at www.pragmatichindu.com. Thanks to the power of technology, we are able to meet once a week online and discuss this ancient text and how it still applies to our modern lives. We talked last week about the conflict we feel as mothers. Our children are our lifeblood, young or old; they are most precious to our hearts. And we agreed that because of this intense attachment, we tend to push, to scold, to worry, and to nag. This doesn't fit too well with what the Gita preaches, which is the goal of detachment, aiming for a state of equilibrium, where one is swayed neither by pleasure nor by pain, by success nor by failure.

"How," one of our members asked, "can this be reconciled with being a good mother? Am I supposed to let my children fail, simply because it doesn't matter? Am I supposed to take no pleasure in

their achievements nor push them to succeed?"

The answer to that is of course a resounding "No!" As mothers we absolutely owe it to our children to guide them, to teach them, to show them right from wrong. It is our duty. So how do we reconcile our role as teacher, mentor, and guide with that of detached observer - By practicing compassionate detachment. In terms of our member's question, my thoughts were as follows.

Push your children to achieve their highest potential. Hold them to the highest standards. But rather than telling them that they must come in first, that they must win the championship, be the best dancer, score the winning goal, or get the highest marks, practice telling them to do their very best. And teach them that by doing their very best, they have done their duty. It doesn't matter after that whether they win or lose, whether they come

in first or third or tenth. To strive to the utmost to fulfill one's fullest capability is in itself success. A subtle change in approach, but one that makes a world of difference, both for you and for your child.

We have to look at our own expectations, our desire to be the best and have our children make us proud. Our pride should come from how hard we try and the same goes for our children. In this way, we continue to strive for excellence, without stressing competition, aggression, intimidation, jealousy and fear which are ugly emotions.

If we frame success in terms of effort, then the ugliness disappears and all that is left is an individual challenge and a self directed goal.

To be compassionately detached is to be free to love and yet be detached, not from our loved ones, but from the expectations that breed disappointment and anger. If we can love our children as beautiful fellow travelers on the road to perfection, who have been entrusted to our care for a brief while on their journey, then we can show true

compassion that is free from toxic attachment.

Too often, we equate attachment with affection. But it is no such thing. Attachment is a selfish desire for payback. "You are mine, I raised you, I need you to do this or that. You disappointed me, you let me down." How is this love? Real love comes only with equilibrium and lack of expectation. It comes with compassionate detachment.

So, if the goal is to perform duties without expectation, then what exactly do we perceive as our essential duties? We determined that being a daughter, sister, wife and mother were among the chief ones.

"So when do my duties end? When do I stop being daughter, sister, wife, and mother? When do I get time for me?" Less of a question and more of a plea, from one of our members.

When does our duty end? Does it ever? If the idea is to be compassionately detached as we raise our children, then what about after they are raised? With my son for example, I was a helicopter parent, especially given the fact

that for many of his most crucial boyhood and adolescent years, I was a single mother. Determined to be both mother and father, I was mommy, friend, and disciplinarian all rolled into one. Not an easy job, nor a very effective combination and I was certainly NOT compassionately detached. Still, I did the best I could, and we made it through. Now that he is grown, in his third year of med school, and has been out of the house for almost a decade, are my duties toward him complete?

I had been looking forward, after a very exhausting semester at school, to a summer where I could focus wholly on myself, my writing, my health, and my creativity. I was anticipating with relish the long summer days when I would be accountable to no one, with no papers to grade, students to advise or meetings to attend. I would go for long walks, I told myself, meditate for hours on end, attend my Gita class, and write a book or two.

Two weeks before the end of the semester, my son sent me a text. "I think I better come home to study for Step 1 of the USMLE." It was a

crucial step in his career, a high stakes exam that would determine whether or not he made it as a doctor. Of course, I told him to come.

For the next six weeks, I resumed my status as Mom, with a capital M. My husband and I arranged a special study room for him downstairs and removed all the furniture. We moved my desk and my brand new display monitor that I had just brought home to write with, into his room. I cooked him three meals a day, carefully balanced to give him the right dose of nutrition. I delivered the meals to his door so he wouldn't be disturbed. We kept the TV low and the dogs quiet, tiptoed around the house, and gave him one of the cars and managed with the other, so he could go to the gym or take off once a week to the mountains to relax. On the day of the exam, I packed a cooler full of granola bars, mixed nuts and coconut water to keep him energized.

Payback? He passed with flying colors and I know that he can now choose his field of specialization and is not limited in what he wants to do. I like to think that I did my duty this time not passionately

attached to the results, but the clock attention and compassionately detached. I occasional support, but it lasts urged my son to do his best, for as long as we do. As for did everything in my power to the self? It seems we have to help him, and left the results to look at duty not as an obstacle, God. but as the actual, often winding, sometimes exhausting path to progress and perfection.

No, our duty never ends.
It may fluctuate between round

DATES TO REMEMBER

October - December, 2015

October 13 – 22	: Navaratri – 9 day festival of Divine Mother
November 13	: Deepvali – Festival of Lights
November 17	: Birthday of Swami Satyananda Giri
December 3	: Mahasamadhi Day of Gurudev
December 2	: Gita Jayanti – Birthday of Bhagavad Gita
December 24-25	: Christmas Celebration
Dec. 31 to Jan.1	: New Years Celebration

Teachings of the Masters

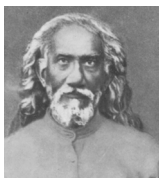
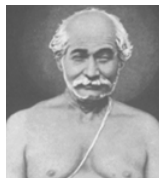


"The door of Kriya Yoga is open only to earnest seekers and sadhakas."

Mahavatara Babaji

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

Lahiri Mahasaya



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

Swami Shriyukteshwar

"Analysis (vichara), detachment (vairagya) and good company (satsanga) are helpful to attain steady spiritual growth."

Sanyal Mahasaya



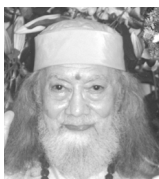
"By drawing and observing the graph of your mind, you can see whether everyday you are making any progress in your life or not."

Paramahansa Yogananda



"Scholarship of the scriptures is of little significance. Was Ramakrishna Paramahansa a great scholar? Yet every word from his mouth was a scripture."

Swami Satyananda



"Every religion teaches the formlessness of God. Kriya Yoga teaches how you can reach that formless stage." **Paramahansa Hariharananda**



"One reaches the state of perfection through regular practice and integrated awareness."

Paramahansa Prajnanananda



MYTHS AND METAPHORS

DEVI MAHATMYA



*ya devi sarvabhuteshu matrurupena samsthita |
namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namah ||*

THE MANY FORMS OF DIVINE MOTHER

There are many aspects of Divine Mother. These forms include Saraswati (the goddess of learning), Lakshmi (the goddess of fortune), Durga (the goddess of strength and power), Kali (the goddess of time). Durga, Kali, Lakshmi and Saraswati represent the development of human personality. Let us look at some examples.

Mother Kali

Kali is shakti, energy. strength, prakriti and the divine consort of Lord Shiva. Mother

Kali is beyond time. She transcends time and can bestow the timeless state upon the seeker. She is the symbol of death, destruction, and dissolution. Without the death of our negative propensities, there is no hope for evolution through transformation.

Her ten faces look in the ten directions – east, west, north, south, the four corners, above and below, symbolizing her omnipresence and omniscience. Her ten feet represent the heroic ability to move in ten directions to protect a seeker by eliminating

difficulties. In her ten hands she holds weapons that represent the strength, skill and power to eliminate the vices of her children. The conch is the symbol of divine sound and auspiciousness. Her three eyes represent the sun, moon, and fire, symbols of light and knowledge. The two physical eyes reveal the knowledge of duality, the third one is the eye of unity. She is decked with ornaments to symbolize her beauty, love, compassion and kindness. She is pleasing and loving.

Mother Lakshmi

Lakshmi is the goddess of prosperity, fortune, wealth and beauty. She represents the motherhood of wealth. Now a days modern man is obsessed with money and works day and night to acquire it. No doubt, money is useful, it gives us a house, clothes, food, a vehicle and a comfortable life style. Thus just as a mother gives us comfort in life, money also gives us some comfort. However one should use money, not abuse it. We abuse money when we spend it on things that make our life troublesome. We should be careful which type of food we

should buy, which habits we adopt and in what way we spend. We should make it a practice to spend money in a healthy way.

If you look at Lakshmi's picture, you will see that she is sitting on a lotus and an owl is perched near her. In one hand she has a treasure pot and with another hand she is offering the treasure. The owl is nocturnal- it does not sleep at night and it can see in the darkness. Likewise people who have lots of money tend to have less sleep. Either they must work long hours to maintain their lifestyle or they are filled with anxiety and tension about losing their money.

One meaning of Lakshmi is prana, the life energy, or the breath. If there is no prana (no breath), where is the beauty of prosperity. The divine Mother is present as breath, beauty, talent, and success in all living beings. The Divine Mother as Lakshmi provides breath to every living being. Day and night there is flow of breath.

Mother Saraswati

Saraswati is considered the goddess of speech, who represents skillful and loving communication. If you see a

picture of sarawati, she is dressed in white clothes, with white flower garlands, holding a veena (a string musical instrument) in two hands, in another hand she holds the vedas and in the fourth hand a rosary.

Saraswati's visual representation contains symbolic truth. Consider the mental process behind speaking. There are two ways to speak – eiether you speak from memory or from some new ideas created within you. The truth is, if you do not know something you cannot speak. Usually you speak from your memory, however sometimes a new thought occurs and you speak about that. New ideas are created when your mind is calm and quiet. This occurs when it is like a clean white paper. It is spotless, nothing is there. During those times when the mind is peaceful and tranquil,

then the truth is revealed. At that time you are able to express some aspect of the revelation. So this is the reason why Saraswati is dressed in white. The color white also represents that good thoughts, good words, and good actions are possible with a clean state of mind.

The musical instrument she holds represents the vocalization of our thoughts. One prayer to her says, “O, Divine Mother, may you sit on my tongue, holding the vina and the scripture. So in this prayer, we ask that our every word be soothing and pleasing to others just as the musical instrument creates music, enchanting people. The scripture she holds signifies that our speech must be full of truth and free from falsehood, ego and vanity. “Let my speech be like music, like a sacred melodious song. O Divine Mother , I bow to You.”

THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI

Sutra 14

Tatra *sthitau*
yatnobhyasah

Word Meaning

tatra – there ; *sthitau* – for steadiness, for being firmly established; *yatnah* – effort, sincere endeavor; *abhyasah* - practice

Translation

Practice is the sincere effort to be established there.

Commentary by Shri Lahiri Mahasaya

What is practice? It is the effort (*abhyasa*) to keep the mind steady and still, and to keep the mind in the *kutastha* (atom point).

Metaphorical Explanation

In the previous *sutra* the sage declared that there are two ways to liberation: *abhyasa* (practice) and *vairagya* (non-attachment). In this *sutra*, he explains the first approach, *abhyasa*, in greater detail.

To understand this *sutra* better, it is necessary to know

these four words: *tatra* – there, *sthitau* – to be settled or established in that state, *yatna* – sincere effort, and *abhyasa* – practice. *Tatra* means to be at the goal and *sthitau* implies steady and firm establishment in the goal. But how is one to be steadily present in the goal? It is through sincere repetition of the practical instructions given by the guru preceptor with love and sincere effort – by *abhyasa* and *yatna*. In this *sutra* the sage describes the necessity of spiritual discipline in a very systematic way.

The sage explains the importance of being established in one's own self. The body, the mind, and the soul comprise human life. The body is inert but is active because of the soul, and it becomes the play ground of the mind. A restless mind is the cause of bondage, and a peaceful and tranquil mind is the gateway to emancipation. When the mind is in *kutastha* (the atom point inside the head), it is in the state of liberation

The Triple Qualities of the Mind

The mind can be lazy, lethargic, and idle, which in yogic language is called tamasic (dull, doubting, and dwelling). The mind can also be active, restless, tense, which is called rajasic (activity, restlessness, ego and temptation). These two states cause suffering, but the spiritual mind is called sattvic, the state of complete calmness and bliss. The spiritual mind is calmly active and actively calm throughout all activities because it is absorbed in the self. Thus the primary objective of practice is to slowly eliminate the tamasic and rajasic states. Achieving this sattvic state of mind will bring success in life.

Practice is the First Step, the Art of Self Discipline

Of the two ways to liberation (practice and non attachment) described by the sage, practice is the primary step. Practice creates the foundation that leads to non attachment. Practice is a conscious effort to train the mind to be steady and always directed towards the goal. Now, what is to be practiced?

Employing self discipline is the key to finding moderation in meditation practice. There should not be extremes which will eventually create inner imbalance. Keeping track of the mind is extremely important, because being unaware of your thoughts creates chaos and conflicts both inside and outside. Practice also entails the moderation of food and activities along with prayer and meditation. It requires focusing constantly on the breath in every activity. This is the key to success in material as well as spiritual life.

Repeated effort to achieve a goal is called practice. To do something once in a while haphazardly is not practice. With irregular effort success is far away. With sincere practice, success is at hand.

Tatra sthitau yatnah means repeat the endeavor with sincerity and love. Let the mind always be absorbed in the self, even while the doors of the body's senses are wide open. Through practice, the mind becomes saturated by the experience of spiritual wisdom and love and more readily

beholds the presence of the divine. By constantly staying in *kutastha*, (the atom point of concentration), through every activity(*kri*)one can experience the self(*ya*).

O Seeker! Practice, Practice, Practice. It will give you perfection. It has been emphasized by the masters since time immemorial .Even in perfecting any worldly skills for

example, singing, dancing, cooking, and other such activities; one can easily see how repeated practice brings mastery and success. However mechanical practice is not enough. There is a need for joyful practice. So practice the instructions of the guru preceptor with love and faith. It helps to be steadier in your evolution.



Guru Purnima Celebration
Hariharananda Gurukulam

VALUABLE VOLUMES



IN THIS ISSUE WE HAVE EXCERPTS FROM
AKSHARA TATTVA

BY PARAMAHAMSA PRAJNANANDA

The book gives a metaphorical and mythological introduction to the inner principles of Akshara (Sanskrit letters), and at the same time gives deep insight to the scientific language itself and its spiritual heritage.

AKSHARA TATTVA

Varna , Matrika and Lipi

i. Varna (Letter)

In Sanskrit there are 50 letters, but all are manifested from the single primordial sound, *OM*.

Om - the Single Letter

In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said,

*Om ityekaksharam brahma
vyaharan mamanusmaran-
(Gita VII-13)*

Here the letter *om* is the single syllable symbolizing Brahman. Though there are many letters in the alphabet there really is only one letter. *Om* is also called the *pranava*. *omkara* is a name for the *parambrahma* and is the

essence of all the *Vedas*. By repeatedly contemplating on the meaning of *omkara* one can know the *Brahman*.

Om is the first sound or the primordial sound from which all others sounds arise. All thoughts are coming from the same source and all sounds also come from a single source. *Om* is the name or symbol of God and has a special significance in the realm of spiritual practice and precept. *Om* includes the three-fold experience of man. The whole world comes from *om*, exists in *om* and dissolves in *om*. The word *om* is composed of the letters *a*, *u* and *m*. *A* represents the physical plane, *U* symbolizes the astral or the mental plane and

M represents the deep sleep state and all that is beyond the intellect. *Om* pronounced correctly sets up powerful vibrations and removes all worldly thoughts from the mind.

A sound can make a person strong or weak and similarly a thought can make one feel powerful or depressed. In the *Bhagavad Gita* Krishna's teaching to Arjuna could change a weak person into a strong one.

ii. *Varna* (Color)

Divine energy is the source of all colors and is described as *sarva varnopa shobhita* - shining as all colors. All sounds are accompanied by colors and give rise to many hues. When someone praises you, your face becomes cheerful and happy and when someone blames you it becomes pale. When you become angry the color of the face turns red. The color of the emotion is not the natural color of the skin. So colors can change with every situation and emotion. To be successful one should learn to control the facial expressions. These changes are caused by the use of words or letters, and with change in the state of mind

or emotion, the words also change. But a successful person maintains inner balance while being praised as well as slandered.

As the *Gita* says,

*Dukheshu anudvignamanah
sukheshu vigatasprihah* -
(*Gita II-56*) - Not to be depressed in sorrow or overjoyed in pleasure but to maintain a state of equanimity.

Through meditation one can achieve this state. When Arjuna gets depressed *yogeshwara* Krishna teaches him to get self-control and discipline and to act the right way. This is the transformation in life.

iii. *Varna* (Caste System)

Varna also means caste. Indian caste system has been the subject of much controversy, conflict and chaos. Here the inner and spiritual approach to the caste system is explained.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* the Lord said,

*chaturvarnyam maya
srishtvam guna karma
vibhagashah*

The meaning is, "I have created the four castes based on *guna* and *karma*."

chaturvarnyam maya srishtvam – I have created these four castes. How does God create these four castes? In every living being there is the presence of God. God has created four aspects in every human being. Each human being becomes a *brahmanah*, a *kshatriya*, a *vaishya* and a *shudra* depending on the nature of the work he is doing at a given time.

When does a person become a *shudra*? In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said that a *shudra* is one who serves the others. When you are taking care of the body, serving the body, at that time you are a *shudra*. *Shudra* are the serving class. You are a servant when you become body conscious while you eat or dress or take a bath. When you are engaged in earning money by whatever occupation you choose, be it teaching, treating patients or trading, you become a *vaishya* or a trader. So everybody who is working for money or dealing with money is a *vaishya*. Your body is a kingdom and you are the king. To maintain a strong body and mind you undertake some exercises – to sustain the

body's defense mechanism, you must become *kshatriya* or warrior. One who controls and destroys the inner enemies is a true hero. Finally as you try to meditate a little, and listen to a spiritual lecture, and feel inspired by a holy book you read. And help others to lead a better life; you become a Brahmana or a teacher. Every person has to follow different castes at different times depending upon *guna* and *karma*, and they in turn reflect different aspects of everyday life.

Evolution in the Spiritual Journey

Every person on the spiritual journey progresses through these four castes. The quality of the *shudra* is to serve. In spiritual life that is the first quality of the disciple. In the old spiritual tradition in India, a disciple was approaching the spiritual teacher and serving him, staying near him and learning the spiritual life- the truth. The first quality of a spiritual seeker is to be humble, to be near a teacher to do the apprenticeship, to learn something which is necessary for one's own spiritual growth. A student must have the sense of humility, love towards the

teacher – this is the *Shudra* stage.

In spiritual life every person should try to get the maximum profit. Your time is your wealth and your breath is your wealth. Life is a one-way journey. What is past will not come back. Time is precious. A spiritual seeker must be more calculating in the investment of time. In the beginning of spiritual life it is important to have a fixed routine. So *vaishya* - the businessman will invest his time and breath to derive maximum benefit. What is your real profit? The real gain in life is love and peace. *Vaishya* - the spiritual seeker is also a farmer. He cultivates life with spiritual practice such as meditation or prayer, to reap the spiritual harvest of peace, love and happiness. By cultivating life in exchange of time and breath, a *vaishya* reaps a huge harvest of peace, love and joy.

Every spiritual person is a *kshatriya*. What does the warrior do? He fights. In spiritual life the warrior fights with the enemies that are not outside but inside, with the inner enemies. One who is strong can fight. One who is strong can

fight. Be strong through spiritual practice of meditation and lead a life of God consciousness to remove the weaknesses like anger and ego. Strong people are not angry and they are not jealous. So one should fight with all inner enemies and become a *kshatriya*.

Then one can progress to be a *brahmana*. *Brahmana* means the state of realization. *brahma janati iti brahmana*. One who knows the truth is Brahmin. By leading this life of discipline passing through the first three stages of *shudra*, *vaishya* and *kshatriya* one will become a *brahmana*. Every spiritual seeker will be enlightened if one follows the path of truth. Practice brings perfection. *Brahmana* is the state of perfection, which is the birth right of every person. The experience of such state depends upon a strong desire, a deep sincerity and a determined effort.

Matrika

Akshara is also known as *matrika*

A letter is also called the *matrika* in Sanskrit. *Matrika* denotes mother. The Divine mother is the source of energy and manifestation of all energy.

She is described as *matrika varna rupini* i.e. the Mother in the form of letters and *matrika varna liptangi* meaning the Mother with many hues.

In Indian scripture God is considered the Mother. When the male and the female deities are referred to, always the name of the Mother aspect, the energy is mentioned first, like Lakshmi Narayana, Sita Rama etc. There could be a few exceptions. The divine mother holds the universe within herself. The whole universe is considered to be the manifested power of the fifty letters of the Sanskrit language. The macrocosm is only a reflection of the microcosm. The fifty letters are also present in each human body and are the power of the consciousness.

*Jihvagre vardhate lakshmi
Jihvagre ripu bandhavah
Jihvagre bandhana prapta
Jihvagre moksha nischaya*

Meaning, one gets material prosperity through proper use of the tongue, one also gets enemies through the

wrong use of tongue. Tongue can be the source of bondage as well as liberation and success.

Every thought is energy and we should know how to handle that energy that is constantly manifested in our brain and in every cell. One who does not know how to handle electricity can get a shock, which can some times be deadly. One who knows how to use it will be benefited.

***Lipi* (Script)**

The 4th name of *akāara* is *lipi*. *Lipi* is the physical expression of sound. There is the sound first and then the form. First there was sound and from sound came the creation. I am hungry is the sound and food is the creation. *Lipi* is the physical expression of all the sounds of all the tongues. Through *lipi*, the system of writing started. *Lipi* is the script, which gives birth to scriptures, the treasure of knowledge transmitted from pure mind, into the matter between the two covers of the book.

EPISODES FROM MAHABHARATHA

DIGVIJAYA

During the period of Mahabharata the kingdom of Bharata was divided into two parts: One part to be ruled by the Kauravas and the other part to be ruled by Pandavas. They would each have their own kingdom and capital.

Similarly, each human body is a kingdom divided into two parts. One part is the dominion of Kauravas and the other is under the rule of Pandavas. Sometimes we become like the Kauravas , completely restless, running after sense pleasure, and other times we are calm quiet and introverted like the Pandavas. Most people have dual personalities.....

The Katha Upanishad (1:2:2) describes two paths: One is the path of *shreyas*, the path of good and the other is the path of *preyas*, the path of pleasure. While many people take the path of pleasure, only a few people take the path of good. In the path of pleasure, people are busy with their

senses and are extroverted and restless. In the path of good, people use their subtle intellect and are introverted, calm and quiet. The Holy Bible says there is a wide gate and a narrow gate. The wide gate symbolizes the path of pleasure and the narrow gate is the path of goodness. The path of pleasure is associated with pain and suffering. This path appears to be attractive, but ultimately, it is painful. The path of goodness is one of eternal happiness. The Pandavas and Kauravas symbolize these paths.

Each human body is a kingdom. Each person finds his own capital city in his body. For example those who live with ego, jealousy, envy, emotions and misunderstanding consider the heart their capital city. When they have a kingdom they choose their own people to surround them. “One’s own people” mean those who also have ego as their capital and activities and vices driven by ego. What is the capital in your

life? Where do you want to stay? From where do you conduct your activities? Those who want to enjoy the world and live the life of sense pleasures choose a specific part of the body – a specific chakra – as their capital.

The capital city of the Pandavas was Indraprastha. Indraprastha is the place where the sense organs have no role to play. It is a place of sense control and purity. After establishing their new capital Indraprastha, a thought came to the Pandavas about conquering. They wanted to win over different kingdoms. This is known as Digvijaya .

Dik means space or direction and *vijaya* means victory. The inner meaning of *Digvijaya* is , - victory over space and entering the formless state. Space has no form. When Pandavas wanted to go to the formless state which is *digvijaya*, Yudhishtira, who was the king, directed his four brothers to go in four different directions. Bhima went east, Arjuna went north, Sahadeva went south, and Nakula went west. How do you know if you are progressing in the

digvijaya? Though the five elements and the five qualities are in the space, the space still has a special quality of its own. *Shabdhamulakam akasham* – sound is the quality of the space. The aim of conquering space means listening to the eternal sound. Usually before one goes for a conquest conches or trumpets are blown, similarly those who go deep into meditation listen to the divine sound. This is the symbol of *digvijaya*, the conquest over space. Space is formless – conquest over the formless means to be in the formless state and to experience unity. In the Mahabharata (sabha parva25:2) Arjuna said to Yudhishtira “ I have been blessed with 8 aspects of life. One is *dhanu* (bow), the second is *shara*(arrow),the third is *shastra* (weapons), the fourth is *virya* (vital energy), the fifth is *paksha*(allies), the sixth is *bhumi*(territory), the seventh is *yasha* (fame), and the eighth is *bala* (army).

“Bow, weapons, great energy, allies, territory, fame, army, those, O King, which are desirable but not easy to acquire, have all been obtained by me.”

Each of these eight aspects of life is very rare to find. In spiritual life they are eight inner qualities. *Dhanu* means a bow. The spinal column is not a straight line; it is bent like a bow. One, who holds a *dhanu* or bow, has control over one's own spine or the spinal chakras. In the Upanishadic description, *pranava* is also *dhanu*, or bow. *Pranava* means *omkara* – to be blessed with the experience of the soul and control over the 5 chakras that correspond to the ten sense organs. *Shara* means *atma*, the soul. It means to have experienced the answer to the question, “Who am I?” There is a distinction between *astra* and *shastra*. *Astra* is that which can be held to fight, like a sword. *Shastra* is that which you can throw like missiles. We throw words. If words are full of knowledge, love and inspiration they will conquer everybody. If words are not good, full of falsehood, hurting others, we are defeated. *Virya* means “strength, valor and heroic nature.” *Virya* comes from the word *veera*, a hero. Heroic nature is the cultivation of discipline, courage, and

determination on the path of *sadhana*. *Paksha* means, “to help,” “support, or strengthen.” In your spiritual journey, who is your *paksha*, or support? In the Mahabharata, Lord Krishna was the support of the Pandavas. On our spiritual journey, our support is the guru or master. The ordinary meaning of *bhumi* is “earth”; the spiritual meaning is “steadiness.” *Yasha* does not mean name and fame; it is the beauty of self knowledge. *Bala* means strength; it is not only the strength of the body, but also the power of refined mind.

We have all these eight qualities within us; thus we should increase our accumulation of spiritual treasure. The word used is *koshaya parivardhanam*—increasing the treasure.. “*Kosha*” means sheath or “covering.” There are *panchakoshas* or five sheaths or five types of treasures: *Annamaya* (food sheath), *manomaya* (mental sheath), *pranamaya* (vital air sheath), *vijnanamaya* (vital sheath), and *anandamaya* (blissful sheath). The simple meaning of treasure is wealth. Ordinary

people go after material wealth. Those who are spiritual consider divine qualities as their real wealth. Knowledge, understanding, and love are our wealth. Let us analyze our journey on the spiritual path and determine which type of wealth we have in our life. We have to go to the *koshatita* state,

beyond the sheath. From *ajnanamaya* (ignorance) state, we have to go to *vijnanamaya* (knowledge) state, *anandamaya* (blissful) state, or even beyond. So *koshaya parivardhanam* means we should increase the treasure of love, knowledge, and bliss within.



Visit to Karar Ashram
Guru Purnima - 2015

STORIES TO LIVE BY

ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

In every step of our lives, we should learn to develop the attitude of gratitude. It enhances the beauty in life. I recollect a story from my childhood.

Once upon a time, Androcles a young slave was wandering in the forest after escaping from his Master. Suddenly he heard a loud groan coming from the nearby bush: there he spotted an injured lion that was writhing in pain. The young man was sympathetic and compassionate as he loved all God's creatures. He was also fearless and unafraid of wild animals. Thus with eyes filled with love and kindness, he slowly approached the lion. The suffering lion looked deeply into the eyes of Androcles and could sense his compassion and love. Consequently when Androcles tried to touch the lion with his gentle caring hand, the lion cooperated and stretched out his injured leg. After few minutes of examining the paw, Androcles could see it was badly infected. While cleaning the wound he discovered that a

large thorn has penetrated deep inside the Lion's paw. He easily removed the thorn and carefully applied from healing herbs. The lion was so happy and grateful, he began sniffing and licking the young man. After making sure that the lion was properly tended to, Androcles went on his way knowing the lion would soon be well again.

Time passed and eventually both Androcles and the lion were captured. The lion was put in a cage and Androcles in the prison, and both were starved for several days. According to the rule the young man was to be placed in the lion's cage and fed to the hungry animal, which was viewed as a great entertainment during those times. Consequently, all the people in the city, and even the emperor with his court went to the arena to watch the ravenous lion devour the young man. Androcles bravely entered the arena and was immediately cast into the wild beast's den. As soon as the lion saw his next

meal he quickly lunged at the young man. However, suddenly something unexpected happened. Just as the lion was about to attack Androcles, he stopped – as he recognized the friend that had once saved him from his agony. Thus instead of eating Androcles, the lion started licking him like a pet cat. As you can imagine the the crowd was astonished at what they were seeing and so also was the emperor, who quickly summoned the young man. The emperor asked Androcles to narrate his story: He wanted to know this wild beast was behaving like a kitten. When

Androcles told him about his previous encounter with the lion and how he healed its paw, the emperor was impressed and so he freed both the young man and the lion.

This beautiful story speaks of friendship, love, faith, compassion, and, above all, gratitude, which is not only limited to human beings in the story but to the lion as well. Indeed, this attitude of gratitude can grow and expand to all living beings and even the entire creation. Gratitude is not a rare quality; in fact it is a very common quality found in all living things.



Inauguration of Girls Camp at Balashram

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA

MESSAGE OF PARAMAHAMSA

PRAJNANANANDA

June 21, 2015

On the occasion of International Day of Yoga, I send my love, best wishes, amity and unity, to all. My expression of all includes not only the human beings, but also the entire creation, the environment, the trees, the plants, the birds and the animals. We all are united in love.

India since time immemorial is ever specialized in the path of spirituality, path of yoga. Yoga means union. We all are essentially one because creator is one. Creation is one. Although there is apparent diversity, but there is inherent unity. Yoga is the path that unites all. Yoga is the path that brings healthy body, healthy mind, good intellect, and ultimately pure love.

So...this path of yoga should bring this message of amity and unity everywhere. Message of yoga in modern India was taken to the world by Swami Vivekananda in 1893. In 1920 Paramahansa Yoganandaji brought the

message of Kriya Yoga to the western world. Later on many other yoga masters have brought this message of yoga - and now yoga is practiced all over the world. People belonging to different religions and different cultures have accepted yoga as the way of their life. Yoga is the path of unity - union.

On this special day of commemorating International Day of Yoga - I remember my master, and the masters of Kriya Yoga, those who have worked tirelessly all over the world, to spread the message of unity and love.

Let this path of yoga bring this love in the heart of every individual, transforming their life to a better life. Let this world be a better place to live in peace, joy, and harmony.

I again, congratulate those who practice yoga, to spread this message of unity, amity, friendship, and love everywhere-through inner transformation. Thank you all. I bow to you all. ***

YOGA FOR A PERFECT LIFE

June 21, 2015, was celebrated as an International Yoga day, around the globe, with talks, demonstrations and discussions on yoga. Let us take a closer look at what is yoga and why it should be practiced. We bring you an article excerpted from a talk of Paramahansa prajnananandaji at Central Missouri State University in Kansas.

What is Yoga?

Yoga is a Sanskrit word. Sanskrit is a beautiful and the most ancient language in the world. The Sanskrit word yoga has 32 meanings. The simplest meaning of yoga is union. Union is possible when there are two. You are sitting here listening to me as I am talking to you. The talk from me is entering you – this is union. In India the two hands are brought together to greet each other.

The Purpose Of Life

What is this union? What is this yoga? If I asked you a question, “Who are you?” can you answer it? What will be your answer to this question? Have you ever thought about “Who am I? Where did I come from? Why did I come?” You have come here to listen to the swami’s talk. But why have you come to this earth? After this talk is finished you will go back. One day you will have to go

back from this life. However much you love this body, your family, your job, or this central campus you have to leave all these one-day. What is the purpose for which we have come? If we can find answers to these questions we can find the clue to live peacefully, joy fully and purpose fully.

George Bernard Shaw was once traveling by train. As the conductor approached checking for tickets, he started searching for his ticket but could not find it. The conductor said, “It is ok” and moved on. As the conductor was returning after some time he saw that Shaw was still looking for his ticket. He asked him why he was still looking for the ticket. Shaw replied, “I thank you for your courtesy but I have to find the ticket so I know my destination and it is printed on the ticket.” This is the condition of most of us. To know the purpose of life and to find the

answer for the question “Who am I” solves the problem of life.

Unnatural Is Rejected

Suppose while taking food a small particle of food like a piece of spinach gets stuck between the teeth. What would be our immediate reaction? The tongue immediately reaches there, and tries repeatedly to push that particle out. If the tongue does not succeed then the brain tells the hand to get a toothpick and take it out. Now you think about it. The tongue cannot tolerate the presence of a small particle of food in between the teeth, but does not complain about the teeth, which sometimes bite the tongue. It is because the teeth in the mouth are a natural accepted condition but the presence of food between the teeth is unnatural. Having the teeth in the mouth is a natural condition but the spinach between the teeth is unnatural. What is natural we accept it and the body and the mind reject what is unnatural and try to get rid of it.

Does anyone want to be sick or diseased? The answer is no. You may love your doctor but no one wants medicines,

injections or surgeries. Does anyone want to die? No. Does anyone want to be weak or sad or depressed? No. Does anyone want to be ignorant? No.

So we don't want to be sick –we want to be healthy. We don't want to be weak- we want to be strong. We don't want to be ignorant-we want knowledge. We don't want to be unhappy –we want happiness peace and joy. After all these questions and answers we can conclude that disease, death, ignorance and weakness are unnatural to us and we do not want them.

How to Live A Peaceful And Successful Life?

You live in a house. You want to keep your house clean, with everything in proper place and proper condition. God has given us this body house to live in. Are we really taking care of the body? Do you know your body? You may know the color, the height and the weight of the body. Listen to a truth about the body. Each human being has three bodies –not one. We are gifted with a physical or a gross body, a psychological or astral body and a spiritual or causal body.

Gross Body

The gross body has six characteristics-Birth, existence, growth, maturity, decay and death. Each of us is born and exists. How do we exist? We exist because of our breath. If breath stops the physical body ceases to exist. Breath is continuously going in and coming out. Who is breathing? When you are in deep sleep can you say that it is you, who are breathing? The third quality is growth. The body has a limited growth. When the body reaches maturity it stops growing. Then decomposition sets in. the eye sight becomes weak, hair turns gray etc. Finally one day it dies. This does not mean that you don't take care of the body. We should care for the body by taking nutritious food in moderate quantities. Do not over eat and then try to burn calories. Practice moderation in your food habits. Live in healthy surroundings with fresh air. Regular exercise and proper rest help to maintain the health of the body.

Astral Body

The psychological body consists of the 10 senses and the mind. Five senses of action

and the five senses of perception-The mouth, hands, legs, anus and the genital organs- are the 5 senses of action and eyes, ears, nose, tongue and the skin are the five senses of perception. The mind is the major aspect of the astral body. Doctors agree that many diseases are caused by the mind-psychosomatic.

How do you take care of the mind? Regular prayer and meditation and some breathing exercises help to keep the mind under control for the health of the astral body. Positive thinking helps. How to cultivate positive thinking? No one can come into your house unless you want him or her to. Someone may ring a doorbell but it is you who decides to open the door or not. Life is like a house. Keep it open but have some control over thoughts and entertain positive thoughts. Good company can give you inspiration. Unfortunately people have no time. The parents do not have time for the children and the children don't like the parents company. You may ask what positive thinking is -I think of my house, my car, my job and my family. What else is positive?

Let us see how a thought comes. Suppose you went to a store to purchase a tape recorder. The dealer is showing you many models and one slipped from his hands and fell to the ground. What will be your reaction? You may feel a little sorry and sympathize- now say you bought one and as you are getting into the car it fell down from your hands. What is your reaction now? Your heart misses a beat. Two different reactions for the same incident!! In the first instance your reaction is mild as there is no attachment to the tape recorder but once you possess it, the feeling of mine causes the problem. Train your mind to accept all situations equally and without undue attachment.

Spiritual or Causal Body

The third is the spiritual or the causal body

How to take care of all these bodies?

The answer is yoga. You will ask what is this yoga and what should I do? The meditation technique that we teach is Kriya yoga. It is a simple scientific technique that anyone can practice but to learn you should be able to spend some time with the teacher at

least for three sittings and practice it.

The basis for the technique is breath. Life and breath are correlated. Breath is life and life is breath. If breath stops that is the end of your life. Breath and mind are also related. Suppose you are appearing for a test. How is your breath? Suppose you are angry –What type of breath do you have? How is your heartbeat? When the mind is peaceful breath is peaceful. Breath, mind and health are all correlated. To take care of your breath takes care of your mind.

Watch your breath. Note how many seconds it takes for one inhalation and one exhalation. It might have taken 3-4 seconds. Ordinarily you breathe 15 times a minute. If a person is angry one could breathe even 30 times a minute. Now watch my breath. It took 20-25 seconds to inhale and exhale once. Practice slow long, deep inhalation and exhalation to the full capacity of lungs. You will see a remarkable improvement in your thoughts and mind.

Kriya Yoga Meditation

The mind and breath are correlated. When the mind is

restless the breath is restless. If one understands how to regulate the breath one can regulate the mind.

It involves sitting for a minimum of 20 minutes a day, in complete silence, to breathe slowly and deeply from each chakra (chakras are subtle energy centers in the spine) concentrating intensely on that chakra, and to energize the entire body using the techniques taught by the teacher. After relaxing the mind and body through simple breathing and concentration exercises, we merge silently with the universe, allowing the inner voice to be heard. In that silence, we gain tremendous peace, strength and even practical answers to the questions whether they have to do with our families, our careers or our spiritual growth.

Practicing meditation regularly helps keep the *Sushumna*, a subtle pranic channel in the spine 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. 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, systematic and continuous.

There are also many physical benefits. When we concentrate on each chakra, the endocrine glands function more efficiently. When we concentrate in the fontanel, the pineal gland becomes activated. Concentrating in the soul center energizes the pituitary gland. 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.

While meditation can be taught through techniques explained and illustrated in books, those who meditate regularly know that real spiritual practice requires a living teacher. In order to learn the technique, we need to be

initiated by a teacher who is qualified to purify the chakras, teach the technique and guide the spiritual aspirants on their path. This meditation technique is not limited to any one religion. It is a tool with which

we can enhance whatever religion we are currently practicing. It requires no expensive equipment or physical contortions and can be practiced by old and young alike.



**International Yoga Day – 21st June
Sydney, Australia**

ATMA-VIDYA

PURSuing SELF-KNOWLEDGE

KAIVALYOPANISHAD

Mantra 21

*apani padoham acintya shaktih
pasyamacakshuh sa srunomyakarnah
aham vijanami viviktarupo na ca asti
vetta mama cit sadaaham*

Meanings

a –without, *pani*-hands, *pada* –feet, *aham*-I, *acintya*-unthinkable, *shaktih*-energy, *pasyama*- see, *acakshuh*-without eyes, *sa*-he, *srunomi*-hear, *akarnah*-without ears, *aham*-I, *vijanami*-(I) know, *vivikta*-without, *u*-form, *na*-no, *ca*-also, *asti*-is, *vetta* –one who knows, *mama*-me, *cit*-consciousness, *sada*-always, *aham*-I

Substance

I am without hands and feet but I have tremendous energy. I see without eyes and hear without ears, I know everything, I am without form and I am always that consciousness.

Commentary

This mantra with slight variations appears in different scriptures. It is in the

Kathopanishad and also in the Bhagavad Gita. This is also said in the Ramacarita Manasa - *vinu pada calai sunai vinu kana* –walking without the feet and listening without the ears.

Here it is said, “I am without feet and hands.” If you see the deities in the Jagannath temple, they appear to have hands but there are no hands, they appear to have legs but no legs, they appear to have eyes but no eyes.

Let us understand this mantra. What do the feet do? Feet are for moving from one place to another and we need them as the body and the mind limit us. But when one is in that universal consciousness and one is everywhere where will one go? Sometimes people say God is in heaven. If God is in heaven then is he not here?

If God is everywhere then where will the God go? In expanded consciousness one need not go anywhere, as one is everywhere.

There is a story from the life of Lahiri Mahasaya. Once Lahiri Mahasaya was talking to some disciples and suddenly said, “Oh the ship is in trouble.” After a long time a disciple came and thanked him for rescuing him. As it happened, this disciple was traveling by ship that was in a storm and was praying to Lahiri Mahasaya. That was the time Lahiri mahasaya made his comment. With our limited consciousness it is hard to

understand it. But to one of pure and expanded consciousness it is possible.

So the mantra says, “Being omnipresent I do not need hands or feet. I am of tremendous energy that cannot be comprehended through your ego. I see without eyes and listen without ears as I am present everywhere and there is nothing but me. . When there is no duality and I am everything, no one can know me and cannot know me. At that level of consciousness there is no knower and no knowable. I know everything.

I am always that consciousness.



Gita Jnana Yajna

PRAJNANA MISSION

– SPECIAL EVENTS

Balashram Highlights

Summer Camp for Girls

A five-day Summer Camp for girls on social and spiritual awareness was organized by the Hariharananda Matruashram, Arua from 4th – 8th June 2015, at Hariharananda Balashram. Inaugurating the camp on the evening of 4th June, Poojya Guruji, Paramahansa Prajnananandaji advised the children to be truthful and courageous while facing every situation of the day-to-day life. Among others who addressed the girls on the inaugural session were Swami Samarpananandaji, Swami Gurukrupanandaji, Sri P.P. Singh, Principal, Hariharananda Balashram and Dr. Aparna Mohanty, Lecturer (Odia), Kendrapada College.

Every day the camp started in the morning with yogasana, prayer and chanting of Bhagavad Geeta. Interesting and inspiring topics were addressed which included 'Aim of Life', 'Yogasana', 'Role of Girls in the Society', 'Plants -

Our Friends', 'Usefulness of Cows in our Life' and 'Devoted Women of India'. There were workshops on 'Preparation of Products from Cow Dung and Cow Urine', 'Preparation of Phenyl', 'Toy Making' & 'First Aid'. The participants showcased their talents in song and dance and participated in debate, quiz and devotional song competitions and won prizes for their proficiency.

The closing ceremony was held on evening of 8th June, with prize distribution.. At the end of the program, Swami Kamalanandaji proposed the vote of thanks. Thirty-nine school girls and five college girls participate in the 5-day residential camp. The mothers of the Matruashram under the guidance of Swami Kamalanandaji coordinated and conducted the camp activities.

Navakalebara

Seva activities during Ratha Yatra 2015

Prajnana Mission has carried out many seva activities

during Ratha Yatra 2015. Cleaning of the area around Sri Gundicha Mandir, Health Camp, Distribution of Water, Display of Sale of Books, Sadhu Seva, Cultural Programme by Artist etc were successfully executed with the help of Several volunteers who worked ceaselessly

Guru Purnima 2015, Hariharananda Gurukulam

Gurupurnima was celebrated on July 29, 30 & 31 at Hariharananda Gurukulam. First Kriya Yoga initiations were held on July 29. On July 31, the day of Gurupurnima there was special worship that included guru paduka puja and fire ceremony in Shri Guru Mandir. Several discourses and guided meditations inspired the large number of participants from all over the country and also several disciples from abroad.

The celebrations were held in the divine presence of our beloved Guruji Paramahansa Prajnananandaji. Swami Shuddhanandaji, Swami Samarpananandaji, and Swami Achalanandaji, Swami Arupanandaji were also present, along with several resident monks and

brahmacharis. An elaborate Guru Paduka Puja and Fire Ceremony were conducted at the Guru Mandir followed by a short guided meditation by Baba. Guru Mandir was filled to capacity with disciple who came from various states like Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. A total of about 1,500 people congregated on the premises of Hariharananda Gurukulam during the celebrations. New books in several languages were also released.

Guided meditations were conducted each day for all the participants in four different languages (English, Odia, Hindi, and Telugu). Guruji personally answered the queries of kriyavans regarding kriya techniques, problems in personal lives and doubts on scriptural studies in the Q&A sessions during the seminar. The essence of his Guru Purnima talk stressed on faith in Guru, sincere and regular sadhana, and surrender of ego. The enlightening and thought provocative talks with beautiful anecdotes inspired the audience with introspection and new determination to progress on the path of spirituality.

AROUND THE WORLD

Gurupurnima

Gurupurnima was celebrated at the mother centre in USA and all other ashrams around the globe with Gurupaduka puja, Fire ceremony, special worship, meditation, seminars and discourses.

NORTH AMERICA

Kriya Vedanta Gurukulam

Our Joliet Ashram, Kriya Vedanta Gurukulam Celebrated Guru Purnima along with their foundation day from July 30 – Aug 2. The annual Interfaith programme on 2nd August with a distinguished panel of speakers from several faiths was the highlight of the celebrations. The talks on the theme of - The Art of Forgiveness, were inspiring. An audience of close to 200 people participated in the programme.

Birthday Celebrations of Baba Prajnananandaji

All ashrams and centers around the globe celebrated the Birthday of Baba Prajnananandaji on August 10th

with special worship, meditations, seminars, discourses and satsang and prayers for Baba's continued spiritual guidance.

Annual Fall Retreat and Foundation Day, Mother Center U.S.A September 17-22

The Mother Centre USA was fortunate to be blessed with the Divine presence of Guruji, Baba Prajnananandaji during the celebrations of the foundation day and the annual fall retreat.

The Retreat at the Mother Center was well attended by national and international participants. Swami Atmavidyanandaji conducted the retreat along with Yogacharya John Thomas Baba and the resident monks and Brahmacharis. The six day retreat of several guided meditations, and inspiring discourses intensified the disciples. September 22nd, the foundation day was celebrated with special worship and meditation and discourses.

SOUTH AMERICA

Special Events at Baranquilla , Columbia

Swami Atmavidyanandaji had a busy program in Baranquilla , Columbia, besides the regular Kriya Programs of initiations and guided meditations..

There were two live TV interviews - One on Kriya Yoga and another on the World International Yoga day.

A talk and a guided General Meditation were arranged by the Indian Embassy on the International Yoga Day in which 160 people participated and practiced.

Other conferences include topics of “Microcosm and Macrocosm”, at the Columbian Federation of Masonic Lodges, where there was a great interest in Kriya Yoga among the Masons (Men of Church), and “Ancient Science of Kriya Yoga” at the Yoga Caribe Head Quarters. The programs were well attended.

“Peace, a Birth Right” at Amira de la Rosa Theater, was a promotion program titled “Good Treatment among

Citizens” by the Mayor of Baranquilla for neglected women through their Social Management office and was attended by 500 women. The center leader would be guiding general meditation for them on a regular basis in future.

AUSTRALIA

Gurudev’s Birthday Celebration.

On the 6th of June 2015, Sydney kriyavans celebrated Baba Hariharanandaji’s 108th birthday at Pymble Uniting Church. It was an intimate gathering of kriya initiates from all over Sydney. Meditations were also held on other Australian centres to celebrate this holy day.

Mind Body Spirit Festival Sydney - 28th to 31st May

More than 500 people visited the Kriya stall during the 4 days of Mind, Body Spirit Festival in Sydney. Many of our kriya publications were sold and a talk on Kriya Yoga and a DVD show case were also presented by the Sydney Kriyavans. any have expressed their desire to know more about Kriya Yoga and get initiated in our upcoming initiation program.
