

Sthita Prajna



Guru Vandana

*akhandananda bodhaya sishya santapaharine
satchidananda rupaya tasmai srigurave namaha*

“I bow to my guru who teaches how to experience the state of unbroken bliss, who eliminates the disciples’ troubles, and who has the form of satchidananda (immortality, consciousness, and bliss).”

Guru Gita verse 100

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FROM THE EDITORS :

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

Paramahansa Prajnanananda

In this issue “Message of the Master” talks of the oneness of all religions and elaborates on how soul is the unity of all beings.

Prajnanavani describes Tapah (penance) as the key ingredient of inner discipline. “Be fearless, be strong and be the master of your mind” is the message of the article on “Developing Fearlessness”.

Devi Mahatmaya elaborates on some verses of Devi Suktam with an enlightening commentary by Baba Prajnananandaji.

Kaivalya Upanishad our series on Self Knowledge concludes in this issue. By the knowledge of this Upanishad it is said, that one can destroy the ocean of the world and enjoy the fruit of liberation.

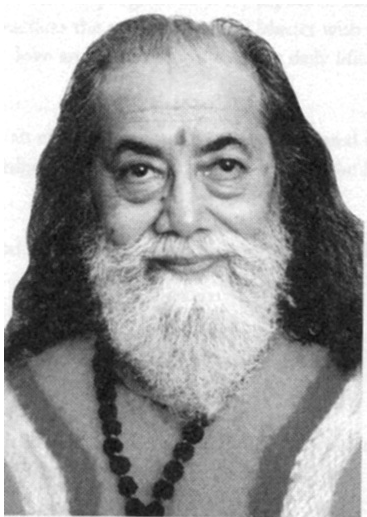
Relevant excerpts from of Paramahansa Prajnanananda’s “AksharaTattwa” elaborate on the expression of emotion and how different feelings are caused through word and ultimately through the akshara, while those from “JnanasankaliniTantra” talk of the cosmic mystery of creation and evolution.

Yoga Sutra of Patanjali defines vairagya as complete freedom from desire. We also bring you dates to remember, short stories and other articles of interest.

We bring you news of special events at the Gurukulam – the 17th IIKYS, Gita JnanaYajnas, special retreats, the memorable Shivaratri Celebrations, and the ever expanding Kriya activities of Prajnana Mission worldwide.

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

SARVA DHARMA SAMANVAYA – ONENESS OF ALL RELIGIONS



Once I spoke at a meeting on the oneness of all religions. Most people at that meeting were orthodox, and had some rigid views about *dharma* and rituals. I put on silk clothes and sat there. I was the seventh person to talk, and the people before me each talked for five to ten minutes. Each subject matter was different. When my turn came, I stood up. There were objections from some members who said I should not be allowed to speak, as I had not taken a bath in the sacred

Godavari river that morning, as they had done. Then the president asked me if I had taken a bath in the river. I said, “Yes, I have touched the water, and I placed the water three times on my head, and shouted, ‘Ganga, Ganga, Ganga.’” In the scriptures it is written that even if a person is a thousand miles from the Ganga, by saying, ‘Ganga, Ganga, Ganga,’ all his sins and impurities disappear. Also, you perceive the flow of the Ganga, the soul, which flows from the body, giving liberation.” I spoke in Sanskrit, quoting the scriptures.

Then I continued to say that it is the purity of the mind that is important, not just the physical dip in the river. There are many fish, alligators, and aquatic animals constantly bathing in the Ganga, and I asked if that would entitle them to come and address the gathering. Then they all realized the truth of my words, and said that I could speak. I said, “You are not the people to decide whether I can speak or not, let

the president tell me whether I am allowed to speak.” The president said that I should.

I spoke about the union of all religions: *sarva dharma samanvaya*, and said that I could complete it in one sentence or speak for hours about *sarva dharma samana*. First I gave my regards to the president. Then I bowed to all those who were there, perceiving God’s presence in them. I told them that I was bowing to all persons of the world, of all different religions, to Christians, Muslims, and others. I said that although they had different beliefs, they were all human beings, having the same two eyes, two ears, and the power of God abiding within them – just like us.

There is no question of caste or creed. When God created, He did not create any religion, He only created man and woman, breathing into their nostrils the breath of His life. He is abiding in the whole universe. The union is through the breath. What is the union of all religions? In the scriptures, in Taittiriya Upanishad (2:5:1), it is written:

*vijnanam devah sarve
brahma jyeshtham upasate*

“Knowing the divine nature, all the *devas* are worshipping the Absolute.”

The sense organs in the body are presided over by the godheads, and all are conducted by the soul. People worship Shiva, the presiding deity of sound, and Vishnu, from whom comes touch sensation. Surya, the sun, is in the eyes; and by power of *shakti* comes talk from the soul. Ganesha resides in the nose in the form of smell. These five deities are, however, useless if the power of the indwelling Self does not inhale the breath. We all are breathing. It is the cause of our life. The presence of life makes people religious. Without breath, they cannot perform any religious activity. Jesus said that God is Spirit, and worshippers of God should worship Him in spirit and Truth. (John 4:24) Spirit, in Latin is “spiritus,” which means “breath.” In the Bible’s teachings, God is considered breath. We all are breathing the same air, and our breath is the power of God. All religions are conducted by the one power of God. This is the union.

In the body, in every sense organ, and in every chakra, there are presiding

deities, but all are part of one person and one life. This is unity in diversity. Indian people worship millions of deities, but without the soul they cannot do anything. This is the union of all religions in one sentence. *Sarve deva* means five sense organs: ears, skin, eyes, mouth, and nose. They are the five deities. They are conducted by one soul. At the end of my talk, they all clapped because no one had explained union in this way before.

This is the highway of common religion. Ears cannot hear without the soul, eyes cannot see, the nose cannot smell, talk cannot come; the whole body cannot function without the soul. The soul is the unity in all activities. The soul is the unity in all living beings

I then spoke in detail about *dharma*, saying that one meaning of *dharma* is “that which is holding our body.” *Dharma* means our breath, which is holding our whole system. Without breath there is no sight, sound, knowledge, or experience. All qualities, good and bad, are stored in the midbrain. It is receptive; it is held by the power. This is called *dharma*. *Dharma* means the

nature, or the quality of the human being.

A thief steals money. It is his nature. A pickpocket is always seeing how to snatch money from others’ pockets. You could be carrying a bag, and a thief could cut it from below with a knife and take it without you noticing. This happened to me once when I was going from Haridwar to Puri. I had a bag in which were train tickets and some money. It was tied to my waist under my shirt. In the rush of getting into the train, the thief managed to cut the lower portion of the bag and take the coins. Some of them fell, and I did not realize that they were from my bag until another passenger alerted me. People were picking up coins, and as the train was about to leave, I was walking along and another coin fell, making a sound. A gentleman picked up the coin and said, “Swamiji, money is falling from your clothes.” Then I realized that the lower portion of my purse had been cut. This is *dharma*, or the nature or quality of the pickpockets. People have different qualities, some evil and some good.

One day, I was walking along the street with

Shriyukteshwarji, and there was a bullock cart with a load of bags in front of us. The bullocks pulling the cart were running fast. Due to the bumpy road, some bags fell off. The driver was unaware of this. I ran to the driver to tell him that bags had fallen because he had not secured them with ropes. He stopped the bullock cart, picked up the bags, secured them and left. When I came back to Shriyukteshwarji he said, "What you did was not right. God was punishing him for being careless, and you should not have interfered. Many people are careless and are punished because of it." I replied, "I am happy to hear this, but I think that it is not wise. The teacher is there for correcting the students, and the teacher should help."

When I find people in need of money, I give it to

them. I have given money to the sick who could otherwise not afford treatment. I considered it as my *dharma*. We must feel that we are the living power of God in every step of our life. We may get many troubles and many upsets, but through all this, we are to know God. The Isha Upanishad (mantra 2) says:

*kurvanneveha karmani jiji
visechchatam samah*

"You are to live one hundred years, and through your experiences, you must watch Him."

You should meditate and perceive the power of God within you. There is no other alternative. *Na karma lipyate nare*. The human being has no alternative but to watch the Self in every step of one's life, seeking God within, and in the whole universe.

DATES TO REMEMBER

April - June, 2016

- April 15 : Rama Navami (Birthday of Lord Rama)
- May 10 : The Birthday of Swami Shriyukteshwar
- May 17 : The Foundation day of Prajnana Mission
- May 27 : Birthday of Gurudev
Paramahansa Hariharanandaji

PRAJNANAVANI - THE VOICE OF WISDOM

THE PATH OF INNER DISCIPLINE



Tapah

There is no substitute for hard work. When Self-realization or spiritual growth is considered the highest goal in spiritual achievement, it naturally requires continuous sincere effort. Sage Patanjali, while describing inner development and transformation, emphasized tapah. In his Yoga Sutra, he has mentioned tapah several times.

What does tapah mean? It has multiple meanings, among them, heat or fire, religious austerity, pain or suffering, meditation connected with the practice of physical mortification, or special observances. Tapah is the practice of doing difficult things to mortify the body for the purpose of discipline and tolerance. Some people sit with the hands up in the air and meditate for long periods of time.

Others sit around a fire in summer and meditate, or stand in cold water in winter and torture the body in pursuit of their goal.

The second aspect of tapah comes from the root word tapa, meaning “temperature.” Each body maintains its temperature, which is done through circulation and the breath. The temperature of the body is maintained through conscious breathing, which is tapah.

Tapah can also be the ability to tolerate hunger and thirst, cold and heat, pleasure and pain.

Fasting

Some people engage in rigorous fasting practices. There is a special fast related to the moon. One starts with a full meal on a full moon day and gradually reduces the amount of food each day so that nothing is eaten on the new moon day. Then food is gradually increased again so that on the full moon day, a full meal is eaten. This is just one method of self-control. Some people try to live without eating food, but for those who want to practice yoga sincerely, a long

period of fasting is not good. In God's creation, plants, animals, and humans naturally need food, so let us live our lives a natural way. Fasting once a week or once in a fortnight is a good practice, and eating only fruits and fruit juices for a day is also beneficial.

A disciplined and dedicated life is the doorway to success. Disciplining the mind implies discipline of the body and discipline of prana. In the Bhagavad Gita (17:14-19), six types of penance or tapah are described in detail. Tapah is the process of disciplining the senses and the mind.

Physical or Bodily Discipline

In yogic practices, the body should be still and steady and not move without purpose. The restlessness of the body reflects the restlessness of the mind. Continuously moving your hands or feet while working or sitting on a chair are signs of a restless mind. Lord Buddha said, "If you cannot keep your hands and feet steady, how can you meditate?" During meditation, hands will often move knowingly or unknowingly. You may feel an itch somewhere and your hand will try to scratch it. It is not just the mind that becomes restless, but concentration is also impaired. When you sit and meditate, do not move your

hands, even if you feel an itching sensation. It is well known that if you scratch one area of your body, you will soon feel itching somewhere else. You should practice keeping your body and your eyes under control, and not allow them to wander here and there without purpose. Swami Shriyukteshwarji said, "I have no time to blink my eyes." He used to sit with his eyes open for hours and hours in the state of shambhavi. How much control he must have had over his body, mind, and senses!

There are many who try to torture their bodies. Some will sit near fire in the heat of summer just to be able to develop tolerance to heat, while in winter they will sit in cold water, all to overcome the body's need for comfort.

There is a verse in Sanskrit which means:

"Great sages like Vishwamitra, Parashara, and others had so much self-control that they lived only on air and water. Despite this, they were still tempted at times to deviate from their path. If it is possible for ordinary people, who enjoy delicious food and drinks, sleep in comfortable beds, and enjoy a pleasant life to gain self-control and exercise self-discipline, then I would say that it is possible to

move mountains and get them to float on the ocean.”

The purpose of this proverb is to alert us to the power of the senses. We should exercise self-discipline by controlling our bodies, our eyes and our breath while always keeping our goal in mind. Just as impurities are removed from metal by heating it, the impurities of life are taken away by penance.

Simple Penance in Daily Life

Try to follow some rules of discipline, such as getting up early at a set time. Your body will protest and say, “Relax a little more,” and your mind will remind you that it is the weekend. If you can just say “No!” and get up at the designated time anyway, this becomes a simple tapah in your daily life. In our ashrams, meditation takes place early in the morning. Make a commitment that you will not come to meditation without first taking a shower. Follow your plan daily.

A long time ago, on Guru Purnima Day, I was in a Himalayan ashram. Approximately five hundred disciples were there and meditation started at 5:00 am. Before beginning the class, the head of the monastery asked

how many had taken a bath or shower before coming to the meditation class. About one hundred raised their hands. Then he asked how many of those had gone to river Ganga to take a bath. Ten people raised their hands. Then he said, “Let me make some observations. You all have come a great distance. Some of you have even come from another country, sacrificing some of your comforts to spend time in the holy company of monks and in the lap of the Himalayas on the banks of the Ganga. This is a rare opportunity, yet out of five hundred people here, only ten people could avail themselves of the opportunity to bring some discipline into their lives.”

Vangmaya Tapah, or the Discipline of Speech

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna talks about the penance of speech and disciplining the mouth. Some people try to discipline the mouth during silent retreats, but this is only a partial discipline. During meals some people can be seen whispering. Keeping control over your tongue in both food and talk is not an easy task. Do not talk excessively and unnecessarily. Silent retreats provide you with a wonderful opportunity to remain silent.

Mental Tapah

Do not entertain negative thoughts, and do not speak about others in negative terms. Speak the truth, speak with love, and speak what is beneficial for others. Do not discuss the bad qualities of others in their absence.

The Inner Meaning of Tapah

The metaphorical meaning of tapah is to live in the loka, or the plane, of tapah. There are seven planes, or lokas, of existence that correspond to the seven chakras in the body. These are bhuhloka (the material plane), bhuvahloka (the plane above the material), svahloka (the plane of brilliance), mahahloka (the plane of delusion), janahloka (the plane of ideas), tapahloka (the plane of meditation), and satyaloka (the plane of experiencing truth). Tapahloka corresponds to the soul, or the ajna chakra. Tapah is also the practice of keeping the mind in the region between the soul center and sahasrara chakra. This is the inner meaning of tapah.

The Benefits of Tapah

In SadhanaPada (sutra 43), Sage Patanjali speaks about the benefits of being established in tapah.

*kayendriya siddhi ashuddhi
kshayat tapasah*

“As a result of tapah, special powers come to the body and the sense organs, and at the same time, any impurities found there, are removed.”

Siddhi is the attainment of yogic or occult powers. It also means achieving perfection. Sage Patanjali described the threefold benefits of tapah, or the special skill of meditation, as follows:

1. Kaya siddhi – This is a special power of the body. By engaging in the practice of tapah, the abilities of the body increase in many ways.

The body becomes healthier and more beautiful, and physical activities are enhanced. A yogi can also make his body lighter or heavier at will, and it is said by many yogis that they can materialize and de-materialize their bodies at will.

Those who are acquainted with the life of Lahiri Mahasaya, a great householder yogi and master of Kriya Yoga, are no doubt aware of his physical abilities. Lahiri Mahasaya, while sitting in his office in India, could materialize in London. Babaji Maharaj could come into a room through locked doors. How were they able to do this? A story was about an attorney who, while sleeping in his bedroom in Kolkata with a

mosquito net fixed to his bed, felt something fall on him in the middle of the night. When he got up, he found a big stone on his bed that looked like it had been thrown there. He wondered where it had come from. Just then he saw a monk standing near him, who said, "I was going this way and I did it. Why are you so worried?" The attorney could not sleep because he kept thinking about it. "Can the human mind comprehend how this could have happened? If I tell others, will they believe it? Who is he, and why did he come? What was the purpose of his actions?" This ability is known as *kaya siddhi*, which comes after regular practice of meditation. However, you should not try to attain this, because it is not the purpose of meditation. The ultimate goal is not to gain some sort of power, since power is only temporary.

2. *Indriya Siddhi* is the attainment of perfection or the special power of the sense organs. God has given human beings five organs of perception and five organs of action. Although these sense organs are subtler than the physical body, they are still limited in their functions. Modern technology and science has provided us with telescopes to see farther, and telephones to hear voices that

are far away. In this way, science and technology have increased the reach of sensory perception, just as yogis, with their yogic powers, have increased the efficiency of the sense organs and can see and hear subtler things. Normally, your eyes cannot see through a wall, but yogis who have *siddhis* can see and hear what is happening at a distance. *Siddhis* can develop, but you should not try to make this happen. Even when *siddhis* come, the sincere yogi goes beyond them.

3. *Vasana kshaya* is the elimination of unnecessary desires. *Vasana* is "desire" and *kshaya* is "to destroy." Human life is burgeoning with never-ending desires, unfulfilled wishes, ambitions, and expectations, which only make life miserable. An intelligent person should try to eliminate all unnecessary desires. There is a clear distinction between human need and human greed. Human needs are naturally limited, but human greed is without limit. A greedy human mind causes all sorts of problems, individually, socially, and globally. As long as our desires are not gradually cleansed and eliminated, we will not be able to attain peace and happiness, nor reach the goal of realization.

All human desires can be correlated with the different chakras or energy centers in the human spine and brain. The bottom chakra, known as muladhara or the money center, is where the desire for possession originates. In the second center, svadhisthana chakra, otherwise known as the family center, an endless desire for physical pleasure is to be found. The navel center, manipura chakra, is the source of the desire to taste various foods and intoxicating drinks, which also damage human health. The heart center, anahata chakra, is where emotional needs, the desire for friendship, and our likes and dislikes reside. The neck center, the vishuddha chakra, is the place of intellectual, religious, and philosophical pursuits, as well as a play of desire.

People whose minds are kept above the neck center will gradually be free from the temptations of their desires. By practicing tapah, you can gain control over your desires. If you have a strong sweet tooth and you refrain from eating sweets for some time, it is a way of gaining control over this desire. There is a tendency for someone who likes sweets to eat more of them when they are present, so try to do without for a period of time. If you like tea, try giving it up for awhile. This practice is the negation of desire. In the beginning your mind will react a little, but later it will cooperate. We can exercise self-control by practicing tapah, meditation, contemplation, and self-analysis. Desires are the cause of bondage, and by slowly eliminating them, liberation will be within your reach.



Dubai Retreat

DEVELOPING FEARLESSNESS

Fear comes out of weakness and when there is strength, fear disappears. I remember a story from my childhood that illustrates how inner strength can be used to overcome fear. One day, just before dusk, a mother goat and her young ones were on their way home from grazing grass near the forest. Suddenly she noticed a tiger coming in search of prey. Just imagine the condition of the mother knowing the tiger is so near and that they could not outrun it. The mother goat was very intelligent; instead of being paralyzed with fear, she loudly said to her children, "I was searching for two tigers for our dinner. It looks like one foolish tiger has come. Let us wait for the second one and then we will have dinner." Not having seen the goat, the tiger only heard a strange voice saying they were waiting to eat tigers for dinner. Immediately, he was afraid, thinking there was danger ahead, and so he ran away. Fear comes to those who feel weak, but goes away with strength.

Increase Your Strength

How do you increase your strength? The body might have limited strength, but the mind has infinite strength. That is why if the mind is strong, we are strong. Here are three ways to increase your strength. The first is to increase the capacity of your mind through concentration and willpower. The next is to develop trust in yourself. You must always remember that no problem is bigger than you. You have the skill and talent to face any problem. Contemplate this, realize this, and maintain faith in yourself. Those who are strong feel, "I have the capacity and capability to do this." Finally, if you wish to be strong, develop trust in God: God is with me, I am not alone. Through these three ways, you will be strong, not weak. One who is truly strong has no fear.

Sage Bhartruhari, the king who became a yogi, said that a yogi should be fearless. To attain this he described what a yogi's family should consist of.

*dhairya yasya pita kshama
ca janani
shantih chiram gehini satyam
ca suta
daya ca bhagini bhrata
manah samyamah sayya
bhumitalam disopi vasanam
jnanamrtam bhojanam
yeteyasya
kutumbina vada sakhe
bhayam kasmad yoginah*

“If a man has a family with patience as the father, forgiveness as the mother, continuous peace as the wife, truthfulness as the son, compassion as a sister, and mind control as the brother; whose bed is the earth, whose clothes are the infinity of space and whose food is the nectar of knowledge, where is the cause for fear?”

One who has all these family members and possessions has no fear. If you are fearless, then you are a yogi. If you are constantly happy, you are a yogi.

Sage Bhartruhari said everything in the world is associated with fear. If you are detached, you are free from fear. The true spirit of spiritual life is to live in Truth, free from fear. Show a stick to a dog and it runs in fear. The flame of a

candle is afraid of strong wind. The flower is afraid of insects that will eat it. Detachment is the state of fearlessness. If you are detached, you are free from fear. If you are a yogi, you are detached. Be free. If you wish to truly live your life, the real life you were meant to live, you must have freedom from fear.

Water the Seeds of Beautiful Virtues

So let us rid our mind of all negativity and fear, because they imprison us and cause us great suffering. Instead, let us water the seeds of beautiful virtues and make the garden of our mind a paradise. Right decisions, sound judgment, and sound thinking are all born from the seeds of patience. Those who are patient can think calmly and make the proper choices. Patience brings also tolerance and fortitude.

Forgiveness is the source of kindness and compassion to our fellow man. Like a mother, we should be able to forgive as well as to give to those around us.

Peace gives us a state of calmness in every situation. When we are wedded to peace, there can be no conflict in our lives. What is the beauty of peace? When there is peace in

the mind, it reflects and radiates peace everywhere.

Every person has many children. Every word we utter is our child. We give birth to every thought, word, and action we perform. For this reason, every thought, word, and action should be true in spirit and in action. Our every action should reflect compassion for others. To have compassion, we need to put ourselves in the other person's place, see life from their perspective, and understand their needs and outlook.

You are the Master of Your Destiny

Be fearless! Be strong! Be the master of your mind, not the slave. Keep the mind under control, without letting the mind control you. Wherever you sleep, whether on a comfortable bed or on the hard floor, remember it all comes from the earth. Whether it is a beggar's body or a king's body, it goes either to ashes or to the burial ground in the end. Therefore, wherever you are and whatever is given, accept it and be happy.

The physical body and the clothes made from earth are limited in their existence. One

day they will again turn to dust. Thus, to know the truth, we must let go of the false notion that we are merely helpless human beings; instead we must perceive ourselves as the all-powerful, infinite Soul. The entire cosmos is the garment of the infinite Soul. Your body is just the Soul's temporary clothes, a boundary for the Infinite One. Wouldn't it be more appropriate for the formless soul to have formless space as its clothes?

Just as the body needs food to nourish it, so, too, does the soul. That is why wisdom is the real food that a yogi lives on. Therefore, drink the nectar of wisdom every day as your food. Knowledge is a great purifier and a source of energy. Ignorance causes fear and makes a person weak. Conversely, knowledge makes a person strong and enables him to experience the truth.

How can you live fearlessly? How can you live with love? How can you live with joy? From now on, every moment, in every breath, always remember that it may be the last one. With this in mind, let your every breath be in joy, in peace, in love.

PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

THE LITTLE SELF AND BIG SELF

Jyothi Bathina

As long as we live our lives with a sense of acceptance, as long as we do our duty without any sense of attachment to the results, why do we need to consciously offer our work to God? Why do we need to say I am not the doer, You are the Doer?"

This was a question that came up today in class. The *Gita* says that not only should we perform work without attachment, but to truly escape the bonds of karma, we need to offer that work to God as well, remembering that we are not the ones performing the action but that we are merely instruments of God's work in the world.

So what is the difference? Isn't the fact that we are releasing our attachment to the results of our work, evidence enough of our progress? Doesn't that alone rid us of a tremendous amount of stress? Once you no longer worry whether you succeed or fail, but work only with a sense of dedication, then all the disappointments and brief elations of life seem to disappear and life becomes quiet, harmonious and peaceful.

For example, in the past I taught my classes with

excitement and a strong sense of ownership. I researched all kinds of articles and printed them out for my students. I created exciting and engaging lesson plans and implemented them in class. Sometimes students would respond with interest and class would be amazing and I would come home floating on a euphoric cloud that I had aced the lesson.

Other times, my carefully designed activities would fall flat and I would be devastated that what I considered brilliant pedagogy had not been well received. "Pearls before swine," I would mutter to myself. "Why do I even bother going to so much trouble for people who can't even appreciate it?"

Since I've been practicing *nishkama karma* and letting go of the results, content merely to do my best and leave the results to God, I no longer fret and fume at perceived failures or go on an egotistical high when things go well. This is definitely a step forward.

However, while this attitude gets us to a more relaxed and calm way of living, it fails on its own to take us to the next level of spiritual progress.

While I am calmer now when faced with either success or failure, I still consider it *my* success or failure. *I* wrote the lesson plan, *I* created the activity, *I* did all that work, *I* was so eloquent, *I* just couldn't get through to them. Or alternatively, *my* idea was perfect, *I* was so good at directing the conversation, *I* was able to get my students to think critically, *I* am a really good speaker.

The problem is that my ego is omnipresent here, taking all the credit, shouldering all the blame, and in both cases accumulating more and more karma by believing that this little self in this temporary body is solely responsible for all my actions. It's only when I can release that sense of ego, when I can see my actions as prayerful acts of service to a higher being and a higher purpose, that I will really escape the bonds of karma.

Nowadays, when I set out to teach, I say "God I am merely an instrument to perform this work. You have given me both the work and the capability to do it. I will do it to the best of my ability knowing that I am not the doer at all. You are the teacher and the taught, and I am merely a vehicle to convey the knowledge. You speak through me, and teach through me."

Amazing what such an attitude can do for one's work ethic. While it may seem at first glance that removing ourselves from the equation would make us less inclined to put in too much effort, I find that I have become so much better at what I do. After all, doing anything less than my best would be incredibly disrespectful to my Maker.

Knowing that it isn't just me, the fallible and mercurial little self that considers herself a professor with all kinds of great ideas, but God who is teaching, and remembering that my students are not just the various little selves who moan and complain about homework, or turn things in late, or fail to see the relevance of my lectures, but God who is being taught, is an incredibly humbling experience. It allows me to push my little ego aside and work doubly hard to deliver the lesson and to facilitate learning among my students. It enables me to consider my work as an offering, rather than something I do merely as a duty.

That, to answer our member's question, is why I think we need to do more than merely work without expectation. We need to transform our work into constant worship, so that along with attachment, we can rid ourselves of our ego as well.

Teachings of the Masters

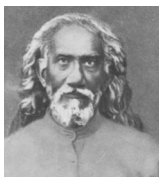
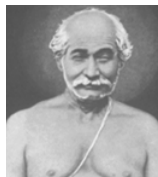


"The door of Kriya Yoga is open only to earnest seekers and sadhakas."

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

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

Sanyal Mahasaya

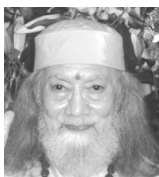
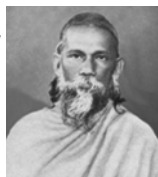


"By drawing and observing the graph of your mind, you can see whether everyday you are making any progress in your life or not."

Paramahansa Yogananda

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

Swami Satyananda



"When your breath becomes very feeble, then you are really practising Kriya. You are established in truth."

Paramahansa Hariharananda

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

Paramahansa Prajnanananda



MYTHS AND METAPHORS

DEVI MAHATMYA

DEVI STUTI 65 - 73



*ya devi sarvabhuteshu daya rupena samsthita |
namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namah|| 65-67||
ya devi sarvabhuteshu tushti rupenasamsthita |
namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namah||68-70||
ya devi sarvabhuteshu matru rupena samsthita |
namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai namo namah||71-73||
ya devî sarvabhuteshu bhrantirupena samsthita*

Mantras 65–67

*ya devi sarvabhuteshu
dayarupena samsthita
namastasyai namastasyai
namastasyai namonamah*

Translation

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

Metaphorical Explanation

Creation is transitory and prone to change, decay, and destruction. Life is full of

misery and affliction. Various kinds of disasters, diseases, and calamities create havoc in individual life as well as on the earth collectively. Seeing the distress of others, a person with a sensible mind and a sympathetic heart cannot remain quiet. Compassion is a great virtue and a divine quality, but in truth it is really a manifestation of the Divine Mother in the hearts of all living beings.

Daya is daya bhave dayate: “to feel pity or compassion.” The Padma Purana, in a section known as the Kriya Yoga Sara, states:

*yatnat api parakleshan
hartum va hridi jayate*

*iccha bhumau surasrestha
sa daya parikirtita*

“O the best of the Suras (celestials)! The feeling in the heart is described as compassion, when one has a deep desire to eliminate the suffering of others.”

When we feel ourselves in others, their difficulty is perceived as our own. At that time, our heart has an urge to be an instrument for relieving the misery of others. O Divine Mother! This kind of experience is your presence. You are the loving and compassionate Mother. You manifest in the hearts of others, individually or collectively as compassion.

When someone truly helps others, there is no trace of ego, pride, or self-satisfaction (“I am so helpful, kind and good”); rather, there should be a feeling of gratitude to the Divine Mother, realizing her love and compassionate presence.

O Seeker! When you serve and help someone, perceive the presence of the Divine Mother in him or her as well as in your own heart. Bow to the Divine Mother again and yet again.

Mantras 68–70

*yadevi sarvabhuteshu
tushti rupena samsthita
namastasyai namastasyai
nmastasyai namo namah*

Translation

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

Metaphorical Explanation

Contentment is a mental state or inner attitude. In Sanskrit, it is known as *tushti*, derived from the root verb *tush*, meaning “to be content” or “to be satisfied.” Contentment comes to us when we achieve a goal or success or when we are free from trouble and difficulty. Commenting upon the Chandi, Nagoji Bhatta described *tushti* as *adhigatarthat anyatra tuchchhatva-buddhih*: “When one experiences a sense of insignificance in everything, contentment arises.”

The Hitopadesha, a classical Sanskrit literature,

says, *sarva eva apadah tasya yasya tushtam namanasam*: “One who is not mentally content finds difficulties and danger with every footstep.”

In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord described the quality of the most loving devotee as *santushtah satatam* (12:14) and *santushtah yena kena chit* (12:19): “One who is always content and content in any situation is a true devotee.” s

Why are people discontent? They develop a great expectation beyond their own capability; in other words, they want to bite off more than they can chew. They want everything to be available immediately at their will. How is it possible? Everything has a proper time, and for everything attained, there is a law of karma. Greed is the root of discontentment.

O Divine Mother! You are contentment in the hearts of everyone. Every living being enjoys more or less contentment, but constant contentment in all situations depends upon your grace alone. The devotee bows to thee again and again to be blessed with that real contentment.

O Seeker! Be content with what you possess in

worldly life. But never be content in your expression to the Divine Mother. Do your work, and offer it to her. Whatever the result, be content with it, but never be content with your own *sadhana*. Be practical in practicing the art of contentment.

Mantras 71–73

*yadevi sarvabhuteshu
matru rupena samsthita
namastasyai namastasyai
namastasyai namonamah*

Translation

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

Metaphorical Explanation

Every living being has a mother. Without a mother, existence in life is not possible. The cosmos also has a creator, the Divine Mother.

Etymologically, *matru* or *mata* is *manyate pujiyate ya sa*: “One who is adorable or respected is the mother.” It describes the greatness of a mother. She carries the baby in her womb, then breast feeds the baby and gives it care and attention, helping the baby grow. A mother brings a smile and joy to the face of the baby, language, words, and ultimately, creates a good person. The

Divine Mother feeds and nurtures all living beings with the breast milk of knowledge and devotion.

As a child grows up, it forgets the love and sacrifice of the biological mother. Similarly, we forget the role of the Divine Mother. “Mother” has many connotations: The earth, the goddess of prosperity, the *shrutis* and the Vedas, mantras, rivers, and cows are considered forms of the adorable Mother.

O Divine Mother!
Always protect me in your lap,
in your arms, close to your
bosom, feed me the nectar-like

milk of knowledge and devotion. Remove my ignorance and let my eye of unity and oneness be opened, so that I can behold your presence within and without. Let me not forget your love and protection. I bow to thee again and again.

O Seeker! Ego assumes a sense of greatness in a person. Be careful. Be like a child. When you really feel like a child, there will be no trace of ego, and vice versa. When such feeling is in you, you will experience the presence of the Divine Mother. She is your real mother, ready to help you. Pray to her in every step of your life.



New Building at Amarkantak Ashram

THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI

Sutra 15

What is Detachment?

*drstanusravika visaya
vitrsnasya vasikarasamjna
vairagyam ||15||*

Word Meaning

drsta – whatever is seen (that is, experienced through the senses); *anusravika* - whatever is heard or imagined (about heaven or hell) through imagination in the mental world; *visaya* – subjects, objects; *vitrsnasya* – without desire, non-craving; *vasikara* – self-mastery; *samjna* – definition; *vairagyam* – non-attachment, dispassion

Translation

Vairagya[non-attachment] is defined as self-mastery or complete freedom from desire.

Commentary by Shri Lahiri Mahasaya

Renounce all desire for what is seen and heard and constantly remain in *samadhi*. In other words, non-attachment is the state of being completely immersed in nothingness.

Metaphorical Explanation

In this sutra, the sage describes non-attachment, which is of two types: *apara vairagya* (relative or ordinary detachment) and *para vairagya* (extraordinary or absolute detachment).

Sutra 15 describes in detail the first step of vairagya (relative non-attachment), which can be attained in three possible ways:

1. Realizing the possible demerits, diseases, discomforts, and troubles associated with the object of enjoyment or attachment;

2. Seeing and experiencing the divinity in all; and

3. Always keeping the mind focused on the highest goal of life.

Attachment exists when people feel the need to possess things because they do not realize that everything they need is already within them. They do not understand that it is not necessary to seek happiness or fulfillment externally. People must realize that whatever they see or experience is *isha vasyam*, or “that which is permeated by the Divine.” (*Isha Upanishad, mantra 1*) It is really a person’s own true Self that he is seeing everywhere in the world, and therefore nothing is beyond him.

The scriptures describe how the mind is never satisfied, even after the enjoyment or accumulation of objects is achieved. Just as a fire grows stronger when fuel is poured on it, our desires only increase the more we indulge them. This is a

common experience in everyday life. People have a strong desire to possess or accumulate everything they perceive with their five senses. Desires can be divided into two categories:

Drishya – desire for the objects of the five senses: what is seen, heard, smelled, touched, or tasted. Desires for material wealth, sexual enjoyment, royal or social status also fall into this category.

Anushravika – desire for what has been heard through the scriptures like the Vedas, the mythologies, or other literature. These are of two types. The first is *avasthantara vedyā*, the desire to experience a different state of existence; that is, a beautiful taste or smell that is associated with different *siddhis* (perfections). The second is *sharirantara vedyā*, the desire to experience what it is like after death, which people experience as heaven or hell. The human mind often roams in the lower five chakras. It always pursues the objects of the five sense organs and the imagination, but one must strive to come up from the pituitary (soul center or *ajna chakra*) to the fontanel and even beyond. Meditating and practicing the Kriya Yoga techniques is an extremely helpful way to overcome all worldly desires.

By using a discriminating intellect in every aspect of life, and

by living a life of constant awareness and practical spirituality, one will overcome the play of the mind in the lower domain. A mind purified through regular spiritual practice is naturally free from likes and dislikes. This type of non-attachment helps one to renounce desires.

Therefore, each person should deal carefully with his mind, providing himself only with what is necessary and never indulging in greed. Every effort should be made to make the mind free from all attachment, which is the bondage that creates discomfort, unhappiness, and suffering in life. One who has renounced worldly desires, with thorough understanding and wisdom, has real non-attachment. This comes through the regular practice of meditation.

O Seeker! Be not a dreamer. Too much expectation brings distraction and disaster in life. Make your life moderate and your desires disciplined. Looking at others and their possessions, do not cherish cravings in yourself to own such things. A life of prayer, moderation, and inner contentment will help you to meditate deeply and to evolve. This will also help you to cultivate non-attachment. Attachment arises out of attraction and appreciation. Physical or emotional attachment is bondage; carefully avoid it.



RESIDENTIAL BRAHMACHARI TRAINING COURSE (RBTC)

PRAJNANA MISSION

Jagatpur, Cuttack – 754021, Odisha, Ph: 0674 – 2491724

Website: www.prajnanamission@gmail.com

E-mail: missionprajnana@gmail.com

Invites application for the 7th Residential Brahmachari Training Course at Hariharananda Gurukulam, Balighai, Puri commencing from **28th October 2016 to 24th February 2017**.

The Goal:

The goal of the Residential Brahmachari Training Course is to prepare the students for living a wholesome and integrated life through the practice of service, study and meditation.

Required Qualification:

1. Open to Indian citizen of the age group 20 – 40 years. 2. A graduate with good understanding and communication skill in English as the course will be in English. 3. Keen interest in the practice of Kriya Yoga, spiritual study and yogic lifestyle. 4. Should be of sound health. 5. Must be initiated into Kriya Yoga or willing to be initiated into Kriya Yoga prior to start of the course.

Scope & Syllabus:

1. The Upanishad, The Bhagavat Geeta and other vedantic texts such as Tattwa Bodha, Atma Bodha etc. 2. The Patanjali Yoga Sutra, Hatha Yoga Pradeepika, Gharenda Samhita. 3. Narada Bhakti Sutra 4. Basic knowledge of Sankrit 5. Comparative study of other religions. 6. Kriya Yoga Meditation, Discourses, Group discussions, Questions & Answer sessions. 7. Seva (Service)

This will be a residential course and the trainees will not be allowed to visit outside during the training course. The entire training course will be conducted under the guidance of Pujya Paramahansa Prajnananandaji, the current spiritual head of the Kriya Yoga International.

Last date of submission of application form : 15th July 2016

Accommodation and simple vegetarian food will be provided free of cost to the trainees. Trainees will be selected through personal interview at Puri in the month of August 2016. For more information and application form please visit our website or contact at the address mentioned above.

Swami Achalananda Giri
Secretary, Prajnana Mission

VALUABLE VOLUMES



AKSHARA TATTVA

Expression of Emotion

All living beings speak. Speech is an expression of feelings, emotions, intellect and experiences. Speech is a combination of words and words are combination of letters. We have seen how the letters originated and that they are nothing but divine sounds. Different letters combine to make words.

When Arjuna said, “I will not fight”, he had so much emotion, attachment and sorrow that he was in tears and his body was trembling. In the *Gita* the Lord said,” Arjuna, be careful of emotion and weakness. Your dejection has made your heart narrow. Be free from the weakness of the heart.”

Emotion and *prana*

How to be free from

AKSHARA TATTVA

AND

JNANA SANKALINI TANTRA

BY PARAMAHAMSA PRAJNANANANDA

emotion and broaden your heart? Before understanding this I will explain some technical terms. You must have heard of *prana* or the vital energy manifested from the heart and brain and acting through different parts of the body. Modern doctors and scientists agree that the MRI, the brain scan and the electro cardiogram are nothing but the measure of the electrical energy that gives a graph of the activity of the physical brain and heart.

Prana remains in the heart and because of the change in the wavelength of the *prana* different emotions come to the heart. Emotion is also called the *bhava* the inner feelings.

The scriptures says:

“*yadbhaava tadbhavati*”, what you feel and experience in the inner world can manifest in the external world.

Emotion over-powers us. Thoughts materialize. Emotion narrows the heart and makes it weak.

Manifestation of Emotion

According to the philosophy of yoga, emotion is manifested in five ways: *anuraga* (attachment), *bhaya* (fear), *krodha* (anger), *dvesha* (hatred) and *ananda* (bliss). Of these, the first four are negative emotions and the fifth is a positive emotion.

***Anuraga* (Attachment)**

Attachment comes through fulfillment of wishes. Attachment is a form of love, but it is love of a lower nature. Here it is not devotion but emotion. You are naturally inclined towards some people more than others. Some are attached to their house, garden, and ornaments. What causes this? Suppose you are shopping for a camera. The shopkeeper is showing you a camera and the camera slips and falls from his hands. You have a sympathetic look. Suppose you had purchased the camera, paid for it and as you are walking out of the store, it fell from your hands. Compare the two situations and the emotion involved. When it fell from your hands your heart would have

skipped a beat. Why? Because once you purchased it you have a sense of possession and you are attached to your possession.

Wanting to possess comes from insecurity. One thinks that by possessing someone, one becomes secure. Besides this, when there is similarity in thoughts, when two people think alike and the frequency is the same there can be attachment. Should we be attached? We should take care of things and experience love but to be attached is not good. Attachment is hard to overcome. It stops our progress and evolution. How can we be inwardly detached? It would help to think about the impermanence of relationships. Let us understand these relationships.

We all live in this world and we love our bodies more than anything else. Is this body a permanent one? The body is undergoing change every minute. The body of the child grows into a youth and the youth becomes an adult and the adult becomes old. Teeth fall, hair grays and skin wrinkles. Buddha said: *sarvam kshanikam anityam*. Everything is ephemeral and transitory. We should change our attitude. Understand that we come alone and we have to go

alone and when you love someone or something, love as if you are taking care of that object. When the child is small the child is attached to you. When the child grows up and you still want to hold on to the child then you are not allowing the child to grow. Just as a mango is at first small and green, then it becomes full-grown and when ripe it detaches itself from the tree. If you want to be sweet, ripe and colorful like the mango you have to be inwardly detached. We should be in the world but not of the world. The boat should be in the water but the water should not come into the boat. If it does, then the boat will sink. We should live in this world with family, taking care of all the material possessions, while being aware that nothing is permanent. Intelligently overcome attachment. Be practical in the use of words in thought, word and speech being free from attachment.

Krodha (Anger)

Anger is an expression of frustration due to unfulfilled desires. When you have a desire to possess something and if you do not get it then anger results. Physically anger causes damage to our heart and brain. Emotionally, it causes pain and

socially, it gives you a bad reputation. You do not like when someone is angry with you and others will not like you when you are angry. How to overcome anger? The fire burns when your hand touches the fire. The mistake is not of the fire but of the hand that touched it. When someone hurts us we become angry. How can someone hurt you unless you have in some way become close to that person physically or emotionally. So be careful in society. Where there is real love there is no anger. Love is not an attachment. Love is an opportunity to grow. Love is an understanding and not an instinct or emotion. Love and anger cannot go together. God is Love. There is no trace of anger in God. The Lord said anger is the manifestation of passionate or *rajasic* quality.

*Kama esha krodha esha
rajoguna samudbhava*

(Gita III-37)

Passion and anger are born from *rajasic* quality. By changing your lifestyle and outlook, you will get rid of it. To overcome anger change or decrease the *rajasic* quality through prayer and meditation and change the food habits.

(to be continued in the next
issue)

JNANASANKALINI TANTRA

THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN SHIVA AND PARVATI

Question on Creation.

Devi asked,

“From where is creation manifested Oh Lord, and how does it dissolve? What is *brahmajnanam* (knowledge of absolute) which is devoid of creation and dissolution?” (verse 2)

Creation is a cosmic mystery. The scientists in the physical world, the philosopher at the intellectual level and the saints and sages through their meditation have all been trying to solve this mystery of creation. The clear, cloud free sky in the darkness of night, with myriads of shining stars smiling at us, reminds us that the limited human mind cannot comprehend this mystery of creation so easily. God is infinite and creation is extremely vast.

The views about creation are multidimensional and often not free from controversies and contradictions. The most ancient scriptures the Vedas in general and the Upanishads in particular, explain elaborately the creation and its evolution.

In this verse, the divine mother, Parvati, the sincere seeker, the inner quest in each person, asks the following questions:

How does the creation begin?

How does this creation come to an end?

How (in this creation) is knowledge of *Brahman* (eternal wisdom), which is beyond creation and dissolution, achieved?

In the subsequent verses, Lord Shiva answers these questions in detail. This verse is the sub-structure on which the Lord bestows the supreme structure of the divine knowledge. In this verse, there are three important words that need to be understood properly: *srishti* (creation) , *vinasha* (destruction, dissolution) and *brahmajnana* (knowledge of the absolute, ultimate wisdom)

***srishti* -creation**

This word is derived from the root word *srj*. The Sanskrit word *srj* consists of three letters

sa, ra and, ja. *Sa* means the Soul, God, *ra* means movement or vibration, *ja* means manifestation, to be born. These three letters together imply creation is the vibratory manifestation of the soul or God. Every creation is the vibration of the cosmic energy. Speech is creation of sound by the vibration of the vocal cord in a particular way. So also thought is also a vibration.

vinasha-Complete dissolution:

vi means perfect or complete, *nasha* means destruction, disappearance or dissolution. Every beginning has an end. Every creation has dissolution. Dissolution is a perfect disappearance, i.e., to go beyond the vibratory creative energy to get merged in the supreme. The world and even the body consciousness of the individual are lost when one sleeps. But that is not a complete disappearance, only temporary.

Brahmajnana -

Knowledge of the Absolute

Ignorance is darkness and knowledge is light. The child from a very early age is eager to know. There is a proverb, “The *why* of the child is the key to philosophy.” From a practical point of view, knowledge is classified in to two groups;

Mundaka Upanisad proclaims verse (1.1.4),

There are two kinds of knowledge *aparavidya* (material knowledge) and *paravidya* (supreme knowledge).

Material knowledge (*apara vidya*) is obtained through proper use of the five sense organs of perception, i.e., eyes (sight), ears (hearing), nose (smell), tongue (taste) and skin (touch), with the help of internal instruments like mind and intellect. This is the means to collect and accumulate knowledge of the material objects and the external world. Using the mind and the memory and analyzing through the intellect, people expand the periphery of their knowledge. It is called as *paroksha-jnana* indirect means to knowledge. If the instruments like the senses and the mind are not in a fit and healthy state, they may be the cause of acquiring erroneous knowledge.

Spiritual wisdom (*para vidya*) on the other hand, is gained through sincere effort. It is direct experience-*a-paroksha anubhuti*. Truth is revealed to a sincere seeker, who disciplines the senses and cleans the mind through meditation and prayer. This is called as the

manifestation of the Divinity, revelation of Truth and light, gaining of inner experience. This knowledge brings liberation.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* the Lord speaks:

yam labdva ca param labham
manyate na adhikam tatah
yasmin sthito na dukhena
gurunapi vichalyate

VI: 22

“That, on gaining which the person thinks that there is no greater gain beyond it, wherein established one is not moved by the greatest sorrow”.

Such knowledge dispels ignorance and makes one free from the bondage of birth, death, pleasure and pain. This is the state of pure mind, a state of equilibrium and equanimity that is achieved through the path of self-discipline.

Ishwara replied,

Creation comes from
avyakta (unmanifest) and into

avyakta it dissolves. *Avyaktam* is *brahmajnana* (knowledge of the absolute) devoid of creation and dissolution. (verse 3)

Ishwara

Some say God is formless and some say God has form. In the Vedic experience, God as *brahman* is beyond all attributes and qualities, formless and beyond creation, while Ishwara is the manifested God perceived in the creation. Ishwara, the Lord is the supreme soul, here represented as Shiva.

The source of all knowledge is traced to the Vedas and the Upanishads, treatises on Divine wisdom. In one such Upanishad (Taittiriya 2/1/3), there is a very lucid and exhaustive description of the process of creation. Every creation is the manifestation from the subtle to the gross.

(to be continued in the next
issue)



Matru Ashram Foundation day

STORIES TO LIVE BY

LOVE ALL, SERVE ALL

Two men were travelling along a village road. One man gave out a cry, caught hold of his foot and sat down. He was in pain. A big thorn had entered his foot. He was unable to even lift the foot. The other man went ahead and then began shouting at the former: "You fool, it is getting late. If you don't come running, we shall not reach the destination before nightfall." The other man replied: "No my friend; I cannot move an inch forward till this thorn is removed." The other man said, "Why are you making such fuss? Come on, get up or I will go away," and went another furlong farther.

Then he too had trodden over a thorn and sat down in great pain. They could not remove the thorns themselves and were both suffering in agony, unable to help each other. A third traveller came along, who removed their thorns and he said to them "Friends, If you have removed the thorn from the foot of your friend when he was suffering, he could have accompanied you and would have helped you, when you

suffered the same fate. Then you both could have marched together to reach your goal faster, not by ignoring each others pain."

Similarly a hardhearted man, when he finds a fellow traveller on this thorny and rugged path called life, stricken with pain, laughs and goes his way. The nature of life itself is such that he, too, is soon stricken by the same kind of pain. Beyond the reach of help the hardhearted man also suffers.

There comes a sage of supreme wisdom, who has consciousness of Unity, and relieves them of their misery, and implants the seed of love in the hearts of both. He says, O man, pain exists in the other man only in order to give you an opportunity to serve him and relieve him of his misery. Thus serving each other, you would evolve rapidly and proceed to your destination. You may laugh at the other man's misery and say it is his karma; but soon you might find your self in the same condition. Understand the nature of the world. Serve all. Love all. Realize the Self in all."

(Parables of Swami Sivananda)

ATMA-VIDYA

PURSuing SELF-KNOWLEDGE

KAIVALYOPANISHAD

Mantra 23

*na bhumi rapo na ca vahnirasti
nacanilomesti na cambaram ca
evam veditva paramatma rupam
guhasayah nishkalamadvitiam
samasta sakshih sadasadvihinah
prayati shuddhah paramatma rupa*

Meanings

na-not, *bhumi*-earth, *apah*-water, *na*-not, *ca*-also, *vahni* –fire, *asti*-is, *na*-not, *ca* –also, *anila*-air, *me*-in me, *asti*-is, *na*-not, *ca*- also, *ambaram*-sky, *ca*-also, *evam*- thus, *viditva* *paramatma*-the supreme self, *rupam*-beauty, *guhasayah*-remaining in the cave, *nishkalam*- without any limbs, *advitiam*-without a second, *samasta*-all, *sakshih* –witness, *sad*-real *asad*- unreal, *vihinah*-without, *prayati*-goes or attains *suddhah*-pure, *paramatma*-the supreme self, *rupam*- beauty

Substance

For me neither earth, or water or fire or air or sky exists. Realizing the supreme self in the cave of the intellect who is without limbs, is one without a second and is the witness of all, beyond the existence and

nonexistence, one attains to the paramatman itself.

Commentary

Nirvana shatkam of Adi Shankara gives the message –I am not the mind, ego, intellect or the five elements. This mantra has a similar message. Although they appear to exist in me as the body and the universe, for me they do not exist –I exist without the universe. The wave cannot exist without ocean but the ocean can exist without the wave. The body cannot exist without the soul but the soul exists without the body. The universe cannot exist without God but the God exists even beyond the universe.

Having realized thus the beauty of the divine remaining in the cave without any parts, the one without a second, one attains the pure beauty of the

divine. One who realizes “who am I” sees that I am not all this and realize the beauty of the Supreme Being in the cave. Cave has only one opening. When you go into a cave at first it appears to be dark, but when the retina adjusts a little you can see many things in the cave. *niskalam* –is without any limbs or formless and *advitiyam* – is one without a second.

R a m a k r i s h n a Paramahansa talked about what happens when a doll of salt goes to measure the depth of the ocean. It simply dissolves and merges in the ocean becoming one with it. An individual who goes to find the beauty of God merges in God and becomes one with God.

After that experience coming back into the world one remains as the witness of everything – beyond the real and the unreal, and attains pure beauty of divinity or oneness with god.

Phala Sruti

yaha satarudriyam adhite sa agni puto bhavati, sa vayu puto bhavati, sa atma puto bhavati sa surapanot puto bhavati, sa brahmahatyaya puto bhavati, sa suvarnasteyo puto bhavati, sa krtyakrtyo puto

bhvati tasmāt avimuktam asrito bhavati, atyashrami sarvada sakrtva japet.

yaha-this, *shatarudriyam* - hundred ways of praising Shiva, *adhite*- by intellect, *sa*-he *agni*-fire, *puto*-pure, *bhavati*-becomes, *sa*-he, *vayu*-air, *puto*-pure, *bhavati*-becomes, *sa*- he, *atma*-mind, *puto*—pure, *bhavati*-becomes *sa*- he, *sura*-alcohol, *pano*-drinking, *puto*—pure, *bhavati*- becomes, *sa*- he, *brahma hatyaya*-from killing a brahmin, *puto*—pure, *bhavati*-becomes, *sa*- he, *suvarna*-gold, *steyo*-stealing, *puto*—pure, *bhavati*- becomes, *sa*- he *krtya*-done, *akrtya*- not done, *puto*—pure, *bhavati*- becomes *tasmāt avimuktam*-totally liberated, *asrito*-refuge *bhavati*- becomes, *atyashrami*-beyond ashram, *sarvada*-always, *sakrtva*-clearly, *japet*-chanted.

yaha –this

This mantra describes the result of chanting and practicing this Upanishad.

One who studies this or one who turns towards God becomes purified with fire. People do fire ceremony – it gives the benefit of the fire ceremony or fire is knowledge and you will be purified with knowledge. You will be purified by air. This could also mean you

get control over the breath and every breath leads to God. Atma here is mind –the mind becomes pure, and you become pure from the sin of drinking alcohol. It can also mean the intoxication with the worldly wine. *brahma hatyayah* –means killing a Brahmin. In Hindu belief, drinking alcohol or killing a Brahmin are considered very great sins. Not trying to get self-knowledge is also *brahma hatya*. You become purified from the mistake of stealing gold. Suvarna also means good color –each person has a color. Sorrowful color changes the state of brilliance. You are purified from what is done and what is not done- commissions and omissions. Therefore irrespective of which ashram you belong to, or even if you are beyond al

ashrams you are *avimukta*-totally liberated and one with God. All the time clearly indeed let them chant this Upanishad. *Japet* here does not mean just to chant but to practice and experience.

*anena jnanam apnoti
samsararnava nasanam
tasmāt enam viditvenam
kaivalyam phalamasnute.*

aneana –by this, *jnanam* –knowledge, *apnoti*-attains, *samsara* – world, *arnava* – ocean, *nasanam* – elimination, *tasmāt*- therefore, *viditva*-knowing, *enam*-this, *kaivalyam*-liberation, *phalam*- fruit, *asnute*-attains or enjoys

By this knowledge one can destroy the ocean of the world and therefore knowing this one enjoys the fruit of liberation.

Balashram News

My Children

Jyothi Bathina

It's hard to believe I've known and loved the graduating class of Balashram for the past seven years. It seems like just yesterday that I was surrounded by their beautiful bright-eyed



faces, as I toured the girls hostel or smiled at the boys mischievous and curious glances while I observed the third grade classroom in session.

I was a stranger to them then, a newcomer who was visiting for the very first time. I like to think that after all these years and several visits later, as we have gotten to know each other, work together, write and publish a book together, that we have become more like family. I have certainly come to think of them as my children and refer to them in those terms in the many academic articles I've published about this miraculous school and its amazing students.

I was fortunate enough to make another trip in December to see my children one more time before they graduate, to give them what words of wisdom I could as

they prepare to enter the wider world. We spent a few hours together one memorable morning during my visit, talking frankly about the tumultuous nature of life. As I looked out at their innocent and eager faces, I prayed that they would have the courage and the conviction to stand by their ideals, come what may. I know that with Baba's blessing and the unshakeable moral foundations instilled in them by the noble teachers and staff of Balashram, they are as prepared as anyone can be for whatever the future might hold.

(Dr .Jyothi Bathina is an associate professor of Education from Fresno State University and has been visiting Balashram frequently for conducting Orientation sessions for the staff and also working with the students on writing projects.)

MAHASHIVARATRI PASHUPATI

Lord Shiva is known as Pashupati. *Pashu* means animal and *pasha* means a noose or something with which you bind another. *Pati* means the Lord. Why is the Lord called Pashupati?

A *pashu* or an animal bound by a *pasha* or a rope, is confined to a limited space and dependent on the food and drink that are provided by someone and has limited knowledge. An animal that is not bound by the

pasha enjoys its freedom, is free to roam about and eat the green grass and drink water from natural sources, breathes pure air and is much happier.

The *pashu* known as *jiva* or the individual self is bound by not one, but three *pashas* of the *gunas* – *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. In order to be free the *jiva* has to go beyond the three *gunas* responsible for the creation of the body and this can only be done by *brahma jnana* or by the knowledge of the Self. As the Gita says,

*Gunaneta natitya trin
dehi dehasamudbhavan
Janmamrityujaradukhair
vimuktomrutamashnute*

(14-20)

Lord Shiva is considered the Lord of knowledge - *Jnanammaheshwaraticchet*. Only by the grace of Lord Shiva can the *jiva* be liberated from the *pasha* or the bondage caused by *maya*.

Hence the name Pashupati – The Lord who can make the *pashu* free from the *pasha* and grant liberation.

PRAJNANA MISSION SPECIAL EVENTS

Inauguration of the 17th IIKYS

**MAKARA SANKRANTI – ASTROLOGICAL
SIGNIFICANCE**

Discourse of Paramahansa Prajnanananda

Jan 14, 2016

Today is the 14th of January, which is celebrated as Makara Sankranti, the beginning of the month Makara in the solar calendar according to Vedic astrology. The Sun enters the rashi of Makara (Capricorn). Sankranti means “movement.” When the Sun enters a new zodiac, it is the movement of the Sun from one zodiac to

another. There are two types of zodiac systems in Vedic astrology, fixed and moving. According to the fixed zodiac system, today, the Sun goes to Makara rashi and will stay there for one month. The Lord of Makara rashi is Saturn, who is considered as the son of the Sun. Astrologically, Sun and Saturn and Sun and Venus are enemies.

The Sun also stays for two months in the houses of the enemies. The significance of this day is to visit the house of the enemy in order to bring light and love. Ask, who is my enemy? I should try to cultivate love and forgiveness for him or her. This is also like a father visiting and living at his son's house for some time. Usually the Sun remains in each rashi or zodiac for about a month. According to the fixed zodiac system, today is the winter solstice, whereas in the moving zodiac system it is on December 21-22. So the Sun is coming to the Northern hemisphere. "North" in the human body refers to the upper part, and the Sun entering the north is the dawn of more light, knowledge, and awareness in human life, which can be utilized in spiritual practice. From today, the days will gradually get longer. So, from today we have to increase our sadhana more and more.

Meeting of Ganga and the Ocean

On the tenth moon in the month of Jyestha (Jyestha Shukla Dashami), which usually comes in the month of June, is the day of the descent of the heavenly river Suradhuni, the Ganga, on the earth due to austere penance and prayer of

King Bhagiratha for the liberation of his 60,000 ancestors (the children of King Sagara). This day is celebrated as Ganga Dashahara, the birthday of Mother Ganga on the earth. She descended on the head of Lord Shiva and then on the Himalayas and moved forward as the path shown by King Bhagiratha. Both the Ganga and King Bhagiratha had to pass through many ordeals, and ultimately today is the day when the Ganga came to the ocean. Today is the day of liberation of all the 60,000 children of King Sagara and there was the manifestation of Sagara (now known as the Bay of Bengal). It is the day of the Ganga meeting the ocean and liberating the suffering Sagaras. It is the day of bringing heavenly knowledge (Ganga) from heaven to the head of Lord Shiva and then to the earth and spreading in the ocean (the ocean of worldly suffering). Today millions of people congregate at the Sagara Island to take a dip in the confluence with a hope of being free from impurities and attaining liberation.

Battle of Asuras and Devas

Today was also the day of the battle between the asuras and the devas, who represent darkness and light, ignorance and knowledge, selfishness and

generosity, after the churning of the ocean to find nectar. As a result, the asuras were destroyed and defeated and they were buried under the Hill of Mandara (located in the Bhagalpur District), where Shri Sanyal Mahasaya established a Kriya Yoga Ashram. To take away the pot of nectar, Jayanta, the son of Indra, moved from place to place, and thus from today

begins the Kumbha Mela in Allahabad.

Kumbha Mela

The significance of the Kumbha Mela is to bring nectar into our life by churning the ocean of life and to let the pitcher of our body (kumbha) be filled with nectar. Let our life be sweet and loving like nectar and taste immortality.

Foundation Day of Matru Ashram Jan 31, 2016

Matru Ashram celebrated its 6th Foundation day on the 31st of January.

The morning program included an early morning grama sankirtan- going round the village singing devotional songs followed by meditation at the ashram.

Evening Satsang started at 4.30 p.m with the lighting of the lamp by Paramahansa Prajnananandaji along with the other invited guests, as the resident monks chanted the shanti mantra. Sw. Sarvatmananda introduced guests. and Brn. Satyamayee read out the annual report.

The first speaker Sri Trijibi Dash, inspired the audience with his introductory talk about developing devotion

to God and Guru. Chief Guest Smt. Indira Mishra, a retired IAS and a social worker from Raipur Chattisgarh, encouraged women to be self employed and work from home to stand on their own feet in the society. Sri Pranab Patnaik, a reputed singer thrilled the audience with inspiring devotional songs.

Baba Prajnananandaji emphasized on women being strong and if needed to be like Goddess Durga to fight with the negatives in the family, society and the world. Women have the power and ability to change the society.

The program concluded with a cultural program by the students of Balashram and distribution of prasad there after.

AROUND THE GLOBE

INDIA

Annual Three Day Gita Jnana Yajnas

Gita Jnana Yajnas were held in Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Puri. Each program also included initiations and technique training classes by monks of Prajnana Mission during the day and Gita discourse by guruji, Paramahansa Prajnananandaji in the evening.

The talk at Kolkata was on the 13th chapter of the Gita.

The discourse on the kshetra and kshetrajna – the field and the knower of the field, was extremely enlightening as Baba extended the field to the three bodies, their composition and how they should be cultivated. Applying it to Kriya Yoga, Baba talked of the spine with its chakras as the shatchakra kshetra and how the guru mantra (bijakshara – seed syllable) germinates with the water of love and devotion. Just as we have the 3 bodies Baba said Bhagavad Gita also can be

interpreted at three levels - the gross is narrated as a mythological story, the subtle narrated as the mental and emotional and the causal is narrated at the adhyatmic and yogic level.

The discourses at Bhubaneshwar, Cuttack and Puri centered around particular verses from the Gita which Paramahamsaji expounded elaborately with metaphoric explanations and inner significance. Baba stressed on the application of Gita's teachings in daily life and the need of a guru on the spiritual path.

17th IKYS at Hariharananda Gurukulam

The 17th Intensive International Kriya Yoga Seminar was held from the 14th – 20th of January 2016. The weeklong event was filled with many celebrations, discourses, and question answer sessions. Initiations into kriya yoga were spread to few days of the seminar to accommodate

different languages. Guided meditations were conducted in 4 different languages. Special events included the Guru Paduka Puja and fire ceremony in the Guru Mandir, the birth day and mahasamadhi day of Sannyal Mahashaya, tour of Goshala and Samba Dashami, Surabhi puja near Deva Mandir. Performances in the evenings included cultural program by Balashram students, music and dance performances by talented local groups, and devotional songs and bhajans by disciples.

Opening of New Building - Amarkantak Ashram

Foundation Day & Inauguration of new building at Kriya Yoga Dhyana Kutir, Amarkantak was held from 6th to 8th February 2016. Birthday of Swami Brahmanandaji was celebrated on 8th February 2016. Amarkantak is a holy site because it is the origin of the holy river Narmada which flows down to western coast of India. The city is located in central India on the border of two states, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattishgarh.

Swami Brahmanandaji a monk of Prajnana Mission, from its inception, was a divine

personality, a sincere seeker of truth who worked closely with his brother disciples, Baba Prajnananandaji and Swami Shuddhanandaji. People often referred to them as the Hindu trinity – Brahma , Vishnu and Maheshwara. People loved Brahmanandaji for his sincerity, gentleness and humility. A man of meditation, his teaching was a practical form of spirituality. Brahmanandaji played a key role as the vice president of Prajnana Mission and actively took part in the many activities of Prajnana Mission as a good organizer. He offered his silent support in many ways. He was a strong pillar in spreading the work of Kriya Yoga through out India. Brahmanandaji loved quiet and secluded place where he could intensify his spiritual practice and hold small retreats with selected groups of disciples. Brahmanandaji had the wish to find a simple dwelling in a secluded spot and with the help of some local disciples , he found a perfect location and constructed a small cottage called Hariharananda Dhyana Kutir, or the Cottage of Meditation. In 2002 Brahmanandaji took some disciples with him and officially opened the ashram. Whenever

he could, he would go to the Dhyana Kutir to spend time in silence and meditation or he would hold a silent retreat with a small group of disciples. His last program in Amakantak was in Februar, 2006.

The seed that he has sown has now become a huge tree spreading its banches far and wide, under the direction of Prajnana Mission, the hard work of the resident monk Swami Paripurnananda Giri, and many dedicated disciples. The Ashram with its unique location close to the banks of the sacred river Narmada is ideal for sincere seekers wanting to meditate in seclusion and for silent group retreats.

Let us keep Brahmanandaji as a constantly burning flame in our hearts. Let his example as a sincere seeker of truth provide the guidance we need as we continue our journey. Let his bright light shine on our path so that we can clearly perceive and accomplish the goal in life.

(excerpts from My Brother Brahmanandaji by Paramahansa Prajnanananda)

Saraswati Puja at Balashram

Saraswati Puja was performed at Balashram on the

12th of February on Magha Sukla Panchami also known as Sri Panchami. The Goddess of learning Saraswati is worshipped on this day especially in schools and educational institutions. Saraswati Puja is a very special celebration at our Balashram in which the students take part with great devotion and enthusiasm.

Baba Prajnananandaji conducted the entire worship and fire ceremony at the beautifully decorated altar propitiating the Goddess assisted by Sw. Gurusharanananda and Brn. Satyamayee and Brn. Premamayee. The divine blessings of Goddess Saraswati could be felt in the holy atmosphere while Guruji was worshipping and guiding the hall full of students facing him in taking part of the chanting.

Prachi Walk

The 5th annual Prachi walk – Parikrama of the Prachi river (Feb 28- March 5) lead again by Baba Prajnananandaji and other monks of Prachi Parikrama Chritable Trust, was followed with great enthusiasm by national and international disciples.

Mahashivaratri

Mahashivaratri was special this year with several initiations into Brahmacharya and Sannyasa. The sacred ceremonies were conducted under the direction and guidance of Guruji Paramahansa Prajnananandaji attended and assisted by many senior monks of the mission. The 3 day ceremony of many prescribed rites and fire ceremonies, ended with the initiations on the holy auspicious day of Shivaratri.

DUBAI RETREAT

The Kriyavans of Dubai were blessed with a retreat with Baba Prajnananandaji Jan 28- 30, 2016. Other Swamis accompanying were Swami Vairagyananda Giri and Swami Gurupriyananda Giri. Paramhamsaji was in Dubai after 5 years. The event took place at the Azman Palace Hotel on the coast of Arabian Sea. The theme for the retreat was a verse from the Gita (6/17) about yogic life style of discipline and moderation in

food, enjoyment, action and sleep. The in depth analysis and explanation by Guruji from various aspects was practical and enlightening. The group of committed disciples who came together included some from as far as Abudabhi.

NORTH AMERICA

SPECIAL EVENTS

Prachi walk, Mahashivaratri and Amarkantak Retreat

Participants from USA had the opportunity to join Guruji Paramahansa Prajnananandaji on his annual Prachi walk from February 28 to March 5 in Odisha and participated in the Shivaratri observance on 7th March at Hariharananda Guukulam.

March 12th though March 26, 2016 Kriyavans from USA attended an exceptional, silent meditation retreat at the Hariharananda Dhyana Kutir-Amakantak Kriy Yoga Ashram near the holy Narmada river. The retreat was conducted by Swami Atmavidyananda Giri, and other monks in India.

Visit our web site:

www. prajnanamission.org

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