

Sthita Prajna



Guru Vandana

*srigurum paramanandam vande hyananda vigraham
yasya sannidhyamatrena chidanandaya tenamaha*

Guru Gita : 334

I bow to the guru preceptor who is supreme bliss and personification of joy: in his presence alone, does the mind assume the form of pure consciousness and bliss.

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FROM THE EDITORS :

“I will come again and again to evolve you all in the spiritual path and to lead you to the goal of realization.”

– Paramahansa Yogananda

Gurudev talks of “Following the Guru” in Message from the Master.

Prajnanavani gives a beautiful metaphor and inner significance of the Rathayatra, quoting from the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita.

We bring you more of Paramahansa Yoganandaji’s life and teachings as we commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of the great Guru.

Our Myths and Metaphors series continues the story of Mahabharata. Yoga Sutras of Patanjali explains how samadhi comes through faith, vitality, memory, balanced mind, and discriminative knowledge.

Our series on Valuable Volumes starts the most thought-provoking book - The Law of Karma by Guruji.

The 125th Birth Anniversary celebrations honouring Paramahansa Yoganandaji continued in many of our ashrams and centres in the United States, South America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand with discourses, seminars and cultural programs in the presence of Paramahansa Prajnananandaji.

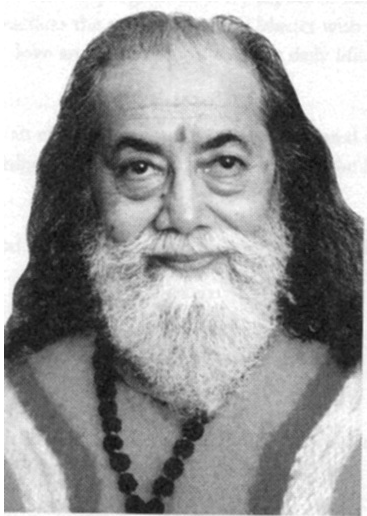
The birthday of Gurudev Baba Hariharanandaji was celebrated in all ashrams and all centres around the world.

We bring you many messages of the Gurus, the news of the many activities of Prajnana Mission around the world.

We thank our readers and sponsors for their continued support.

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

FOLLOW THE MASTER



Life is to learn. People learn how to earn money, but rarely do they learn how to live with love, peace, and harmony. Earning money alone cannot give real joy in life. One should be constantly learning the real art of thinking and living. For such orientation and training, one needs good company, and especially the company of the teacher. Nowadays, it is not so easy to have good company, or to find a teacher, but if you are sincere in your quest, and pray, you will find one. There is a beautiful saying in Sanskrit:

*tyaja durjana samsargam
bhaja sadhusamagama
kuru punyam ahoratram
smara nityam anityatvam*

“Avoid company of evils and seek good company intensely. Do noble work day and night, and always remember the transience of life.”
(Chanakya Niti)

Always feel the possibility that you may die at any moment. Life is like a glass plate that you carry around that could fall and break into pieces at any time. *Tyaja durjana samsargam*: avoid bad company. Where is bad company? Bad company is within you. You are your friend, and you are your foe. All evils, such as anger, pride, viciousness, cruelty, insincerity, suspicion, and doubt, are all bad company. These were the relatives of Arjuna. Arjuna was not willing to fight with them in the Mahabharata war. He kept saying, “No, no, no, I will not kill my relatives.”

Krishna was teaching him how to rise above

weakness. *Krishna* means good company. That is your indwelling Self. He knows good and bad. Your conscience always tells you what is good and what is bad. Sometimes you try your utmost to avoid the bad, but fail. However, if you are in good company, and follow your best friend Krishna, then you can succeed. *Krish* refers to cultivation of land, and *na* refers to the formless power of God. The combination of the two is Krishna. If the farmer helps you to cultivate your land properly, and you follow his instructions, then you can get a good harvest, but it depends upon your deep desire.

You need a very strong and disciplined master. Every teacher is a strong master. They teach how to control the mind of their disciples, giving new education to their brains. The teacher is good company. Through him, you can remove all your bad qualities. Arjuna failed in the beginning, and we also fail often. Arjuna represents all worldly people. Lord Krishna had to teach him the eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gita to remove his confusion. *Nam cha nirguna vachaka. Nirguna* means “formless,”

represented by *na*. The formless is conducting the body, gradually leading it from the lower to the upper centres.

tyajadurjanasamsargam

“Be free from bad company.” (ChanakyaNiti)

Undoubtedly, outside extrovert friends are also *durjanasamsargam*. Some of your friends may force you to smoke or drink, and, in this way, you have learned smoking or intoxication. That is *durjanasamsargam* (bad company). Always remain in good company and watch who you are. You are the imperishable soul. Krishna talked about the imperishable life and said to Arjuna, “You are a warrior. It is your duty to fight. You have now become a coward.”

*hatova prapsyasi svargam
jitva vabhoksyase mahim
tasmat uttishtha kaunteya
yuddhaya kritanischayah*

“If you die fighting, you can go to heaven. If you win, you can get the kingdom. Either way, you are to fight. So get up and fight.” (Bhagavad Gita 2:37)

Lord Krishna said to get up. Metaphorically, in the body,

you have to come up from the lower centers to the upper.

In deep meditation one feels as though the body has no limits. The physical body is gone, and one can feel the cosmic form. The Isha Upanishad (mantra 17) says:
bhasmantam sariram.

“Ultimately the body is burned to ashes.”

In the eleventh chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna shows his cosmic form to Arjuna, which engulfs the whole universe and beyond. When you are in meditation, in infinity, then your breath is very feeble. You do not know where your body is. You are in the atom point.

yavad bindu na bhavati dradhah

“As long you do not go to the atom point you will not experience the truth.” (Hatha Yoga Pradipika 4:114)

Arjuna followed Lord Krishna through and through. At the end of the teaching, he said: “*nashtomoha*, my delusion has disappeared; *smritirlabdha*, I have regained my memory; *sthito'smi*, now I am established; *gatasandehah*, my doubts have disappeared;

karisye vachanam tava, I will follow what you say.” (Bhagavad Gita 18:73)

A realized teacher teaches from his experience and realization. Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was not educated, yet he talked about the highest truths of the Upanishads, Vedas, Bhagavad Gita, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, and Brahmasutra. Vivekananda once asked him how he could talk about all these things without ever studying the scriptures. Ramakrishna replied that what he spoke was the Vedas, the Upanishads, Yoga Sutra of Patanjali, and Brahmasutra, and they were in his realization.

If you touch electricity, your body will be electrified by the current. Similarly, if you experience the truth, you will be in Truth. Follow the teacher and follow the teachings. Try to be in the company of the teacher. I spent a good period of time with my masters like Shri Bijoy Krishna, Shriyukteshwarji, Swami Satyanandaji, and Sanyal Mahasaya. I did not miss the opportunity to be with great spiritual masters like

Anandamoyee Ma, Nanga Baba, and Swami Bharati Krishna Teerthaji. Such associations gave me immense strength in my spiritual life. They are like spiritual catalysts, helping to accelerate practice.

As I have said repeatedly, good company will make you good, and bad company, bad. Guru is the good company, so try and be near him as much as you can.



Foundation Day Retreat in Australia

PRAJNANAVANI - THE VOICE OF WISDOM

THE INNER SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHARIOT FESTIVAL



As depicted in the Katha Upanishad (1:3:3-4):

*atmanam rathinam viddi
sariram rathamevatu
buddhim tu sarathim viddi
manah pragrahameva ca
indriyani
hayanyahurvisayamstesu
gocaran
atmendriyamanoyuktam
bhokteyahurmanishinah*

“The soul is the real conductor or the lord of the body chariot. The intellect is the chariot driver and the mind is the bridle. The senses are the horses and the sense objects

constitute the path of the horses. Being connected together, the soul, senses, and the mind enjoy the sense objects.”

The body is lifeless and insignificant without the soul. The soul is the beauty of the physical body. The soul is to be realized as the conductor within the body chariot. The Katha Upanishad (1:2:22) further states :

*asariram sariresu anavaste
tvavasititam
mahantam vibhumatmanam
matva dhiro na socati*

“Knowing the Self who is the bodiless among bodies, the stable among the unstable, the great, the all-pervading, the wise man does not grieve.

In all bodily forms, the soul exists as the disembodied pure consciousness, and it is manifested as eternal in all ephemeral objects. Realizing this omnipresent and supreme soul, the righteous saints and sages become devoid of any sorrow.

Though Lord Jagannath is all-pervading and omnipresent, He is subtler than the atom. In a popular prayer to the Lord, it is said:

*rathe tu vamanam drstva
punarjanma na vidyate*

“Beholding Vamana in the chariot of Lord Jagannath, one is free from the cycle of birth and death.”

In the scriptures, Vamana is described as one of the incarnations of Lord Vishnu. He is said to be a dwarf *brahmin* youth. But here, the phrase “*vamana* on the chariot” refers to the subtle form of the Divine in the body of chariot.

It is said in the Katha Upanishad (1:2:20) and in the Shvetashvatara Upanishad (3:20):

*anoraniyanmahato
mhiyanatmasya
jantornihito guhayam
tamakratuh pasyati
vitasokodhatuh*

prasadamnahimanatmanaha

“Subtler than the subtlest, greater than the greatest, this soul abides inside the cranium near the pons gland. Transcending mind, intellect, ego, and senses, a desireless person can behold Him and be devoid of sorrows.”

The Bhagavad Gita (8:9) says:

*kavimpuranam-anusasitaram
anoraniyam-sam-
anusmaredyah
sarvasyadhataaram-
acintyarupam*

aditya-varnam tamasha parastat

“He who meditates on the Seer, will ultimately perceive the ancient (ageless being), the ruler of all, the subtler than the subtlest, the universal sustainer Who possesses a form (formless form) beyond human conception, and Who is effulgent like the sun beyond the darkness of ignorance.”

He Who is omniscient and eternal, Who rules over and sustains all, Who is subtler than an atom, is of a form inconceivable, Who is radiant like the sun, and is beyond all

darkness, He should be meditated on. The soul in the form of *vamana* is abiding inside every human being. Literally, *vamana* means one who has a very subtle and small body. The Katha Upanishad (2:1:12) says:

*angushthamatrah puruso
madhya atmani tishthati
ishano bhutabhavyasya na tato
vijugupsate etadvai tat*

“The person of the size of a thumb resides in the middle of the body. After knowing Him, Who is the Lord of the past and the future, one does not shrink (from Him). This, verily, is that.”

It is further corroborated in the Katha Upanishad (2:3:17) and Shvetashvatara Upanishad (3:13):

*angusthamatrah purusontaratma
sada jananam hrdaye samnivistah*

“He Who is the size of a finger is all-perfect *swarupa* and abiding in the hearts of all human beings as the inner Self.”

God manifests as the soul in all living beings. The body is a chariot and in this body chariot, Lord Jagannath is present as the soul. The soul is *vamana*, and Lord Jagannath appears as

vamana, in a miniature form. Eyes cannot see Him. Words fail to describe Him. He is beyond being heard. The body in which the soul is present performs actions. The performance of action leads to accumulation of knowledge and karma. Though He is ever present in all, in their body chariot, as the *vamana*, as the soul, human beings cannot know or realize Him without earnest *sadhana*. He is the eye of all eyes, the nose of all noses, the ear of all ears — He is the Lord of the ever-changing cosmos. The Lord of the Universe, or *jagat*, is Jagannath.

In the body chariot, realization and the *darshan* of the soul as Vamana-Lord Jagannath will lead to liberation, to freedom from the cycle of birth and death, and to freedom from all forms of sorrow. Without this realization, this human life chariot will be driven astray by the extroverted sense horses. The mind without a bridle will surely be afflicted with sorrows, sufferings, adversities, and despondency.

In every human being, Lord Jagannath is ever abiding. He is like the *prana* or life force of every living being.

PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANDA

A LIFE OF MEDITATION AND RIGHT ACTION

Yogananda and his friends started their own spiritual group in Calcutta, with the dream of eventually opening a *brahmacharyavidyalaya* or school for strictly celibate students. They founded an ashram in Dihika, in the state of Bengal, and later on moved to Ranchi, in the state of Bihar. Together, Yogananda's dream like vision and Satyananda's hard work made it possible to build and maintain this ashram and school. They were blessed with a generous donation from Yogananda's father and even from the King Mahendra Chandra Nandhi of Kasimbazar, Bengal. Their main activity was caring for the sick and poor and helping children from extremely poor localities obtain their only chance for education, enriched with meditation. It is remarkable that when the great spiritual leader of India, Mahatma Gandhi, visited the beautiful ashram and school, he bestowed on it his admiration and highest esteem.

Messenger to the West

Swami Yogananda always dreamed of going to the West. First of all, he received a scholarship and a job offer in Japan. He went to Japan without the consent of Shriyukteshwar. He did not stay long, he felt the need to return to India. Shortly afterwards, he lost his eldest brother, Ananta, who had been instrumental as a medium for testing Yogananda's trust in God in various situations. In 1920, Yogananda was invited to attend the Congress of Religions, in Boston. In this interlude he received the direct blessings of Shri Babaji to go to America.

In America, he travelled far and wide, delivering lectures and creating a receptive environment for spiritual life. At that time, people in the West were not familiar with meditation and the yogic lifestyle. Yogananda was one of the first pioneers from India who helped to open people to a new concept of spirituality. He was

the first to introduce Kriya Yoga and to explain the yogic way of life in such an accessible and beautiful way that the reached many Westerners. His strong will power, dynamic personality, divine love and high state of spiritual experience enabled him to be a spiritual dynamo that encouraged and inspired millions of people. His work progressed at a galloping pace. It was difficult for him to work alone. He invited Swami Satyananda to come and join him in his divine mission, but Swami Satyananda declined, his place was in India.

Later on, Swami Dhirananda, formerly Basukumar Bagchi, went to assist Yogananda. Yogananda again called on the help of Satyananda to train new disciples to be ready to help him in his work in the United States. In 1928, Brahmachari Jatin, who was later ordained as Swami Premamamda, went to America. Eventually he found the Church of Self Realization in Washington D.C., and became the author of many spiritual books.

Yogananda's beloved guru, Swami Shriyukteshwar, was always proud of the

success of his dearest disciple in the West, but often requested Yogananda to return to India. In 1935, after a decade and a half of tireless work, Yogananda made the trip back to India, stopping in Europe on the way.

The joy of the reunion between Yogananda and Shriyukteshwar and Yogananda and his father, Bhagavati Charan, cannot be expressed in words. While he was in India for several months, he had the opportunity to visit many spiritual leaders. He met Mahatma Gandhi and initiated him and many of his followers into the sacred technique of Kriya Yoga. He visited Ramana Maharshi, Anandamoyee Ma, and many disciples of Shri LahiriMahasaya including Kashimani Devi, the saintly wife of Shri LahiriMahasaya.

In many places, he was received with great honour and respect. It was during this period, that he also initiated our Gurudev into second Kriya in Calcutta. In January 1936, Yogananda visited the *Kumbha Mela*, the holy gathering of monks, spiritual teachers and saints, in Allahabad, where the three sacred rivers,

Ganga, Yamuna and invisible Saraswati merge.

From Swami to Paramahamsa

Swami Shriyukteshwar honoured Yogananda during his stay by conferring on him the highest monastic title of Paramahamsa. Paramahamsa, the “supreme swan”, is one whose mind is always engrossed in the Lord and His divine play, being inwardly detached from all occurrences. From that time onwards, Yogananda came to be known as Paramahamsa Yogananda.

Mahasamadhi of Shriyukteshwar

When Yogananda was at the *Kumbha Mela* and later on in Calcutta participating in the festival of Holi, the festival of colour celebrating Lord Krishna, he had several calls from Shriyukteshwar asking him to return to Puri. Yogananda was planning to combine his visit to Puri with the foundation-day celebration of the Karar ashram, on the day of vernal equinox, the 22nd of March. The divine plan was different, however. On the 9th of March, 1936, Shriyukteshwar sent an urgent message to

Paramahamsa Yogananda to come back to Puri and on the same day, in the evening, he consciously left his physical body.

The next morning Yogananda reached Puri with the intuitive knowledge of Shriyukteswar’s *mahasamadhi*. It is difficult to describe the sorrow of the realized yogi, who missed the physical company and guidance of his beloved guru. According to tradition, a monk’s body is not burned, it is buried. Yogananda performed the burial ceremony on the ashram premises and in the traditional way, called *bhandara*, invited several monks of Puri and well-known spiritual leaders to pay tribute to this great guru.

After a couple of months, he decided to leave India to fulfil his divine mission in the West. Before his return on the 19th June, while he was staying in a room at the Regent Hotel in Bombay, he had the rare opportunity of experiencing the actual materialization of Shriyukteshwar, who appeared to him in bodily form. This was a beautiful and inspiring encounter with his loving guru.

GURUDEV'S BIRTHDAY

Message of Paramahansa Prajnanananda

May 27, 2017

Loving and Divine Soul,

Let the choicest blessings of God and the masters be upon all of you. I take this opportunity to pray for you and send my best wishes as we celebrate the birth anniversary of our beloved Shri Gurudev.

Shri Gurudev's birthday, according to the lunar calendar, falls on the full moon day in the month of May (Vaishakha), which is also the birthday of Buddha. But for easy remembrance we celebrate it on 27 May every year.

When we celebrate the birthdays of great personalities, it is quite natural to remember their lives and teachings, their values and ideals, so we can reflect upon the extent that our own lives follow their advice. It was a great privilege for me to spend a good part of my life with Gurudev. Out of his kindness and compassion he would narrate stories from his life, which I have narrated in his biography as well as in other discussions. I would like to

narrate one story from his childhood.

Gurudev's eldest sister's son was of his age, and he stayed with him during his studies. He was not very good in academics, and he was jealous of his uncle. Once, he lost his temper and did not hesitate to hurt Gurudev with a knife. Gurudev was patient and forgiving. He neither made any cry, nor told anyone about the incident. His foot was bleeding. The nephew was scared and apprehensive about reproach or reprimand.

Regarding Gurudev's kindness and forgiveness, as if nothing has happened, his nature transformed. This event provides a hint of Gurudev's nature since early childhood.

Gurudev often said that a spiritual seeker should cultivate the habit of forgiving others. A Sanskrit expression states, *kshamarupam tapashvinam*: "Forgiveness is the inner tenet for seekers of Truth." *Tapas* is the first aspect

of Kriya Yoga as described by Sage Patanjali. We should learn to live a life of sincerity, and we should cultivate the art of forgiveness in daily life. It is easy to punish, but difficult to forgive. Ordinarily, we speak of justice and want others to be punished. If we do not have the ability or strength to punish others, we accept help from others. But where love and kindness fill the heart, there is a good element of forgiveness; we are not bothered with the desire to retaliate.

We are all following the path of spiritual life. We should learn the art of forbearance and forgiveness from the lives of the masters. Great masters have emphasized that we must bear insult and injury. Patience and

perseverance can help us overcome a mountain of difficulties.

On the occasion of the auspicious birthday of our beloved Gurudev, let us reflect upon this incident in his life and how he lovingly dealt with his nephew without a big commotion. We should love and serve, learn to forgive, and strive to dissolve past impressions a little bit from our minds.

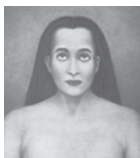
On the occasion of this special day, I am praying to God and Shri Gurudev to bless each one of us with more strength and stability in our lives and steadiness in our practice. Again, I offer my love and best wishes to all of you.

With Love,
Prajanananda

“It is the duty of the guru and the disciple to be loyal to each other, not only in one life, but for many lives if these are necessary to reach God. Those who are one hundred percent loyal to a guru can be sure of ultimate liberation and ascension. One may have many teachers, but only one guru, who remains as one’s guru even in many different lives, until the disciple reaches the final goal of emancipation in God.”

Paramahansa Yogananda

Teachings of the Masters

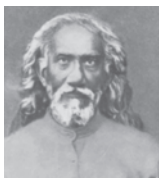
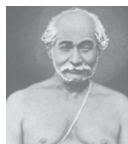


"The door of Kriya Yoga is open only to earnest seekers and sadhakas."

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

MAHABHARATA

THE CHILDREN OF PANDU AND DHRITARASHTRA



Excellence of the Pandavas, the Cause of Envy of the Kauravas

The Pandavas learned everything quickly while the Kauravas lagged far behind. The Pandavas' quick learning undoubtedly created jealousy. Usually, a teacher loves the one who learns faster, whereas the mother loves the one who is weaker. However, the mother-teacher, one with a motherly heart, looks after all the students but gives more care and attention to the weaker ones.

Hence, the teachers loved the better students (the Pandavas) and always

appreciated them, which made the Kauravas quite unhappy. Ultimately, this caused jealousy. When we are jealous of somebody, their clothing, their hair, their walk, their talk, their work, everything creates jealousy in our mind. We ultimately express this jealousy in our mind through our conduct. Indeed, the Kauravas did that many times. They often treated the Pandavas poorly. Now, as it was stated earlier, all the Pandavas were gracious, and the eldest one, Yudhishtira, was exceptionally calm and quiet. He loved his younger brothers intensely and the younger brothers loved him the

same. Constantly, his beautiful heart was forgiving. Love is so divine. Love gives and forgives, whereas selfishness gets and forgets.

Beautiful Contrasts

One day, when the guru was lecturing his students, he said, "There is one very important thing that you all must remember: you should never become angry. Now, did you all hear what I just said? Absolutely under no circumstances should you ever become angry." The following day, before the guru began the class, he asked, "Do you remember what I taught you yesterday? If there is anyone who does not remember, please raise your hand." Yudhishtira raised his hand. The other children kept their hands down, indicating that they all remembered. The guru was unhappy and said, "Yudhishtira, you are so dull! Are you telling me that you really do not remember what I said yesterday?" Yudhishtira said "no."

Next the guru called upon Duryodhana, "Tell me what I told you yesterday."

"You said never become angry," replied Duryodhana.

The guru then looked at Yudhishtira. "Yudhishtira! Do you remember what he just said?" Again Yudhishtira said "no." Upon hearing Yudhishtira's answer, the guru became extremely angry. Trembling with fury, he began to shout, "You foolish child! You do not even remember what he said just now!"

Yudhishtira smiled with delight. "Yes, yes, yes, I remember now. He said that you told us never to become angry."

What is the moral of this incident? Yudhishtira was the eldest of all the children; he was the crown prince. He could have said, "My teacher, you are a paid employee, and I am the prince; soon I am going to be king. Therefore, it would be wise not to show your red eye to me." Indeed, it is very easy to remember and repeat "don't be angry," but Yudhishtira wanted to practice this in his life. When somebody is angry with us we should not become angry in turn; instead, we should stay inwardly cool, calm and quiet, balanced, then we can remember the lessons we were taught. Think of your own life. You may know many things, but

when you are tested, how much of those teachings do you remember? How much do you practice what you preach? Yudhishtira was the example of practical spiritual experience while Duryodhana's actions symbolize book knowledge.

We may read and know many things, but how many of these things do we really practice? If we want to be like the Pandavas, we should try to practice more. Knowing is the first step, but practicing it is the next step. Those who practice Kriya have been taught to watch their breath. If you have taught this, are you practicing it now? If not, then you are like the Kauravas. If yes, then you are like the Pandavas. If you are true seekers, then you will love your every breath — that is, you will watch your breath all the time.

There is another story about the Kaurava and Pandava children, and it also has a beautiful moral. One day, the guru called Duryodhana and Yudhishtira to his room and said, "My children, I am sending you both on special quest. Duryodhana, you must go to the city and search everywhere for a good person. I am giving you

one month; this is your practical work. After the month is over, you are to return to the palace with the good person that you have found." Next, he spoke to Yudhishtira, "Yudhishtira, I am giving you a similar mission. However, there is one big difference. Instead of finding a good person, you must go the city and find a bad person, and then come back after one month."

After one month's time had elapsed, they both came back to the palace, and they both came alone. The guru was curious; thus, he asked Duryodhana, "Where is the good person that you were supposed to bring back?" With great pride, Duryodhana puffed his chest and declared, "My Master, I went to the city, as you requested and carefully examined each one I saw. Unfortunately, I discovered that every person I encountered was bad. Everyone I met had so many bad qualities. When I compared myself to them, it was easy to see that I was the best person there. Among all people in the city, I was the only good person, and the rest of them were bad."

The guru said, “thank you,” then he looked at Yudhishtira. “Where is the bad person you were told to bring back?” Yudhishtira had tears in his eyes. With humility, he said, “My Master, like Duryodhana, I also went to the city. However, every person I found had many good qualities. When I compared myself to them, I saw that I had so many bad qualities, many more than them. Therefore, the worst person in the city is standing before you. The worst person I could find was me.”

While seeing the same people, one believed all were bad and the other believed all were good. WE look at people and things thorough both our eyes and our minds. Depending upon the condition of our mind and eyes, we see good or bad. Jesus said, “If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.” (Matthew 6:22-23)

Duryodhana had evil eyes, so wherever he looked, he saw evil. Yudhishtira had a divine eye, a spiritual eye, and wherever he looked, he saw goodness. Because all that he

saw was good, naturally he was happy. However, when he looked within, he was able to find his own weaknesses. A spiritual person is one who looks at the good of others but very carefully examines him or herself to see if there are any weaknesses or not. If you wish to be more spiritual, more divine, you should try to analyse your life and your thoughts, and you should earnestly strive to remove any weaknesses in you. Each day you should make a vow to make your life stronger and more beautiful.

Test of Concentration

One day, the guru wanted to test the young princes’ concentration through archery: how one uses one’s skill to reach the target. In a tree, among dense leaves, was a bird with one eye. The guru wanted to test his students’ point of concentration. In this concentration test, one prince said that he saw a tree, nothing more. Another said that he saw the tree and the branch. Yet another said that he saw the tree, branch, and a bird. Among all the students, only Arjuna said, “I see nothing except the eye of a bird.” What does this mean?

Gurudev always said d to go to the atom point: “Fix your mind and concentration on the atom point.” Our body is a tree, this life is a bird, and the eye of the bird is small in this dense, thick body-tree. And we are to go there, to that atom point, at the top of the head. We are the students, the archers. With the bow of concentration, we look, closing the external eyes and searching within. Arjuna was the successful student because he saw only the eye of the bird, the one point. Why did Yudhishthira not see the eye? Yudhishthira was so calm and quiet that he was seeing God’s presence everywhere. For him, there was no bird’s eye; the bird’s eye was everywhere. So Yudhishthira did not require spiritual training because he was already in the state of extreme calmness. On the other hand, Arjuna was trying to attain this state and was eventually successful. Hence, among all the students, although the gurus and the parents loved Yudhishthira because he was so balanced, calm, and quiet, it was Arjuna who was successful with his power of concentration.

Impartiality of a Teacher

A teacher should teach all students with equality.

However, because the king paid these two teachers, they had also to take into account who the king loved more. The Pandavas only had their mother; they were fatherless. The Kauravas had both a father and mother. So Acharya Drona became partial. The name Drona is derived from the characteristics of a crow. Although a crow has two eyes, it does not look out of two eyes; instead it looks with one eye. Thus, it has partiality. You have two eyes; you must look with both and be impartial. But Acharya Drona developed partiality; he favoured not only the king’s sons, but also his own son, Ashwatthama, who studied with the princes. Among the children, the most intelligent and eager to learn was Arjuna. Ashwatthama was also smart. Being both a father and a guru, the father in him wanted to teach Ashwatthama more than Arjuna. Acharya Drona would sometimes give Arjuna a task and tell him to come back after it was finished. But Arjuna was very bright; he knew that his teacher would likely be teaching something more to his son. So Arjuna would finish the assigned task quickly, and then

go to Acharya Drona while he was in the middle of teaching Ashwatthama. Arjuna was then able to learn whatever was taught to Ashwatthama because he was intelligent and eager to learn,

Story of Ekalavya

There is a beautiful story in the Mahabharata about a young tribal boy named Ekalavya, who lived in the forest. One day, Ekalavya heard that Acharya Drona and Acharya Kripa were the most reputed teachers of that time. He greatly desired to study with them. But Acharya Drona refused his request to be initiated because he was the royal teacher and could not teach a layperson.

Knowledge is free, and the true spirit of teachership is just like a mother feeding a child. Will a mother who has milk in her breast discriminate between twins? So also is the loving attitude of a true teacher. Ekalavya was very humble. Thus, he asked Acharya Drona, "Will you allow me some soil from below your feet? I will take it and go." With the consent of the Acharya, he took the soil and with it he made a clay image of Acharya Drona

that he placed under the shade of a tree. Every morning Ekalavya offered flowers to his guru, who was in the form of clay. Sitting with eyes closed, he contemplated his guru and what he was teaching. Because he contemplated and meditated so deeply, everything was revealed to him. In fact due to his intense concentration, he learned more than those who learned in person. Even when sitting in front of the teacher, it is easy to lose concentration for a brief moment. When that happens some words may be missed and the link may be missing; thus, one may not learn everything the teacher has taught. But when Ekalavya was sitting with full concentration, he learned everything perfectly.

One day, the guru took the young students to the forest to practice what they had been taught. Their hunting dog ran ahead and found this tribal boy sitting with eyes closed, contemplating. Seeing his strange form and appearance, and unkempt hair, the dog barked loudly. Because the dog was barking so loudly, the tribal boy, with eyes closed, took his arrow and hit the dog without hurting it, in such a way that

the dog was unable to bark. The dog quickly ran with the arrow in its mouth back to its master. Acharya Drona was surprised and thought that the one who had done this must surely be a master archer. Ekalavyawas able to do this while in meditation. The dog showed the way to Ekalavya, and Acharya drone asked him who he was. When Ekalavya opened his eyes and saw his guru standing there, he bowed down at his feet with extreme humility and said he was Acharya Drona's humble disciple. Acharya Drona said that his only disciples were the royal family's children, not anyone like him.

Who truly recognizes the guru? The guru may not recognize the student, but if the student is devoted, he or she recognizes the guru. The guru does not glorify himself; the disciples glorify the guru. The guru does not need any recognition, glorification, or reputation; rather, the disciples do this for their own development. Ekalavya said, "You are my beloved Gurudev. Don't you remember the young boy who once went to you to learn but you said you were unable to teach him? That day

I brought some soil from below your feet and mad this clay idol of you, and I have been practicing here ever since."

This is the nature of Drona. From that state, you must learn to cultivate impartiality, to cultivate love for all. This story is about devotion, contemplation, concentration, commitment, hard work, determination, and strong willpower. Even if one is far away from the teacher, one can be realized. Gurudev was initiated by Swami Shriyukteshwarji, who four years later left his body. Gurudev received initiation from Yoganandaji, who soon left for the USA. With the physical departure of these two masters, Gurudev did not stop his practice. He learned from other teachers, and although the teachers were not near him, he pursued his practice sincerely and in a committed way. When Gurudev first arrived at the ashram, he felt weak and sleepy. Hence, he slept for some time, and when he woke up, he reminded himself that he did not come there to sleep. Gurudev made a large mosquito net to cover himself while meditating and even doing

exercises. He needed more physical flexibility so he could sit longer in meditation; thus, he worked outside in the garden doing physical work. The brain is the place of two qualities: sattvic and tamasic qualities. When you lie on a bed and concentrate deeply, either you will go into deep concentration or feel sleepy. Gurudev said, "If sleep comes, stand up, walk, and then sit down. Open your eyes and meditate; do some physical work every day. If you do not do any physical work, the body will become lazy and lethargic, and thereby tamasic qualities will overpower you." To overcome the tamasic quality, you need some rajasic quality; to overcome the rajasic quality, you need sattvic quality. The sattvic quality can go beyond *sattva*, which is known as *shuddhasattva*.

With extreme love and calmness, look deeply into the

story of your life. In the kingdom of your life, you have a mind that is the blind king. Your younger brother is Pandu, knowledge. You have numerous tendencies and propensities of the mind (the Kauravas) known as *manovrittis*, as well as *buddhivrittis*, tendencies and propensities of knowledge and intellect (the Pandavas), which are only five. To be well trained, you need a teacher who can help you transform these tendencies of nature. Thus, from the core of your heart, sincerely pray, "O God! I want to be a better person. I want the story of my life to be a happy story, one that is filled with love, courage, and beauty. Let me find the strength to transform my life through prayer and meditation, through sincere, conscious right activities. O my Beloved, let me be a successful hero in the story of my life."

"You should live in Truth, live for Truth and realize Truth."

Paramahansa Hariharananda

THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI

Sutra 20

**The Means for
Attaining Asamprajnata
Samadhi**

*sraddha-virya-smrti-
s a m a d h i - p r a j n a -
purvakaitaresam*

Word Meaning

sraddha – faith; *virya* – strength, vitality; *smrti* – memory; *samadhi* – concentration; *prajna* – intelligence, knowledge; *purvaka* – preceded by; *itairesam* – for others

Translation

To others [this *samadhi*, *asamprajnata*] comes through faith, vitality, memory, balanced mind, and discriminative knowledge.

Commentary by Shri Lahiri Mahashaya

Others attain *samadhi* through faith, vitality, memory, concentration (the limbs of yoga), and discriminative knowledge. Through regular practice of Kriya, one develops faith. Through sincerity, one gets strength and constant remembrance, a balanced state, and ultimately enters into

s a m p r a j n a t a s a m a d h i .

Through this and continuous *vairagya* [dispassion, detachment], one achieves *asamprajnata samadhi*.

Metaphorical Explanation

In this sutra, the sage explains *upayapratyaya*, another route to *asamprajnatasamadhi*. This is the path that bestows the state of *sadyamukti*, complete or instant liberation. One can understand this in a beautiful sequence: *shraddha* (faith), *virya* (vitality), *smrti* (memory), *samadhi* (concentration), and *prajna* (contemplative knowledge).

Shraddha (faith) — faith in words of the master and the commandments of the scriptures. When one is not able to follow the inner meaning of the scriptures, one should listen to its interpretation from the master.

Virya (vitality) — the strength that arises from the purity of the senses, control over the mind, an elevating outlook, and forbearance of all pain and suffering.

Smriti (memory) — to have constant remembrance of *ahambrahmasmi*: “I am Brahman.” (See the *Bhagavad Gita* 18:73.)

Samadhi (concentration) — mind concentrated and absorbed in the object, the goal.

Prajna (contemplative knowledge) – one’s own experiences attained through deep meditation, devoid of imagination and hallucination.

When one proceeds in this way, step-by-step, one experiences the Absolute. This is *upayapratyayaasamp rajnata samadhi*: realization arising out of all these means of meditation. All the stages described come one after the other and help the seeker to reach the highest state.

Through deep desire and faith, one develops inner urges and encouragement leading to a meditative mind, deep concentration, and realization. These five steps lead one to reach the cave of the cranium, ascending through the five chakras, where one becomes merged in the essential divine nature, the Self, Brahman.

O Seeker! Remember the mantra of the *Katha Upanishad* (1:3:14)

*Uttisthatajagrataprapya
varannibodhata*

“Arise, awake and reach the supreme goal. Stop not until the goal is reached. Shun all distracting ideas, slothfulness, and doubt. With faith and love proceed and attain the supreme state.”

DATES TO REMEMBER

July – September, 2017

July 9	: Guru Purnima
August 10	: Birthday of Paramahansa Prajnanananda
August 14	: Birthday of Lord Krishna
August 25	: Ganesh Chaturti
Sept 21 – 30	: Navaratri

STORIES TO LIVE BY

THE VALUE OF FREEDOM

A bird trapper was catching birds, putting them in small cages, and selling them. A special bird had a gift. When it sang so beautifully, pearls, diamonds, and jewels emerged from its beak. The bird thought, "This poor man catches birds for money to maintain his family. If I live with this man, I will provide him with pearls and jewels so he won't catch any more birds, then my fellow birds will no longer suffer from imprisonment."

The singing bird sat on the hunter's hand and started singing. When it sang, a jewel appeared. The hunter saw the gem and immediately put the bird in a cage. The bird thought the man was foolish. It had come to him of its own free will and had sat on his hand. "Why is he putting me in a cage?" the bird wondered. "This man is ignorant and greedy; he doesn't know that if you imprison those who are free, they will not be happy."

The bird trapper took the special bird, and thought he should sell it for one million rupees. He didn't realize that he would be a millionaire just by keeping the bird. The hunter took the cage outside and said, "Who wants this special bird? It costs one million rupees; the other birds cost one." People thought he was crazy. Soon the news of this amazing bird reached the king, who promptly sent his messengers to bring the bird and the trapper to the palace to verify whether the trapper's claim was true. While the minister and the king were sitting together, they took the bird out of the cage and let it sit on their palms.

The bird thought, "There is no need to stay imprisoned in the king's cage. I should fly away." The bird flew near an open window and started singing:

"I am the first fool who allowed myself to be trapped.

The trapper is the second fool who didn't

*believe in me and wanted to
sell me.*

*The king and the
minister are both fools to
have let me out and freed me.*

*Now I realize my
foolishness, I want to be
free.” While singing the bird
flew out the window.*



Celebration of Yoganandaji's Birthday at Kansas

“A guru preceptor will keep coming back to earth
voluntarily until all his disciples have found liberation.”

Paramahansa Yogananda

VALUABLE VOLUMES



JNANA SANKALINI TANTRA

&

THE LAW OF KARMA

BY PARAMAHAMSA PRAJNANANANDA

**JNANA
TANTRA**

SANKALINI

Lord Shiva continues that knowledge acquired from the scriptures must not remain only in the mouth, but should be internalized as thoughts and feelings.

Verse 52

*ucchistamsarvasastrani
sarvavidyamukhemukhe
no
'cchistambrahmanojnanam
avyaktamcetanamayam*

Translation

The mere intellectualization of the shastras is of no value. The real value of Self-knowledge cannot be expressed, as it is inexpressible pure awareness.

Metaphorical Interpretation

In this verse Lord Shiva says, *ucchishtamsarvasastrani*: “All scriptures are like the left-overs on the plate and hence, considered impure.” Studying and interpreting the scriptures is commonly held in high regard, but the exercise is useless unless Truth is experienced. Shiva makes clear that knowledge acquired from the scriptures must not remain only in the mouth, but should be internalized as thoughts and feelings. Truth must be realized, not just remain an intellectual activity.

Ucchista means ‘left-overs in the plate after a meal.’ It is considered impure and unhygienic. True knowledge of Brahman is never unclean;

Self-knowledge is always undefiled.

Spiritual experience transcends mental and intellectual interpretation. In a deep state of meditation, a seeker experiences the state of reality. This is defined as pure awareness; God is felt in everything at all times.

The Bhairava Damara Tantra describes such anomaly in these words,

*tamtrarthasastravyutpat
yajnatumgacchati yah
puman
saevandhovijaniya
tulukaivabhaskaram*

“One who tries to know the meaning of the Tantras and the origin of the scriptures, is like a blind person, such as an owl searching for the sun.”

The Kularnava Tantra (1:96) gives a similar interpretation,

*tattvatmatmasthamajna
tvamudhasastresuyujyate
gopahkuksagatamch
agamkuepasyatidurmatih*

“Without experiencing the Truth hidden in oneself, foolish people search for it in books; like a person holding a goat in his hands, and (at the same time) looking at its image in the well.”

The direct experience of Self-knowledge is vital to the supreme state of realization. Instead of studying the scriptures, a seeker should put them in to practice. In the Bible, it is described that the scriptures are the Breath of God, therefore with every breath, a spiritual aspirant should turn inwards and realize one's own real nature to be free.

Verse 53

*natapahtapahityahu
brahmacaryamtapottamam
urddhvaretabhavetyastu
sa devo natumanusah*

Translation

Penance is not penance as it is ordinarily thought of, and brahmacharyam (celibacy) is the best of all penances. One who is a perpetual celibate is not an ordinary human being, and attains godhood.

Metaphorical Interpretation

In this verse, Lord Shiva speaks of the state of the *brahmacharya* to be established in god without deviation. To understand the inner meaning of this verse, three concepts need to be clear:

tapas, *brahmacharya*, and *urdhvareta*.

Tapas means 'burning,' 'warming,' 'consumed by heat,' 'causing pain,' 'penance,' or 'religious austerity.' In spiritual practices, *tapas* is used as penance to withstand heat and cold, hunger and thirst, with endurance, while remembering God. *Tapa* is also derived from the verb *taapa*, meaning 'heat.' Body temperature is maintained through the breath. Metaphorically, to love and be constantly aware of god in every breath is also considered *tapas*.

Brahmacharya literally means 'abstinence' or 'perpetual celibacy.' Yet a married person, following certain rules and disciplines within married life, can also be considered a *brahmachari*. The inner meaning of *brahmacharya* is *brahmavicharana*, i.e., 'to roam' or 'to move in Brahman.' 'A *brahmachari* undertakes all activities with love for god, without any deviation. Thus, *brahmacharya* has multiple meanings: 'religious studies,' 'a life of celibacy,' or self-restraint' but above all it means 'constant awareness of God,'

Urdhvareta means *urdhva* or 'higher' and *reta* or 'engrossed,' or the preservation of human magnetism in the body.' In the Hindu tradition it is believed that through the practice of regular celibacy, a spiritual aspirant inwardly transforms the life-energy into *ojas*, which is translated as 'human magnetism,' or *urdhvaeta*. A state of continuous cheerfulness, a peaceful countenance, and increased vitality, are signs of *ojas* in a person. It is the state of continuous awareness of the higher purpose of life, and a mind engrossed in God-consciousness. This state is synonymous with 'perfect evolution.'

Verse 54

*nadhyanamdhyanamityahu
dhyanam sunyagatammanah
tasya dhyana prasadena
saukhyam moksam nasamsayam*

Translation

Dhyanam is not meditation if the mind is not devoid of all thoughts. Only through such meditation, peace and liberation are obtained. There is no doubt about this.

Metaphorical Interpretation

Dhyana or meditation is the seventh limb described in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Meditation is an art of withdrawing consciousness from the mind and the senses and turning it towards the source of life, centered in the brain very close to the pineal gland. Such concentration enables the seeker to experience a state of inner peace and bliss. The highest level of such meditation ultimately results in communion with God, known as *samadhi*. According to the Yamala Tantra,

*dhyanamtudvividhapro
ktastulasuksmavbhedatah
stulammantramayamvidd
hisuksmamscamantravarjitam*

“Meditation is said to be two types: gross and subtle. The gross art of meditation is based on mantra while the subtle is beyond mantra.

In the scriptures it is also said,

*snana mana mala
tyajyasaucaindriyanigraha
abhedadarsanamjnanamd
hyanamnirvisayammanah*

“A true bath is to purify or cleanse the mind; true

purification is the control of the senses; true knowledge is the state of unity or experiencing God everywhere; true meditation is the state beyond thoughts and objects.”

Regular practice of Self-awareness focuses the mind on the goal of life. The tendencies of a restless nature disappear, and the state of inner tranquillity, peace, and love is achieved. Lord Shiva teaches that the true state of meditation is to be immersed in nothingness, with the mind devoid of all thoughts.

Meditation bestows two major benefits:

i) *Saukhyam* is derived from *sukha*; *su* means ‘complete,’ ‘good,’ or ‘real,’ *kha* means ‘space’ or ‘sky.’ *Sukha* is therefore the ‘state of happiness that can be experienced in deep meditation.’ At this juncture, there is a sense of real freedom from the noose of ignorance and delusion.

ii) *Moksha* comes from *mohakshaya* — *moha* means ‘delusion’ and *ksha* is ‘elimination.’ *Moksha* signifies ‘the elimination of delusion, illusion, and error.’

Verse 55

*nahomamhomamityahu
samadhautattubhuyate
brahmagnauhuyatepranam
homakarmataducyate*

Translation

Homam (sacrifice) is not a homam in which samadhi (realization) is reached. Homa karma (sacrificial ceremony) is that process in which prana (breath) is offered as an oblation into brahmagni (the sacred fire).

Metaphorical Interpretation

Through constant practice, devotion, and deep meditation the devotee becomes saturated in spiritual experience and enters the state of spiritual ecstasy known as *samadhi*. *Dhi* means ‘intellect,’ and *sama* means ‘balance.’ Metaphorically, *samadhi* is not a state of intellectualization, rather it is the experience of being established in Truth; all duality disappears and only complete oneness with God remains. To go deeper in meditation and eventually attain *samadhi*, Lord Shiva teaches the art of *homa* (sacrificial fire ceremony)

In ritualistic practices, *sadakas* perform a fire

ceremony in the Vedic or Tantric tradition, offering oblations with ghee and other materials, into the blazing fire, accompanied by the chanting of mantras.

Tantric practices can be divided into two steps; the preliminary step is the practice of mantra and the ultimate step is the practice of yoga or meditation. *Homa* is both; the ritualistic offering in the external fire, and the inner offering called *pranayama*, where the oblation of *prana* or breath is offered to *brahmagni* or the sacred fire in the soul center. In this context the seven chakras are symbolically believed to be the seven ceremonial fires.

Chakra Name of the fire

Sahasrara	Visvarupamahaagni
Ajna	Brahmagni
Vishuddha	Samudbhava
Anahata	Ahavaniya
Manipura	Vaishvanara
Svadhithana	Grihapati
Muladhara	Dakshinagni

By means of an inner fire ceremony, a devotee practices *pranayama* or a special breathing technique learned directly from the guru, offering every breath as an oblation into the *brahmagni*, i.e., the *ajna*

chakra (soul center) and the *sahasrara* (the crown of the head). The practice of *pranayama* enables a sincere seeker to attain the state of deep meditation and ultimately, *samadhi* or realization.

Verse 56

*papakarmabhavetbhavyam
punyamcaivapravartate
tasmatsarvaprayatnena
tad dravyam ca
tyajetbudhah*

Translation

By *papakarma* (sinful actions) one acquires sin, and by virtuous acts, virtue is earned. Intelligent people make every effort to discard both.

Metaphorical Interpretation

Papa (vice) and *punya* (merit) represent duality: the cause of birth and death; happiness and unhappiness; disease and health. *Papa* is literally translated as ‘sin,’ ‘demerit,’ ‘vice,’ or ‘wrong

action.’ *Punya*, on the other hand is ‘merit,’ ‘virtue,’ or ‘noble deed.’ It has already been mentioned, in the first section of this work, how *papa* and *punya* (vice and virtue) become the cause of bondage.

Any kind of chain if difficult to break, but even though sinful activities bring suffering and should be shunned, virtuous deeds, which promote goodness, also prevent a real state of liberation.

In the Bhagavad Gita (9:21) it is said, *ksinepunyemartyalokamvisanti:*

“When the fruits of the meritorious deeds are exhausted, one suffers again in the mortal plane.”

A sincere seeker, whose ultimate goal is liberation, should try to be free from the clutches of both vice and virtue. *Sarvaprayatnena*: ‘by all efforts’ — by careful and intelligent efforts it can be achieved.

THE LAW OF KARMA

*We reap what we sow.
We are the makers of our own
fate. None else has the
blame, none has the praise.*

- Swami Vivekananda

“Karma, karma, karma” is a common cry everywhere in the world. This concept, this philosophy, and this reality of life was first revealed in Vedic lore, but later was accepted by all religions developed in India, such as Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Subtle traces of this principle are found in all other faiths. The idea of karma is now found in English lexicons. In the Oxford Dictionary, its meaning as a noun is “the sum of a person’s actions in this and previous states of existence,” which will affect future fate. Informally, it means good or bad luck that is the result of our actions. In Sanskrit, karma is “action, effect, and fate.” Currently people all over the world use the word “karma,” but without understanding its deeper import. Let us try to dive deeply into what karma is and what it means.

Two forces

All creation, all that we perceive and feel, is a play between two aspects, like wires making an electric current or the two poles of a magnet. The two aspects are *prakriti* and *purusha* — nature and the indwelling spirit. To understand the law of karma we must look closely at the meanings of these words. *Prakriti* is a compound word made from *pra* and *kriti*. *Pra* means “perfectly” or “beautifully” and *kriti* means “creation” or “manifestation.” Thus, *prakriti* is beauty manifested. Nature brings forth beauty. The changing of the seasons is due to the play of *prakriti*. *Prakriti* is defined as *prakrstenakriyate karyadikamanayaiti*: “One who is efficiently active in creativity and creating many things.” It refers to that which has the ability to do things in a perfect, beautiful way. *Prakriti* is considered the feminine aspect of divinity, and *purusha* the masculine. *Purusha*’s presence is needed in all aspects

of creation, during every step of creation.

The work *purusha* is defined as *puryamsheteiti*, which means “One who hides or sleeps in the city” (inside creation). *Purusha* is never visible and *prakriti* is never still. *Prakriti* is not only visible, but is also always in motion, ever changing. For example, the body changes from childhood to youth to old age. *Purusha*, on the other hand, never changes. Hence, *prakriti* and *purusha* are much like a screen and a movie; the pictures on the screen constantly change, but the screen behind it does not move. The body changes, thoughts in the mind change, and the decisions of the intellect change, but the soul behind these processes never changes. Change occurs only in external nature and the universe.

In the Bhagavad Gita (9:10), the Lord declares *mayadhyak sen aprakr tihsuyatesacaracaram*: “Under My Lordship and presence *prakriti* (divine nature) creates all that is visible.” The bhagavad Gita (3:27) also says, *prakrtehkriyamananigu naihkarmanisarvasah*: “All

activities are performed by *prakriti*.” Thus, every activity is the play of *prakriti* (nature), and whatever *prakriti* does is *kriya*, which means “function” in English.

Function and Action

The sun shines; this is the function of the sun. The moon gives cool bright light; this is the function of the moon. The eyes see; this is the function of the eyes. The heart beats; this is the function of the heart. The mouth speaks; this is the function of the mouth. Every day the body digests food, which is also a function. A delicious meal is assimilated in the stomach and eventually evacuated. The entire process is the function of the digestive system. With impeccable precision, nature functions day and night. The body also functions; the movement of the hands and the legs walking are functions of the body.

The function (*kriya*) becomes action (karma) when the *purusha* (the indwelling spirit) associates itself with the body and considers itself an individual doer. Eyes look, ears hear, feet walk; as these functions manifest in day-to-day life, we use these instruments

to fill our lives with activities and accomplishments and then say, “I am walking, I am looking, I am talking, I am going, I am hearing, I am eating, I am enjoying.” It is no longer a function; it is now an action. Hence, by associating doership with action, which is ego, functions become actions – *kriya* becomes karma. And when a function becomes an action, it produces a consequence. Sir Isaac Newton said, “Every action has an equal and opposite reaction.” This law is true. But when it comes to the law of karma, there is a much bigger story to tell. Unlike Newton’s Law, it is not equal and opposite, it is much, much more.

Detachment, the Door to Freedom

Just as function becomes action because we identify with nature and the body, likewise, karma can become *akarma* (inaction) if we detach or dissociate ourselves from nature and the body while performing any action. In the Bhagavad Gita (4:18), the Lord says, *karmany-akarma yah pasyet-akarmani ca karma yah*: “One who finds inaction in action, and action in inaction, is wise among

all human beings”; that is, the wise observe everything dispassionately, with inner detachment. This teaching from the Bhagavad Gita uses the beautiful word *pashyet*, which means “looking at.” This solves the problems of life. But the question arises: How do we observe? We can observe as a witness or as an enjoyer. Witnessing is similar to watching a movie or a television show; we are merely observing. We see everything but we are free from emotion and obsession, likes and dislikes, or in other words, disconnected from the object.

Long ago when I was teaching economics, the department head and I were working together at her home preparing questions for the university examination. Suddenly I heard loud crying coming from another room, and I was informed that it was her young daughter crying while watching a sad television show. So the truth is, much of what we usually do or experience is with attachment, with association – even while watching television.

Happiness and Unhappiness

The Bhagavad Gita (13:20) says, *purusasukha-*

duhkhanambhoktrtvehetur-ucyate: “When *purusha*, the indwelling spirit, becomes associated with nature or the body, it considers itself an individual, and it experiences *sukha* and *duhkha* (pleasure and pain).” We become happy or unhappy, excited or depressed because of attachment, strong association, and the bond of identity. A simple example is what happens to us when we see delicious food on a table. First, there is hunger. Then, the eyes look at the food; the nose smells the food; the mind says, “Eat! You are hungry.” The hands touch and hold the food, bringing it to the mouth; the mouth eats; the teeth bite and chew the food; the tongue brings saliva to mix with the food and liquefy it so that is easy to swallow; the mouth swallows the food; the mind helps us recognize whether the food is sweet, sour, bitter, salty, or hot. Next the food slowly goes through the esophagus to the stomach, and so on. The key is to silently observe who is truly working when we eat. If we are eating food as the witness, we watch the hands and mouth do their work; we are like a mother

observing her children as they play with toys. In the examination hall the professor silently stands while the students take a test. The professor is not personally involved in the test; rather, the professor witnesses the activity in the room. In all action there are two approaches: be the witness, or identify with the action. Whenever we identify with an action or anything in nature, we experience pleasure and pain.

The Mundaka Upanishad (3:1:1) describes two birds in a tree. One bird visits the tree to eat the fruit. When the fruit is sweet, the bird is happy, cheerful. When the fruit is sour, unhappiness and sorrow arise. Occasionally the unhappy bird looks up at the other bird that is sitting at the top of the tree, observing. Similarly, we can identify, associate, or attach to the body and nature, or we can be a witness to everything – observing, watching. The mind is thinking. The mouth is speaking. The eyes are looking. But who is looking through the eyes? If we identify with the body and nature, we create karma and experience pleasure and pain. On the other hand, if we maintain the posture of a

witness unaffected by events, whether it is sweet, sour, or bitter, whether there is pleasure or pain, our action becomes inaction. However, make no mistake, inaction does not mean inertia, because activity continues. The difference is that we perform an action, but we remain free and detached. When we observe a function without the attitude of doership, we are not bound. Conversely, if we taste the fruit of any action, we are bound by karma.

The Bhagavad Gita (13:21) says:

*purusahpraktistho hi
bhunkteprakrtijan-gunan*

*k a r a n a m g u n a -
sangosya sad-asad-yoni-
janmasu*

“The soul abiding in nature enjoys the qualities born of nature. Attachment to the qualities causes birth in good and evil bodies.”

The acceptance of doership causes identification. When *purusha* identifies with *prakriti*, we will experience the result of karma at different times in different phases.

What is Karma?

The simple meaning of karma is “action” or “duty.”

When any karma is performed, intelligence and freedom of choice are engaged. Karma can be explained by an example: Imagine a vast field where a cow is tied to a post with a long, one-hundred-meter rope so it can graze. How far can the cow move? It can move in a circle with a one-hundred-meter radius. However, what did the cow do? It went round and round the post so often that instead of a one-hundred-meter rope, it had only a five-meter rope. The cow is experiencing the law of karma. At one time there was the freedom of a one-hundred-meter radius, but the karma from the cow walking around the post created a five meter rope. As with this cow, our actions create a result.

Because we have entered this world, we should learn how to live here, how to act in daily life, and how to be free from bondage. It is sole purpose of this book to provide the skills and knowledge to do so. We will elaborately discuss the secret of karma, the cause and effect relationship, and the key to being free from karma’s bondage, in effect free from pleasure and pain.

Thus far we have discussed *kriya* (the function), *karma* (the action), and *akarma* (inaction). What we are today is the result of all that we have done until now. In the Bhagavad Gita (3:5), the Lord says, *na hi kascit-ksanam- apijatatisthaty-akarmakrt:* “Not for a single moment can a living being exist without any function or action.” When can we say that we are not doing anything? Even when we sit quietly, we are doing something — our eyes are working, our ears are working, our brains are working, our minds are working, many things proceed. To say that we lie down on a bed to sleep, not doing anything, is not correct. the brain continues to produce dreams, the heart is pumping, the stomach is functioning, food is digesting, and circulation and breathing continue. In every single moment of life there is activity. Thus, life flows in a series of actions.

Whether it is a function, an action, or inaction, something is continuously going on. A realized person and an ordinary person might both be eating, for instance. However, the ordinary person reacts to the taste of

food while the realized person does not. When an ordinary person eats, if there is not enough salt, the tongue reacts; if there is too much salt in the food, the mind is unhappy. A realized person experiences everything, enjoys everything, but does not react, The Bhagavad Gita (5:11) says, *yoginah karma kurvantis angamtyaktvatma-suddhaye:* “A yogi works in a detached way to achieve self-purification.” Being inwardly detached for the sake of spiritual evolution, the yogi (spiritual seeker) performs actions, but is not bound.

Prakriti (nature) functions. When *purusha* identifies with *prakriti* with the attitude of doership, then a function becomes an action, But who is *purusha*? If it is the indwelling spirit, the soul, is it associating itself with ego? And if it identifies with ego, it cannot be the soul. Let us contemplate our own identities, our own “self.” Who are we referring to when we say “myself” or “ourselves?”

Theoretically, we may know that we are souls. Theoretically, we may know that we inhabit a human body.

Theoretically, we may realize that we are not the body. Theoretically, we may understand that the soul is ever detached. Yes, we may know the theory very well, but are we practicing it? In practice, in our day-to-day lives, when we behave, who do we think we are? When *purusha* associates with *prakriti*, how does this association take place? This kind of self-inquiry will solve many inner conflicts and confusion.

Example is better than precept. Let us consider the sun and sunlight. Think of sunlight as *prakriti* and the sun as *purusha*. Light emanates from the sun; creating light and heat is the function of the sun; it is natural. However, if the sun is thinking, “I am shining,” its creation of light becomes karma. Thus, there is sunlight, *kriya*, the function, but if the sun identifies with that *kriya*, this *kriya* becomes karma. In the course of the journey of the soul, the soul, out of apparent ignorance, identifies with ego. It should be understood that the ignorance is only “apparent,” because, in truth, ignorance can never touch the soul. When apparent ignorance covers the

soul, it veils the knowledge that “I am pure consciousness.” Through ego and ignorance we believe: “I am the individual, I am young, I am old.” Ego and ignorance create the bondage that imprisons us. Although we are individual spirits and essentially free, we are not free, because we cannot remain in our original state. We cannot think of our existence without believing that we are bodies and minds. Our bondage is the result of associating *purusha* with ego and ignorance an action. The scriptures say, *avidyakamakarmetihrdayagranthih*: “Ignorance, ego, and action are the bonds that bind the heart.”

The Bhagavad Gita (13:22) says:

*upadrastanumanta ca
bhartabhoktamahesvarah
paramatmeticapuyuktodehesmin-
purusahparah*

“The Supreme Soul in this body is called the Witness, the True Guide, the Sustainer of All, the Experiencer, the Great Lord, and the Absolute.”

In this verse, *bhartabhoktamaheshvarah* is the same as *purusha*. *Bharta* means “helping to enjoy” and *bhokta* means “enjoying.”

Maheshvarah is the Supreme lord or the divinity within, and *upadrastaanumanta* means “being in the state of witnessing awareness.” It is the state of “I am witnessing, but I am not doing. Nature is doing, I am observing.” Such is the state of the realized being.

Sometimes there is confusion about the soul carrying prior life karma into the next birth, thinking that this means the soul is not ever free and is ever attached. Let us compare the soul to space. Suppose you have an empty basket with only space and air inside it. When you carry the basket from one room to another, what are you carrying? Space and air. Is the space

and air in the basket attached to the basket? When you carry a basket from Chicago to London, are you carrying the space of Chicago to London?

In a similar way, we conclude that living beings are constantly doing something due to their apparent doership. Their actions constitute karma because there is an expectation of a fruit (result) from the actions. We become attached to actions as we constantly seek their results. Some results arise instantly and some take time. Karma and its fruits always accompany an individual from one time to another, from one place to another, and sometimes from one life to another.



Guruji with Monks at Miami Ashram

25TH YEAR OF JAGATPUR ASHRAM

Message of Paramahansa Prajnanananda

Loving and Divine Soul,

Let the choicest blessings of God and the masters be upon all of you. I take this opportunity to pray for you. I send my best wishes to you as we celebrate the 24th anniversary of our ashram at Jagatpur, Odisha. It is entering its 25th year.

From a small and humble beginning, it has become the centre of activities for the master's work in India and abroad. A few college students worked very hard to create this small plantation that honours our Gurudev. In the beginning of January 1993, we acquired a small piece of property; in February, we had the ground-breaking ceremony, and on May 17th we had the opening ceremony. All those involved in this work know how much hardship allowed this humble work to be accomplished in such a short time.

We received much moral support from countless well-wishers. This small plantation has grown and will celebrate

its 25th year of service dedicated to humanity.

No great work is accomplished without commitment, sacrifice, hard work, and ultimately the grace of the Divine. It is my feeling that divine grace is always present so we must prepare to receive it with sincere effort and endeavor. Those who were there from the beginning know very well how hard work and simple living brought much joy and happiness to a small team of residents. Whether working in the garden or carrying stones, no one was reluctant to work with love and devotion. Working together, especially while doing physical work like gardening, created joy and happiness that cannot be described with words. Although we had to pass through a great deal of financial hardship, the joy of living together while sharing and caring helped us transcend all difficulties.

During this special year, I humbly request all residents and visitors at our ashrams to

serve with love and do a little physical work in a garden or a cowshed. Whatever *seva* is done by anyone will make that person more active and dynamic. We need to be good examples of practical spirituality in this changing world.

Let our amity, unity, and simplicity create a loving and caring atmosphere of humility and love. Let's create a new positive change in the hearts of all who visit our ashram.

With Love,
Prajnanananda



Gurudev's Birthday Celebrations in Australia

125TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANDA IN USA

Paramahansa Prajnanananda had a hectic schedule visiting several centres and ashrams in US celebrating the 125th Birth Anniversary of Paramahansa Yogananda. The programs ended with the celebrations in Miami concluding with Gurudev Baba Hariharanandaji's 110th Birth Anniversary on the 27th of May at the Mother Centre. Guruji's travels took him to Temple of Peace – The Denver Ashram, Temple of Harmony – The Midwest Ashram, Temple of Divine Love...- The Brazil Ashram, Temple of Compassion – The Texas Ashram and Kriya Yoga Institute – our Florida Ashram. Centres included Kansas, St Louis, Cleveland, Detroit, Boston, Rochester. Every place was a celebration of love and joy and a revival and reminder of the yogic way of life of peace, harmony, joy and unity beyond the barriers of country, religion, culture and gender and a great tribute to the Kriya Yoga Gurus.

Below are details of some of the places.

Kriya Vedanta Gurukulam – Temple of Harmony

May 11- May 14

A 4-day celebration was held beginning with a discourse and meditation at the ashram on the 11th. On May 12th, a public discourse was held at the Fourth Presbyterian Church.

On May 13th was a grand celebration held at the Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago, with panel discussions, talks, cultural program and photo exhibition. The chief guest was the consul General of India Ms. Neeta Bhushan and the key note speaker Mr. Craig Marshall. Panellists were reputed Yoga instructors and Editor of Yoga -Chicago. Cultural offering included a flute performance and Paramahansa Yogananda's favourite bhajans and chants.

Sunday, May 14th was a special celebration of Mother's Day at the ashram

A Report from the Kansas Centre

Kansas, USA was blessed to have Paramahansa Parajnanananda for a one day visit.

Guruji arrived at the airport at 11:20 am and was taken directly to the RajarsiJanakananda's crypt. It was a pleasant surprise for Guruji when 25 kriyavans were waiting to receive him at the crypt. He then offered the prayers at the crypt and entered his name in the visitor's register. He explained the Rajarsi's achievements in the both the materialistic world and in spirituality

After the visit to the crypt, we came to the Kriya Yoga centre where nearly 50 Kriyavans were waiting to receive Guruji and had lunch with him.

The evening was the main event with a public talk at the Hindu Temple auditorium where about three hundred people assembled on a work day evening to attend the celebration. The topic was – "The linking of East and West". Guruji was offered a traditional welcome by the temple priest with Vedic chanting and

presenting of a shawl. The event started with devotional songs invoking Lord Ganesha and the Guru preceptor. In his talk Guruji related how Swami Vivekananda predicted the arrival of Yogananda in future to become a Guru for an American disciple who wanted to be a disciple of Swami Vivekananda. It was an absorbing talk and the audience listened with rapt attention and interest.

Another special feature was the bhajans in English, performed by the SRF bhajan group. Which was something new for most who had not heard bhajans in English.

Blessings from guruji, was the high point of the program when each and every one had the opportunity to receive a fruit from him. Each family was given a book mark, a special issue of Sthita Prajna our quarterly magazine featuring 125th Birth Anniversary Year of Paramahansa Yogananda and a card with a picture of Yogananda and his quote '*Read little, meditate more. Think of God all the time*'.

The day ended with a dinner prepared by Kriyavans and served by them with love and enthusiasm.

It was a celebration of great love and joy.

Mother CenterUSA, May 24-27

A beautiful celebration of Baba Hariharanandaji's Birthday was held at the Mother centre with a Seminar at the ashram in Homestead, Florida.

The seminar featured the following a two-day workshop on Raja Yoga and Health, was given by *Sri N.V. Raghuram* on May 24th and 25th. Yogashree N.V. Raghuram is the Chairman and Spiritual Founder of Yoga Bharati and Professor of Yoga Philosophy in Swami Vivekananda Yoga Research Foundation (SVYASA), in Bangalore India.

Roy Eugene Davis – founder and director of CenterFor Spiritual Awareness, and who was ordained by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1951, visited the Mother Center and gave a talk.

Celebrating the 125th Birthday of Paramahansa Yogananda.

On the 24th of May, a public talk was held at FIU's Graham Center. The theme of the night was - Yoga Health and

Well-Being – Celebrating the 125th Birthday of Paramahansa Yogananda. This event featured several speakers, including Sri N.V. Raghuram, Roy Eugene Davis, and Dr.Akhilesh Sharma, who is one of the nation's foremost Ayurvedic doctors. There was also a performance by Marisa Ma, the gifted-singer from Germany who recorded an album of songs by Yoganandaji titled *O Life is Sweet*.

Birthday of Gurudev Baba Hariharananda

On 27th May the birthday of Gurudev was celebrated with special worship, fire ceremony , discourses and guided meditations in the divine presence of Paramahansa Prajnanananda.

Celebrations in Australia and New Zealand Sydney

Australia ashram – Sydney, was blessed to have Paramahansa Prajnanananda for a four-day retreat at the end of April from 24- 28, assisted by Swami Gurupriyananda Giri and Swami Sarvatmananda Giri. Disciples from all over Australia and also from Tasmania and New Zealand attended the retreat.

Foundation day of the ashram- April 29th coincided with the 1st Foundation day of the ashram as per the lunar calendar and was celebrated in Guruji's divine presence in the ashram with Guru Paduka puja and special worship followed by lunch.

**P a r a m a h a m s a
Yogananda's 125th Birth
Anniversary** was

commemorated on the evening of 29th April at the Sydney University auditorium.

New Zealand

The 125th Birth Anniversary of Paramahansa Yogananda was celebrated at Auckland. with a sat sang, guided meditation, a discourse of Paramahansa Prajnanananda and songs of Paramahansa Yoganandaji .



Gurudev's Birthday Seminar at Miami Ashram

Visit our web site:

[www. prajnanamission.org](http://www.prajnanamission.org)

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