

Sthita Prajna



Guru Vandana

*akhandananda bodhaya sishya santapa harine
satchidananda rupaya tasmai sriguravenamaha*

Guru Gita : 334

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).

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VOLUME 16

ISSUE 1

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FROM THE EDITORS :

“Keep your mind engrossed with the divine and you will not have time to think about lesser things.”

– **ParamahansaYogananda**

In the Message from the Master, Gurudev talks of a historic moment, the meeting of two great saintly leaders – Mahatma Gandhi, a leader of the nation and ParamahansaYogananda , a great spiritual leader and how each influenced the other.

PrajnanaVani elaborates on the Mind and its qualities and the importance of making your mind, your friend.

Our series of Myths and Metaphors continues with the great epic Mahabharata, stressing on the importance of good advice in life.

Yoga Sutra of sage Patanjali emphasizes on the qualification for attaining the Samadhi state.

Law of Karma explains the power of thought and how every thought, action and talk of ours has a result and the fruit of each single thought manifests sooner or later.

Lord Shiva describes the state of brahmajnana answering the question of his consort in JnanaSankalini.

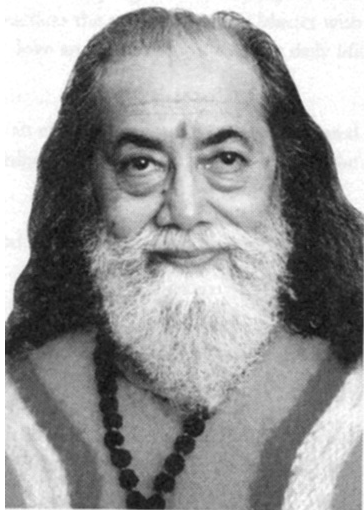
Worldwide celebrations of the 125th birth anniversary of our great guru ParamahansaYoganandaji continue under the guidance of our current guru ParamahansaPrajnananandaji, both in India and abroad.

We bring you inspiring messages, news of the special event of Go-navaratri in Puri, Odisha, and other celebrations of the Kriya family around the globe. We thank our readers for their interest and support during the eventful year of 2017.

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

FOLLOW THE MASTER

MAHATMA GANDHI AND PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANDA



On Aug 22, 1935, the ship Rajputana docked in the huge harbor of Mumbai. On this day the supreme and greatest spiritual guru of the world, Paramahansa Yogananda, after 15 years of teaching Kriya Yoga in the USA and other countries, returned to India. Inspired by Swami Satyananda, on the way to Kolkata Yoganandaji got down at Wardha along with his fellow disciples to meet Mahatma Gandhi in his ashram. This meeting between Mahatma Gandhi and Paramahansa Yogananda, was

a great rendezvous between two karma yogis achieving excellence in two different fields.

As an illustrious embodiment of Karma yoga, as described in the Bhagavad Gita, Mahatma Gandhi, through the extraordinary path of karma, succeeded in bringing independence to India. At the other end of the social spectrum, Paramahansa Yoganandaji created a great spiritual upsurge in giving direct experience with the profundity of eternal truth realized by the ancient sages and saints to the people of the world. Both were all renouncing supreme yogis. There was no difference between the two in the ideal of karma as depicted in the Bhagavad Gita.

Gandhiji was concerned with the noble task of liberating India. Paramahamsaji was concerned with a greater work – the spiritual liberation of mankind. To work detachedly

is the essence of karma yoga. Gandhiji was a sadhaka of karma yoga. His inner field was ready. So, to guide him on the spiritual path of kriya yoga, Paramahansa Yogananda arrived at the appropriate time. Paramahansaji was cordially welcomed with all felicitation into the ashram. Yoganandaji was very much moved by the very simple and austere life of Gandhiji's ashram. He spoke on kriya yoga to the capacity audience in Wardha town hall.

Attracted by the simple and easy techniques of kriya yoga, Mahatma Gandhi and many associates took initiation from Paramahansa Yogananda. Through the practice of kriya yoga, the practice of Karma yoga with detachment becomes very effective rapidly. It was under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi that India got independence and the yajna for independence came to fruition.

The subtle and all influencing effects of kriya yoga resulted in Mahatma Gandhi being one of the greatest human beings of the world.....If any sadhaka practices kriya sincerely and regularly, with love

and devotion and in strict adherence to the technique, he can easily be liberated from the fetters of karma. Understanding its profound meaning and essence, Mahatma Gandhi accepted Yoganandaji as his spiritual guru and the far-reaching effects of kriya yoga on Gandhiji's philosophy, way of life, and activities have startled the world. The life spring of Gandhiji was transformed and fulfilled many lives. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, is the greatest representation of the Himalayan - like greatest guru.

Listening to Paramahansa Yogananda speak about the simultaneous development of body, mind and intellect, and soul through the practice of kriya yoga, Mahatma Gandhi understood the real meaning of the word sarvodaya (total development in the individual as well as in the society). This sarvodaya was his life's greatest objective

(Article based on the talk of Gurudev at the centenary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi)

PRAJNANAVANI - THE VOICE OF WISDOM

MIND AND THE QUALITIES OF NATURE



In vedantic and yogic texts you find an elaborate description of the triple qualities of nature: sattva, rajas and tamas. In our own individual behaviour, we find that sometimes we are sattvic, sometimes rajasic and sometimes tamasic. Our behaviour, our food choice, our reaction, interaction – every aspect of our being, is the result of the triple qualities of nature. Let us understand these triple qualities a little more and then see how our mind is also under the classification of sattva, rajas, and tamas.

Sattva is derived from the word sat, which in Sanskrit means truth. Thus, that which leads one to truth is sattvic. The qualities of sattva are peace, calmness, contentment, and inner joy. Rajas means the ability to create, and it also means the colour red. Activity, restlessness, agitation, ambition and other such states, are all qualities associated with rajas. Finally, tamas the third quality of nature, means darkness, lethargy, laziness, slumber, inertia, lack of interest, and procrastination.

Effect of Qualities on Human Behaviour

Now let us apply these three qualities to human behaviour. We have all seen people with sattvic nature, who are mostly peaceful, loving, calm and quiet. Then there are rajasic people, who are frequently agitated and aggressive. However, it should be noted that rajasic quality can take two directions: it can make you active and creative or it can make you unhappy, aggressive and angry. People who are dull and lack motivation are said to have a tamasic nature. If we analyse our own behaviour, we will find that sometimes we are very peaceful, calm and quiet: sometimes agitated, active, aggressive, quarrelling, fighting; and yet other times we experience a total lack of interest. Therefore, as a result of our ever changing disposition, the yogis classified the mind into three categories. – sattvic mind, rajasic mind and tamasic mind. By understanding the function of the mind, and how it becomes tamasic, rajasic, or sattvic, we can learn to easily deal with its fluctuating nature. Let us examine what factors influence these three natures of the mind.

The Tamasic Quality

When are we tamasic?

We are tamasic when we sleep for a prolonged period of time. However, the amount of sleep varies from person to person. Those who sleep soundly require less sleep and are active and energetic throughout the day. On the other hand those who sleep poorly, only derive the benefit of lying down and resting. In Sanskrit, we have two words one is nidra and the other is tandra. Nidra means sleep and tandra means sleepiness, which is different than the sleep. Incidentally there is a yogic sleep, known as yoga nidra, which is actually a contradiction to what we call sleep. One may see a yogi lying down with eyes closed and think that he is sleeping, but it may not be so. Only one who has crossed that state can know what he is doing. Nevertheless, if we analyse our own sleeping patterns, we can see whether or not we are tamasic. If we sleep for a long period of time, yet feel tired, we are in tamasic state. The same applies to when we feel listless during our wakeful state and have no zeal or interest in doing anything. The change of seasons can

make humans tamasic, just like animals and plants.

The tamasic mind makes it difficult to get motivated. We procrastinate. As human beings, we not only have the ability to motivate ourselves, we also have our children, our parents, friends and teachers to motivate us as well as our circumstances. In spite of that we still feel uninspired.

The Rajasic Quality

The rajasic quality is quite different from the tamasic quality. It was mentioned earlier that the rajasic quality can affect people in two ways. Hence people with rajasic nature are workaholics who are ambitious and have many expectations. However, the rajasic quality can also make someone short tempered, angry, aggressive, jealous and intolerant of others. When the rajasic quality takes this direction, people can become so competitive that they slander or even physically hurt someone to achieve their goals. Thus, we can say that the rajasic quality can be positive or negative. When it is positive, people make worthy contributions to society and to themselves. When it is negative, it becomes

a destructive force that harms anyone who gets in one's way. Now take a moment to analyse your own life. Do you have negative rajasic tendencies? How do you treat the people in your life? Are you extremely ambitious? Do you love power and controlling others? Do you put someone down so you feel superior? Are you critical of others? All these are rajasic qualities and sadly, they are far too common in today's world.

The Sattvic Quality

Unlike rajasic people, who are very excitable, sattvic people are peaceful. But do not assume that because sattvic people are calm, they are inactive. Sattvic people make many beautiful contributions to the world without being motivated by ambition. Their goal is to serve others not overpower them. Gurudev often said that most animals and most people love power. Gurudev sometimes tested his disciples by giving them a little power, a little authority. Because giving someone a little power or position reveals their nature. After giving someone a small promotion he would observe the change in their behaviour. Some people would think they are

really important. Their behaviour towards others changed including their tone of voice and the words used. These changes did not occur if the disciple had a sattvic nature. Sattvic people are lovers of peace and calmness. They serve with love not with restlessness and agitation. They love to help others without power or ego. To a sattvic person a great responsibility means a greater opportunity to serve others. That is the beauty of the sattvic person, and, as Gurudev said beauty is power, real power!

The Substance of the Mind

In Vedantic thought it is said that mind is matter and mind is elemental just like earth, water and fire. Consequently, just as we can handle matter easily, we can also handle mind easily. Although mind is matter, it is as gross as the earth, water and fire that we see. In other words, mind is composed of subtle matter. The yogis say, we have three bodies – gross body, astral body, and causal body. The gross is the physical body that we see, taste, touch and smell. The astral body is the subtle body and its constituent is the mind. The causal body is

comprised of ignorance and knowledge. Because mind is subtle matter, it is fragile and should be handled with care. Vedantic philosophy states, mind is an object and therefore it is not “you”. Hence mind and soul are different. Soul is the source of all knowledge and consciousness. Mind itself is not conscious just as the physical body is not conscious. For instance, say a mosquito is sitting on your arm. Even if you think it is the body that feels the presence of the mosquito, it is not the body. Then what makes the body conscious? Is it the mind? No. according to vedantic philosophy, although mind appears to be moving and active, it is not consciousness. Thus, it too lacks awareness. In reality, mind is but a vehicle that reflects consciousness; much like the moon, which has no light of its own, reflects the light of the Sun. Because it is a reflection of consciousness, it appears to be wise. The truth is consciousness is the quality of the soul. Therefore, it is the soul’s presence that gives the mind the appearance of being active and conscious. One can compare the mind to a puppet. The soul is the person in the back pulling the strings.

Vedanta tells us that the mind is an object and soul is the subject. Simply stated that which I see is not me. The simple logic is applied in the following examples. I see the flower; therefore, the flower I see is different from me. The book I see is different from me. Now let us apply this simple logic to the mind. Can you see your mind or not? Undoubtedly at one time or other, you have said, "My mind is restless, my mind is really tired" One cannot make those statements unless one has observed the mind. Therefore, since what you see is not you, you are not the mind. Then who are you? That is what you have to find out. If I am not this body, not this mind, not this intellect, then who am I?

Mind Controls Us

There is something very important that you need to understand about your mind. Because it has remained with you for so long, it knows you better than you know yourself. Therefore, you must be careful. If you go to a spiritual master, or some spiritual program, the mind laughs and says, "OK GO ahead and go, but don't forget I am coming with you. Let us see how long you last." Then

after being in good company for some time, feeling happy and content, you return home inspired and motivated. However unknown to you the mind is thinking, "Don't get too enthused my friend. I will see Howlong you will maintain this idea." Why does mind say these things? The mind is a manipulator and it knows all our weaknesses. It manipulates us so tactfully that we are unaware of what it is doing. Mind tricks us, mind tempts us, mind makes us agitated. Mind makes us weak and mind makes us do things that may not be good. The yogis and those who are spiritually conscious can easily see the influence of their mind. That is why Arjuna said my mind is restless. Bhagavad Gita 6:33. How many people realize their mind is restless. The mind is only restless to someone who is trying to achieve something, trying to contemplate something, or trying to make life more peaceful. At those times one finds the mind is noncooperative, restless, agitated and aggressive.

When Arjuna found that his mind was restless, he said, "*chanchalam* *hi manahkrishna*, O Lord

Krishna, my mind is restless. *Pramathi*, it is churning my life. *Balavad*, appearing to be very strong, and, *dridha*, powerful; I consider the control of the mind as impossible as catching air.” (Bhagavad Gita 6:34)

The reply of Shri Krishna was very beautiful. Shri Krishna was a very good psychologist. I will explain why this is so. When a person has a problem, a psychologist first listens. The doctor never speaks in the beginning of session; instead, he will encourage the patient to say whatever is on their mind. The patient then pours his heart out to the doctor, and if the doctor is wise, he will never label what was said as bad. In fact, the doctor may even say, “It is all good. Many people experience this; therefore you should not worry.” Only then will the psychologist begin his counseling. Likewise, five thousand years ago, Shri Krishna patiently listened to his disciple Arjuna. Then he counseled him by saying,

*asamshayammahabahom
anodurnigrahamchalam*

“O mighty armed Arjuna, no doubt, mind is restless and

difficult to control.” (*Bhagavad Gita* 6:35)

In those few words, Shri Krishna said it all. First he validated Arjuna’s statement by telling him, “What you are saying is true.” Then he praised him by saying, “You are mighty armed. Although, you say you cannot catch the air; remember, you are not an ordinary person.”

*abhyasenatukauntay
avairagyena cha grihyate*

“O son of Kunti, it is only through practice as well as detachment (*vairagya*) that you can control it.” (*Bhagavad gita* 6:35)

Making the Mind Our friend

In this chapter, we discussed the nature of the mind and how the mind plays with us. However, it is also necessary to learn how to control, regulate, and transform the mind. Once accomplished, the same mind that used to sabotage our lives will become our helpful friend. It has been said that the mind is a good servant, but a bad master. In other words, your mind can serve you very well if it knows you are the master, If the mind masters you and you are directed by your

emotions, extreme ambition, and expectations to do this and that, you will undoubtedly be in trouble. So how does one control and regulate the mind? How does one keep it on track? These questions are the subject matter of yoga. Vedanta provides the ideas and yoga puts them into practice. Hence, yoga is the practical aspect of Vedanta, and Vedanta is the theoretical aspect of yoga. Yoga and Vedanta are two sides of the same coin. If you just study Vedanta but not practicing what you read, then you are nothing more than a good theoretician. You will never have success on the spiritual path without practice – and that is the purpose of yoga. In the

following chapters, we will discuss the teachings of Shri Krishna from the Bhagavad Gita and Sage Patanjali from the Yoga Sutra. We will learn how to control the mind and use it to free us from bondage. There are different methods, different techniques, and different practices that will be discussed in greater detail.

Human birth is a great privilege. Use every moment as an opportunity to advance in your spiritual journey. Live your life intelligently and use your mind skilfully. Observe the play of the mind indifferently. Whatever happens, remain detached. By practicing discipline in our lives, we can easily achieve success.



PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANDA

DIVINE PREDICTION

Swami Vivekananda, who was the chief monastic disciple of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, a great spiritual Master of the last century, was the first messenger to extend India's spiritual treasure and tradition to the West. He was a delegate to the Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago, in September 1893, which was incidentally also the year when Paramahansa Yogananda was born.

Dickinson, a young man of seventeen, was miraculously drawn to this august gathering without any prior knowledge of it. Looking at the smiling and loving Swami Vivekananda, he intuitively knew that here was someone that would save his life on many occasions. He approached Swamiji wishing to become his disciple, but Swami Vivekananda lovingly patted the young man and said, "My child! I am not your guru. Your guru will come from India later on." The young man asked, "How will I recognize him?" to which Vivekananda replied, "He will

fill your life and heart with love and divinity and he will give you, as a present, a silver cup." Dickinson did not disclose these words to anybody but treasured them in his heart. As the years passed, he waited and prayed every day to meet his spiritual teacher at prophesied by the great saint. In 1925, his prayers were answered. He met Paramahansa Yogananda who was at that time teaching in Los Angeles. Dickinson started to practice Kriya Yoga under Yogananda's guidance and grew in love and inner spiritual experience. But where was the silver cup? He consoled himself with the thought that it might have been only a metaphor.

On Christmas day in 1936, after returning from his trip to India, Paramahansa Yogananda was joyfully offering presents to his disciples. He presented Dickinson with a gift he had purchased at a Calcutta market, with a remark that he might like it. The parcel contained a silver cup. Tears

of joy and gratitude streamed from the eyes of the man, who was now nearly 60 years old. Dickinson had been waiting for 43 years to see Vivekananda's words come true.

In the year of birth of ParamahansaYogananda, Swami Vivekananda had already foreseen the coming to the West of a great Indian yogi; thus the great divine play of God is disclosed through the life of saints and sages.

Eventful Life

The life of ParamahansaYogananda was eventful and miraculous in nature. He was not only a gifted orator and singer who thrilled the hearts of his listeners, he was also an extraordinary author. Among the books that were published during his lifetime, which won the appreciation of thousands are: Autobiography of a Yogi, Whispers From Eternity, The Science of Religion, The Divine Romance and Metaphysical Meditations.

Yogananda worked ceaselessly, day and night. At midnight and even later, he was still surrounded by several secretaries taking dictation,

writing and answering seeker's letters from all over the world. In one of his letters to his disciple Rabinarayan (later known as Paramahansa Hariharananda, our beloved Gurudev), he wrote on the 6th October 1951; "My life is a whirlwind of activity and struggle with work."

His Last Smile

For a short period, at the beginning of 1952, Yogananda was very sick. On 7th of March he recovered miraculously. On that day a banquet was to take place in honour of the Ambassador of India to the United States, his Excellency Mr. Binay Ranjan Sen. During this celebration, Yogananda was full of humour and joy. No one suspected that it was his last day on earth. Many photos were taken during the reception showing him smiling and blissful. The he sang a song glorifying India:

"Where Ganges, woods, Himalayan caves and men dream of God; I am hallowed; my body touched that sod."

They were his last words, paying tribute to his motherland, which had given him training

and inspiration. Although a monk is for all humanity, Yogananda's love for India, his guru and his parents remained always unique.

He had often told his disciples: "I do not wish to die in bed but with my boots on, speaking of God and India." When he was so literal in the fulfilment of his words, his closest disciples were in a state of shock. Nobody wanted to believe or accept his death and, for several weeks, they waited for him to return to his body. There was no sign of decomposition. His face was filled with peace and calmness, like that of a sleeping child. His physical play had come to an end, and although his physical body was eventually buried, his divine play continues forever. A guru's teachings are eternal. To

pay homage to the divine guru is to follow closely his teachings, imprinting in one's mind the steps that led him on the ascending path. In a letter to Brahmachari Rabinarayan, Yogananda he had written : "Do not seek to find faults in others, for then your whole life becomes tied with negative traits. Every person has some faults and needs love and understanding. Be humble and loving towards others. Keep your mind engrossed with the divine and you won't have time to think about these lesser things."

May his life of love and liberation be an example for all of us to keep our lives in tune with the Divine and by following his teachings begin our transformation in order to reach self-realization.



THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI

Sutra 21

Qualifications for Attaining Samadhi

Tivra-samveganam-asannah ||21||

Word Meaning

tivra – intense;
samveganam – quick speed;
asannah – close to happen

Translation

Success in yoga (*samadhi*) comes with great speed to those who are intensely sincere.

Commentary by Shri Lahiri Mahashaya

One attains *samadhi* through intensive practice.

Metaphorical Explanation

Life needs a goal and direction to manifest perfection. The path of spirituality is no doubt slippery, but with sincere effort one can accelerate if one has great zeal and is assisted by the grace and guidance of a teacher. In this sutra, the sage explains the factors influencing evolution.

Samvega means “zeal,” “spirit,” or *yogalipta* (desire to attain the state of yoga).

Samvega is derived from the words *samyak*, meaning “complete” or “total” and *vega*, meaning “speed” or “movement.” *Tivra* means “extreme” or “intense.” When one’s desire to progress is very strong, quick spiritual evolution is inevitable. Another meaning of *samvega* is *samskara*, which means “latent tendency.” The root cause of any effort or endeavour is the *samskara*, or impression, from the past. One who has a strong spiritual tendency can work with more sincerity.

The path of yoga is the inner journey through the *sushumna*: from the *muladhara* (base of the spine) to the *sahasrara* (top of the head). So a seeker or practitioner of yoga should sincerely move forward to reach the *sahasrara* and to experience divine bliss.

In brief, one who feels extreme pain of separation from the Beloved Lord, and cannot bear the separation anymore, will exert all zeal and spirit to proceed and be united with Him in the *sahasrara*.

This is the attainment of *samadhi*.

O Seeker! Life after life you have forgotten your own Beloved. You became absorbed in the worldly drama. Your Beloved has been waiting for ages; have you realized it?

Through the grace of the guru preceptor and the Divine, now you are able to feel this separation. You have the desire for this divine reunion, but how intense is this urge? If your desire is great, success is at hand.



Guruji's Birthday at Australia Ashram

GURU PURNIMA - 2017

Loving and Divine Ones:

Let the choicest blessings of God and the masters be upon all of you. I take this opportunity to pray for you and send you my best wishes on the occasion of Guru Purnima, the birthday of Bhagavan Vyasadeva, which is dedicated to the guru-preceptors of all times and all places. This year it falls on Sunday, July 9. On this day we celebrate by paying homage not only to our Kriya lineage, but to all the gurus of humankind.

When we were little children, we went to school, and our parents told us that the teacher was our guru, so we should be respectful. At school, we observed the older students' obedience and their regard for the teachers. We were taught to love and respect our teachers as we did our parents. Our parents gave birth to us and raised us with the utmost care.

When we grew up, we found that the concept of the guru was broad. To love any guru is to show our love and gratitude

for their contribution to our development. We have learned a lot from them. Who are the gurus? A popular Sanskrit verse describes a few gurus who should be adored:

annadata bhayatrata vidyadata
tathaiva cha
janita chopaneta cha panchaite
pitarah smritah

"One who has given us food, who has helped us be free from fear, who has educated us, who has given birth to us, or who has initiated us into a spiritual path is considered to be a parent (guru)."

Annadata, someone who has fed us: It could be a farmer or Mother Earth, water, the sun, or the environment. It could be a mother who cooks or anyone who has provided food to others. Do we really recognize their importance in our lives? Metaphorically, anna (food) can refer to spiritual knowledge or divine thoughts provided by a guru-preceptor through divine teachings.

Bhayatrata, someone who has freed us from fear: When we were little babies, our parents, family members, society, and even our pets could protect us and make us fearless. They must be recognized and appreciated. A friend can give us courage or support us, or free us from life's challenges when we are weak or fearful. The guru removes our greatest fear, the fear of death.

Vidyadata, someone who has educated us: Vidya refers to knowledge of two types: secular knowledge that we obtain in schools, colleges and universities, and spiritual knowledge that we receive from the guru-preceptors. Not only humans educate us. The Bhagavatam describes twenty-four different kinds of gurus (We recently published a study of this work as *My Gurus*).

Janita, someone who gave birth to us: Our parents are our first gurus, and between them our mothers are the first gurus. A guru-preceptor can be a father or mother because he or she provides us with new life via spiritual instruction.

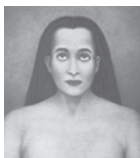
Upaneta, someone who initiated us into a spiritual path: Just as we have teachers in schools for our formal education, we also have spiritual educators. We have been inspired by reading the writings of many teachers, and we have been initiated into a particular spiritual path.

Let us develop a new understanding of life. Let us understand the practical significance and role of the guru-preceptor. On this special occasion we should remember our beloved Shri Gurudev, his divine qualities, his love and compassion, his sacrifice and selflessness, and his wisdom and training. I have no words to describe how much I appreciate him.

On this special occasion, I pray to all the masters of humankind including Sage Vyasadeva, asking them to bless every one of us to be a worthy disciple and serve the masters' causes with love and humility. I bow to all of you. I send my love and best wishes to all of you again.

With Love,
Prajnanananda

Teachings of the Masters

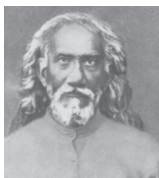
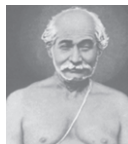


"A living being Shiva."

Mahavatara Babaji

"Since we are all God's children we all have equal rights to practice yoga for God realisation, irrespective of whether we are male or female."

Lahiri Mahasaya



"Those who shun all longings, lust and cravings, become devoid of any attachment, passion, ego or personal inclinations and are able to arrive at the stage of ultimate peace."

Swami Shriyukteshwar

"Purity in thought, refraining from criticizing others, and freedom from vanity and ego are essential in spiritual life."

Sanyal Mahasaya

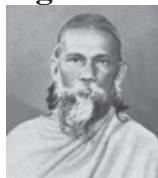


"Let my soul smile through my heart and my heart smile through my eyes, that I may scatter rich smiles in sad hearts."

Paramahansa Yogananda

"Never accuse others of their mistakes. If a person has only one good quality out of 100 then try to see that good one not the 99 bad ones."

Swami Satyananda



"As a person separates stones from the foodstuff before cooking, one should carefully separate unnecessary thought and emotions from one's own life."

Paramahansa Hariharananda

"We should change ourselves inwardly and lead a good life. It is not through words but through a purifying example, that we can have a beneficial impact on those around us."

Paramahansa Prajnanananda



MYTHS AND METAPHORS

MAHABHARATA

SCHOOL DAYS AND TREACHERY



Are We Really Humans?

It is said in the scriptures that among all creation or created beings, human beings are the best. The Bible (Genesis 1:27) says, “God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.” The VivekaChudamani by Shri Adi Shankacharya says, *jantunam nara janma durlabham*: “it is extremely rare to attain a human body or a human birth.” In human birth, we all have been blessed. Human life is a special opportunity. Although we have a human body, a human life, how many are truly

trying to be human beings? If we do not have human values and qualities, we live like animals. The scriptures say that if we do not use our life for God-realization, then our life is like that of animals:

manusya rupena mrgah caranti

“Deer and antelopes are roaming in human forms.”

It is said that human beings and animals have some common qualities: we eat and they eat, we sleep and they sleep, we mate and enjoy physical pleasure as do animals, we have fear, and animals have fear. Some animals are afraid

of human beings and humans are also scared of some animals. Birds make beautiful nests. Sparrows make such beautiful, delicate nests in palm trees that survive stormy weather: not even a drop of rain will enter the nest. They make the nest intelligently so that it can swing on the branches. Similarly, humans also build beautiful houses. Then what is the difference between humans and animals? The difference is human values.

We Should Cultivate Values

The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali lists ten human values or five *yamas* and five *niyamas*. The five *yamas* include: *ahimsa* (nonviolence, not to hurt others or injure others), *satya* (veracity and truthfulness), *asteya* (not to steal, honesty), *aparigraha* (non-possessiveness, not to accept anything we do not need, not to be greedy), and *brahmacharya*, (continence). The five *niyamas* include *shaucha* (purity and cleanliness), *santosha* (contentment and satisfaction), *tapah* (austerity and purificatory action), *svadhyaya* (self-study, the study that leads to Self-knowledge), and

ishwarapranidhana (self-surrender, resignation to God, surrendering all actions to God). We should try to cultivate these noble values. When practicing yoga and meditation, we should cultivate the values of truthfulness, not to hurt or injure others, not to steal, not to possess more than what we need, and celibacy or self-discipline. We should also cultivate purity, contentment, austerity, self-study, and self-surrender. The five values of *yama* speak of our interaction with others: how we should deal with our friends, relatives, colleagues, and people anywhere. When speaking to others our words should be truthful, honest, and useful. Our behaviour and interactions should not hurt others. If our conduct is not good, we are not human beings, we are animals. *Niyama* speaks of inner transformation: what we should be or what type of inner life we should maintain. *Shaucha* means “to purify”: our bodies should be clean, our clothes should be clean, and our minds should be clean. We have to maintain both inner and outer purity. *Shuchi* means “cleanliness.” Outer purity refers to wearing clean clothes,

bathing daily, brushing teeth, and other outer cleansing. Inner purity refers to purity of mind, purity of thinking, and purity of heart. The Katha Upanishad (1:3:8) speaks about the highest purity:

*yastu vijnanavan bhavatis
amanaskah sada suvih*

“One who has the knowledge of ‘who I am,’ or Self-knowledge, is always pure.”

Education in Practice

Trailanga Swami was a great, realized mystic who was considered an incarnation of Lord Shiva. It was believed that he had lived for more than three hundred years. Trailanga Swami came from Andhra Pradesh and lived in Benares (Kashi). Trailang Swami had an unusually large body. During those days, there was British rule. When a British administrator who did not know about Indian yogis saw what he considered an uncivilized and uncultured person walking naked on the street, he arrested and imprisoned him. Although Trailanga Swami was locked in a room, early in the morning the prison officers were surprised to see him walking outside. When asked about this, Trailanga Swami said that he

felt the call of nature and needed to pass urine. Since there was no place even to stand, he went out of the room. Upon seeing him, the officers asked how he got out, given that the room was locked and had no windows. When the officers checked the room, they found gallons of urine and were baffled that a person could pass so much water. Trailanga Swami was then taken to the court. The same administrator was present, and thinking this man was unusual, he asked Swamiji, “Are you a holy man?” Swamiji smiled. Again he asked Swamiji, “Will you eat what I eat?” Swamiji replied, “I will eat it provided that you will eat what I eat.” Thus, both sat down to eat. The British man served him a plate of beef, which Hindus, of course do not eat. Swamiji said, “Before I eat, you should bring me a plate and see what I eat.” Swamiji then took a plate and defecated on it. And, without any hesitation he started eating from that plate. No doubt, seeing this, the British officer was shocked. Swamiji then handed the plate to the officer because he had promised to eat what Swamiji ate. But to the great surprise of the officer, instead

of being repulsed, he smelled such a beautiful aroma of delicious food that he had never experienced before. In fact, it tasted very sweet. One who was established in Truth, like the great yogi Trailanga Swami, wanted to show that what we see as food is nothing but the modification of the five elements. The same food is again modified by the body and becomes excrement.

There is a story about a guru who told a disciple to find something that was very dirty. The disciple contemplated what the dirtiest thing could be. He concluded that animals and birds are not dirty; sweeping the dust and dirt from a room is also not dirty. He then decided that fecal matter was dirty. As he was about to take the feces, the feces said, "Do not touch me. You are so dirty. Yesterday I was a nice smelling delicious, colourful apple. You are so dirty that coming in contact with you has caused my new condition. Yesterday everybody loved me, but today, everybody hates me." This was an eye-opening statement from the night soil.

Santosha means contentment. Most people are discontent because they do not

know what they want, why they came to this world, what they are doing, or what they need; thus, they cannot be happy. Whatever they do, they think it is not what they want.

On the other hand, there are many vices. Virtues, values, and vices are very close to each other. Education is essentially that which makes a person conscious of virtues and vices as well as skilful in separating vices or keeping them out of his mind, thoughts, and activities. It helps one make use of one's values in life. Undoubtedly, we all know what is bad. One day, Gurudev was sitting in his room in the Puri ashram. In those days, there was a primary school in the ashram. A student was very unruly and undisciplined and used filthy words. The teachers complained to Gurudev. They said, "Something must be done about this student. If the boy remains in the classroom, he will surely spoil the whole class." Gurudev then asked what the boy was doing, and the teachers said he was uttering bad words. Gurudev said, "Tell me what words he utters."

The teacher said, "We cannot utter these words to you."

Gurudev said, “Then you know the words, isn’t it so? You also know that these words are bad. First, I will kick you out of this place because you all know the bad words, and then I will think what to do about the boy. You know the bad words and so does the boy. You know the words are bad and should not be used, but the boy does not know that. That is the difference.”

Gurudev asked the boy, “My child! Are you talking like this? Do you know it is bad? These words are bad and you should not talk like this. Will you obey my words?” The boy said, “Yes.” This is what education is. Education is a refinement in one’s behaviour.

The Kauravas and Pandavas in Our Lives

As we have seen, the family of the Pandavas and Kauravas lived in the same palace. Symbolically, this means that if our body is the dynasty, family, or palace, both the Pandavas and Kauravas are in our lives. The Kauravas are deemed the negative qualities or vices in life, and the Pandavas are the virtues and goodness in our life. Yudhishtira, the eldest

Pandava, never called Duryodhana, the eldest Kaurava, by his name that begins *du*, which means “no good.” Instead, Yudhishtira called him Suyodhana, beginning with *su*, which means “good” or “easy”; thus, *suyodhana* means “easy to face him.” This is the attitude a seeker should develop. It is easy to see the faults in others. In seeing the fault of others, some people may hate or dislike that person and not have anything to do with him or her. God has given us two eyes so that we can see both the good and bad. What is our impulse or reaction when we see something bad, like somebody doing bad or speaking badly of others? It is said, “Hate the sin, not the sinner.” No one is really a sinner. We should dislike or not appreciate that which is bad, but we should not dislike or hate the person doing the bad thing.

Yudhishtira and his brothers always tried to cultivate good qualities because of the good company that they had while living in the hermitage in the forest. Since they were good, naturally others liked them. Everyone in the palace and the kingdom, except the

Kauravas, liked the Pandavas. Nobody liked the Kauravas. Why did this happen to the Kauravas? First, look at the parents. Father Dhritarashtra was born blind. Gandhari, who had the ability to see, was not looking at them. If the parents do not take care of their children properly, What will happen to the children? Naturally they become stubborn, rude, and misbehave, and that is what happened to the Kauravas. If they had been disciplined from the very beginning, they might have been different. The second cause was the environment. Pampered children are wayward. Too much affection spoils the child. Shri Adi Shankaracharya said:

*snehas ca papam pathanam
ca dharmah*

“Affection or too much latitude is deplorable, but study and discipline are admirable.”

Sneha means “unusual affection.” Unusual affection is not good. Affection brings attachment and blindness. Out of affection, we cannot see the fault of the child. To train and to teach is the *dharma*, the value, and the right way to raise a child. Being blind towards

the conduct or manner of their children, the parents showed too much affection and attachment; as a result, they were spoiled children.

The Kauravas were more body conscious and egotistical. Furthermore, looking at our lives, we must ask whether we give too much affection and attention to our negative qualities, attachment to our bodies, or even our weaknesses. If so, then we are making a mistake.

Worldly people who have too much attraction and attachment to their bodies are represented by the Kauravas, who looked more towards the lower chakras in the body, otherwise known as *dakshinapanchala* (the kingdom in the south). By training ourselves to view the body as a vehicle, which should be kept in proper condition without too much attachment to it, we proceed to Truth in the north of the body, which is towards the brain and the fontanel.

How Are Our Advisors?

We love to have advisors and even become advisors to others. Good advisors and good followers achieve success, and

vice versa. The Kauravas had bad advisors, whereas the Pandavas had good advisors. Bad advisors lead people the wrong way and good advisors help to improve the path of their followers.

There once was a businessman who loved holy and spiritual people. One day an old *brahmin* visited the town. The businessman bowed down to him and asked, "Can you please give me some advice?"

The *brahmin* said, "I will not give free advice. If you pay me money, I will give advice. For each piece of advice, I need one hundred rupees." During those days, one hundred rupees was a lot of money. The businessman agreed. The first piece of advice the *brahmin* gave: "Pay respect to even an ordinary person sitting in a high position, occupying a high authoritative post." The second advice: "If you find fault in others or you see something that is not really good, try to help the person if you think that he will listen to you, otherwise do not tell anybody about it. Keep it to yourself. There is no need to tell others what he or she did."

The third advice: "Allow others to do the work that they can do properly. Do not waste your precious time. Do not think you will do everything yourself." The fourth advice: "If there is a difference in points of view and others do not accept your view, then leave the place."

In the course of time, the businessman lost everything and became poor. But he never forgot the four teachings. He and his faithful servant left the town and went to another kingdom so nobody would know he had been a rich man who was now poor. While traveling to the other kingdom, they came near the entrance of the capital city. The businessman was hungry and told his elderly and faithful servant to go and get them food. The night before they arrived, the king of the city had died. He had no successor. The people decided that the next morning, whomever they would find first at the entrance to the city would be made the king. Since the servant was the first one at the entrance, he was made the king. Yesterday's servant is today's king.

The businessman continued to wait for the servant to bring him food.

When he eventually heard that the servant was now the king, the businessman went in search of his servant and found that he actually was now the king wearing royal attire and sitting on the throne. The businessman remembered the advice of the *brahmin*: one should pay respect even to an ordinary person who has attained a high position or an authoritative post. The businessman prostrated himself to the new king and asked him how he was. The king took him aside and relayed everything that had happened. He said, "What am I to do? It is human destiny. If you like, I will make you my minister." The businessman agreed and stayed with him.

One day, when the minister passed through the inner part of the palace, he saw something unpleasant. He was shocked to see the queen of the deceased king, who was now the queen of the new king, in an illicit relationship with an employee of the palace. The minister remembered the second wisdom of the *brahmin*: to not let anybody see it. Since the two were so engrossed in their play and did not realize others

could see, he took off his scarf and made a curtain to shield them from the view of others. He silently left and kept what he saw within, not telling anybody. When the two became conscious, they saw the scarf and recognized that it belonged to the minister. They feared the consequences if he reported them to the king. The queen devised a plan and reported to the king that his minister was not good. She said, "Your minister came to me wanting the play of love. He tried to persuade and force me, but I kicked him out. While he was going, he left his scarf and it is here with me." The king saw the scarf and was shocked. He decided to get rid of the minister and devised a secret plan. The king sent a secret message to the local butcher to kill whoever comes to purchase meat. Then the king asked the minister to bring him meat from the butcher. The minister thought, "The king knows that I am a pure vegetarian, so how could he think that I will do this? There may be something behind it." He then remembered the *brahmin's* advice about not doing all the work himself and to give work to those who can

do it. So, he sent a servant to bring the meat for the king. When the servant went to the butcher and was killed, the minister absconded and went incognito, wanting the king to think he was killed. Later on, the king discovered the queen's character. He lamented the injustice to the minister. Eventually, he received the news that the minister was alive and he went to him to apologize for what happened and invited him back to the kingdom to be the minister. The minister reminded the king about the *brahmin's* advice and narrated how he followed each and every piece of advice. Only the fourth instruction was left: "If there is a difference in view, a misunderstanding, and if you find it is not good, you should leave the place." He told the king not to request him to be his minister and he left the place.

Follow Good Advice

Even if you have good advisors but you are not strong enough to follow them, then you cannot achieve goodness. It happens in spiritual life. We have been advised by the scriptures, saints, sages, and our own teachers about what is

good and what is bad. We have been encouraged by our masters to do good, but how long do we practice it and how often do we fail?

The principal advisor of Dhritarashtra, the blind king, was Vidura, the chief minister. Vidura was the incarnation of Yama or Dharma. He was a very honest person and the best advisor of his time. He always taught good things, even if it was not so pleasant for Dhritarashtra to hear. Dhritarashtra was weak and he represents our own mind. A weak mind attached to his children could not really follow the advice of Vidura, which is the cause of all the troubles. Dhritarashtra could not be strong enough. Are our minds strong? Are our minds committed? Even if we know the right thing to do, we are not able to do it. Gurudev used the expression, "a conscious devil." We are conscious of what is good and what is bad, but we still do bad and ignore the good. Gurudev also used the term, "educated fools." Most people are educated fools. Even if they know what is right and what is wrong, they do the wrong things.

VALUABLE VOLUMES



JNANA SANKALINI TANTRA &

THE LAW OF KARMA

BY PARAMAHAMSA PRAJNANANANDA

THE LAW OF KARMA

Traveling with Our Backpack of Karma

We are responsible for what we are; and whatever we wish ourselves to be, we have the power to make ourselves. If what we are now has been the result of our own past actions, it certainly follows that whatever we wish to be in the future can be produced by our present actions; so we have to know how to act.

- Swami Vivekananda

We are active day and night. We may enjoy the results of karma instantly or it may take some time for it to reach fruition. In many cases it may take a long time for the karmic

result to manifest, even in future lifetimes. When an alcoholic drinks, he receives the result of this action instantly, and it can continue for some time. Excitement, loss of memory, incoherent speech, imbalanced walk, improper behaviour, and even sleeping in dirty places may occur. The long-term effect of alcohol abuse may be heart failure or damage to the liver. The impact of this karma is stored in the body even longer. The result of some karmas manifest after a long time or even the next life. We may have forgotten what we did, but we will experience the result. This is possible because the karma is carried in our minds and memory from one life to another.

Karma : A Fulfilment

After an active life Lord Krishna prepared to leave his physical body. One day in the forest, the Lord was sitting on a swing under the shade of a huge banyan tree. Banyan trees are so enormous that a swing can be made from their hanging (aerial) roots, and indeed children use the roots to build swings. On that day a hunter was in the forest. As the hunter surveyed the forest, he spotted something that piqued his interest. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw what he thought were the reddish ears of a variety of deer. Thus, with steady precision, he carefully aimed his bow and released a poisoned arrow. But because the hunter had been standing some distance away from his target, his assessment of the situation was utterly mistaken. What he had thought was the reddish color of a deer's ears was actually the reddish color of the bottom of Lord Krishna's precious feet. Hence, his venomous arrow had pierced the Lord! As the hunter neared Lord Krishna, his excitement instantly transformed to horror when he realized the magnitude of his

mistake. Lord Krishna, lying on the ground, let out a soft moan, and the remorseful hunter, apologizing and sobbing, bent down to help him. The anguish that the hunter felt was indescribable. However, the ever-compassionate Lord Krishna comforted him, saying, "Do not worry, my child. You fulfilled the karmic law. Although you do not remember your previous life, I do. In my last incarnation I killed your father in the same manner. It was during a war, and I was hiding behind a tree. I killed your father, and you wanted revenge. At that time I told you that you would have to wait until your next life to fulfil your wish. Therefore, in this life you became a hunter, and I became the victim."

If we accept this incident from the life of Lord Krishna, we see that even the Lord reaped the results of his actions. Lord Krishna was not free from the law of karma, a natural law of God's creation. The lawmakers are bound by the law. The law of karma applies to all, even to celestials, and karma is bilateral. When we create karma, as Lord Krishna did, there is an affected

party, positively or negatively; so there is karma for both parties, and it has its result. Even divine incarnations are not free from karmic impact.

Why Blame?

During our lives, we become unhappy with certain people, thinking, “he did this,” or “she did that.” We like to blame others for what happens to us. We do not understand that human life is not just this life alone; it is a journey through countless lives. We are divine travellers, constantly traveling. As when winter comes, and it is snowy and cold, we wear warm clothes. In summer we exchanged those warm clothes for something cooler. Similarly, each lifetime we, the soul, change our body clothing, our physical body. We do not just inhabit a body in this present life; we have passed through a series of bodies. During these lives we have filled a backpack with karma, the results of our actions, and as we continue to carry this pack from life to life, we put more things into it. Some old karma is exhausted, and new karma is deposited, as we travel on. Thus, anything that happens to us – pleasant or unpleasant, good or bad – is

the result of our own karma, nothing else.

During our lives we create a variety of karma. For example, in the battle of the Mahabharata the one hundred Kaurava brothers were killed. Their mother, Gandhari, a beautiful lady, complained to Lord Krishna, “Can you understand the pain in the heart of a mother who has lost one hundred sons, one after the other? What did I do to deserve this? Why do I have to endure such suffering?”

Lord Krishna replied, “My aunt, I understand your pain. But do you not know that your suffering was the result of your own karma?”

Gandhari answered, “In this life I have not done anything so bad. In fact, I also remember a few of my past lives, and nothing happened to warrant such results.”

Lord Krishna then said, “Many lifetimes ago you were a princess, and one day you went to seashore with your friends to play. As you were walking, you suddenly hear a squishy, cracking sound, as if something burst open. You liked that sound. Hence, you and your friends dug in the sand

and discovered that a turtle egg had burst. You told your friends to bring more eggs for you to burst, just so you could hear that sound. Your friends collected one egg after another, and you squashed them with your feet. You continued breaking them until all were destroyed. You did this without ever considering how much pain you brought to the heart of the mother turtle who had lovingly laid so many eggs.”

The Seed of Karma

We do many things in life, and whatever we do is deposited on our balance sheet of karma. Karma (action) is like a seed. Its impression remains with us. Just like a seed, the impression has the potential to become a tree that bears a lot of fruit. A good seed will germinate and become a tree that will bear a lot of good fruit; on the contrary, a bad seed will bear much bad fruit. The kind of seeds we plant determines what kind of trees will bear fruit. If we plant an apple seed, we will not get an orange tree. Consider how much fruit grows on one single tree. This is the law of karma. Anything we do in thought, word, or deed – all that we do

remains within us in seed form. The karma we acquire from physical actions is much less than the karma from words, and uttering words produces less karma than thoughts. Our physical karma is much less than our vocal karma, and our vocal karma is much less than our mental karma.

As human beings we are blessed with dynamic minds, and with the mind we think. Day and night we are thinking. If we analyse our thoughts, we will begin to perceive their quality. We will see what kind of thoughts arise again and again. We will see how much worry, anxiety, and emotion we choose to entertain. Every action, every activity, even thoughts are deposited. When we are less conscious and quite attached to the body and mind, we believe, “I am thinking, I am talking, I am doing, I want this, I say this, I am right, he or she is wrong” – and through this attitude we create a great deal of karma. Ordinarily, human beings spend a little karma and deposit much karma. Every karma is like a fruit that contains many seeds. Hence, one good karma will bear much good fruit and one

bad karma will bear a great deal of bad fruit. Every person must pass through their own karmic experience, because very few people in this world can take on the karma of others or give their good karma away. Consequently, we must exercise caution while thinking, speaking, or acting.

Another story about Shri Krishna can demonstrate how thought works. This story deals with Shri Krishna in a previous incarnation, when he was a young dwarf boy (Vamana). At that time a king named Bali was very generous and charitable, but he had one flaw: he was as egotistical as he was generous. The generosity of this king knew no bounds. Any person who requested anything from him had their wish granted. Needless to say, the king's good works were very commendable, but if ego increases each time good is achieved, the result of the good deed is reduced. Let us consider a very simple mathematical formula: Suppose you do one hundred good deeds and your ego increases by the same quantity. Hence – one hundred good works, one hundred units of ego. If you divide 100 by 100, the result is

1. However, if you do one good work without ego, the result is one divided by zero, which becomes infinity. This is simple mathematics. So if ego increases equally with our actions, it leaves us with exactly the same.

Since the king was very good, but had such a big ego, a little *brahmin* boy, an incarnation of the divine, decided to help him diminish it. The young *brahmin* boy went to the palace, and King Bali welcomed him and wanted to know the purpose of his visit.

The boy asked, “O King, there is something I need. Can you fulfil my wish?”

“Certainly,” said the king. “What is it you need?”

“I need only a little space.”

“How much space do you require?” the king wondered.

“Using my foot as a measurement, I need only three feet.”

The king smiled, “Little one, you are physically and mentally a child. You have come all this way and you ask for so little. What will you do with such a small space? Ask

for my kingdom, I will surely give it to you.”

The boy replied, “O King, I am not greedy. I need only this much space – measuring three feet.”

Acharya Shukra, the king’s guru-preceptor, was watching the whole situation unfold. Sensing something strange about this little boy, he warned the king, “Be careful. Do not give anything to him.”

The king just laughed and said, “My adorable teacher! I have never said no to anyone. I will give him whatever he wants.” Then he turned to the boy and said, “My child, you asked for three feet of space. Now take it!”

Upon hearing the king’s words, the boy took one foot and covered the entire earth with it. With his other foot he covered the heavens and all of space. “Now I rule earth and space. I will now take the third foot of space,” said the boy.

The king was very intelligent and wise. He knew the boy had already used both of his feet, and that he had promised him three. “Where is your third foot?” he asked. The boy then materialized a thirty

foot from his waist. The king said, “My child, since you already rule the heavens and earth, place your foot on my head, where my ego resides.” And that is where his foot remained.

Prior to the young boy’s encounter with the king, the king’s youthful daughter had seen the boy standing outside the palace gate. While looking at him she thought, “That child is so sweet and beautiful. I could have loved to have such a cute child as my baby. If he were my baby, I would tenderly hold him in my arms and feed him from my breast.” However, later, when she saw that the young boy had been the cause of her father’s downfall, she thought, “If I had the strength, I would kill that boy!” Clearly, two kinds of thought had come to her: one to be like a mother and feed the boy, and the other thought to kill him. The effect of this last thought went with her into her next life, when she became Putana, who tried to kill Shri Krishna (who had been Vamana, the dwarf, in his previous life)

Just as King Herod set out to kill baby Jesus by ordering the killing of all male

babies, Shri Krishna's maternal uncle, King Kamsa, wanted to kill all the young male babies so that Shri Krishna would be eliminated. To carry out this heinous deed, he told his advisor Putana, the daughter of the king in the previous story, to put poison on her breasts and go door-to-door offering to feed all the newborn baby boys, which would kill them. However, when she arrived at Shri Krishna's house, she was unaware that Shri Krishna knew about her plan. Shri Krishna tricked her. To prevent her from killing any children, he used his invisible and mighty will power to draw her to his doorstep first. Concealing her evil intentions with a smile, Putana held baby Krishna and began to nurse him. But instead of the poison killing Shri Krishna, he drank her life while she breastfed him. Thus, the daughter's thought of wanting to breastfeed the young child was fulfilled in her next life.

Fruit of karma

Rest assured, the result (fruit) of every single thought that we entertain will manifest – if not today, tomorrow. Consequently, we should be very careful. Think for a

moment about how many thoughts, worries, irritations, frustrations, and angry emotional outbursts you have already stored in your karma backpack. How many lifetimes will it take to exhaust all of it? And the biggest problem is that we are not unpacking – instead, again and again, we keep adding to the backpack. Hence, be very careful about what you think, what you say, and what you do, as it increases the load of karma.

Always keep in mind that whatever you think, say, or do will have a result. And that result is manifold. People who follow a spiritual path must try to regulate their lives to be free from the law of karma, and highly spiritual people those who are very advanced, can take the karma of others and exhaust it.

How many kinds of karma do we have? Let us first consider that we all have a body, and each body looks a little different, somewhat unique. On this planet we come from different countries and speak different languages. We are also born into different families. Why? Was God partial to have some born in an affluent country and others born

in a poor country? Why is it this way? Why did God give you that body and give me this body? Why were you born in a particular family? Many questions come to mind. Why is there so much disparity in this world? Some babies suffer from the day they are born. What karma did the baby do? We should analyse why things happen to us.

Many times we ask god, “Why are these things happening to me?” But God, like a loving mother, just smiles and answers, “My child, this is what you wanted.”

“I do not understand. How could I want this? How could I want to suffer like this in my life?”

“My child, you wanted something, expecting it to bring you joy. But in this world of illusion, things are not as they appear. Thus, you did not know that what you wanted also brings pain and suffering. From a distance you admired a mountain, thinking it to be majestic and grand, and you greatly desired to be there. But now, when you have it in your grasp, you see that this mountain is not as beautiful as you expected. For it is naught

but sharp, barren stones and rocky, jagged ledges, far from the splendor you beheld in your mind. From a distance you thought someone was very nice, and you wanted to be a good friend. However, later, when you became closer to that person, you discovered that the person was not so nice.”

All Is Our Wish

Due to our misunderstandings and faulty perceptions, we cause our own suffering. To illustrate this, let us look at an example of a mother and her sick child. A sick child asked its mother for something to eat that was not healthy. The mother responded that the food was not appropriate during a fever. The mother then tried to feed the child something healing. Even though the mother was earnestly trying to help, the child complained, “No! I do not want to eat this. Give me what I asked for!”

The mother implored the child, “My child, please eat what I am giving you. When you are healthy, I will prepare what you want.” The mother knew what the child should eat, and when. She knew that some food should be eaten even when

it is not palatable and that these healing foods were necessary for the child's growth and evolution.

In time the child became healthy again. The mother prepared the food the child had asked for when it was sick. When the child asked the mother why she prepared this food, she responded, "When you were sick, you told me you wanted it; so, I prepared a lot of it for you." Thus, the mother provided the desired food, but the child had already forgotten what it had wanted. In both instances the child suffered from a lack of understanding, a lack of acceptance. This is exactly what happens to us in life; we forget what we asked for. We do not understand or accept reality; therefore, we suffer.

Play of Karma

Life is a journey along a series of karmas, a journey where we learn and grow. Why

was I born in a particular country? Because of my karma, nothing else. Why was I born in this family? Because of some common karma that I share with them. In this life those we meet are not met by accident. There is no such thing as an accident. That which has to happen, happens, but we do not accept it. Why do two people come together? Because they have common karma, like two intersecting circles. Common karma brings us together, and when that karma is exhausted, we part. Karma brings us together; karma pulls us apart.

Life is a play of karma. Out of ignorance, ego, and arrogance we are mere puppets. If we are a little more conscious of our thoughts, words, and deeds and of the eternal and inevitable law of karma, we can enjoy the drama of life and be free from karma's trap.

JNANA SANKALINI TANTRA

Verse 58

*devi uvaca
yat tvaya kathitam jnanam
naham janami samskara
niscaya bruhi devesa
mano yatra viliyate*

Translation

Devi said, “I am not able to understand this jnanam (wisdom), which you have described, O Shankara. Please tell me clearly, Lord of lords, how does the mind get dissolved?”

Metaphorical Interpretation

This verse addresses the quest of a seeker in the search of knowledge, but Parvati is not asking for theoretical knowledge, she seeks practical experience. At the stage where the play of the mind is no longer required, the mind is dissolved.

Each sense has a presiding deity, but all the senses derive their strength and energy from the light of the soul. The One Soul (Shiva) is *devesha*, or the Lord of all gods.

Verse 59

*isvara uvaca
mano vakyam tatha karma*

*trtiyam yatra viliyate
vina svapnam yatha nidra
brahmajnanam taducyate*

Translation

Ishwara said, “A state in which mind, speech, and action are dissolved, and where one experiences the awareness of dreamless deep sleep, is the state of *brahmajnanam*”

Metaphorical Interpretation

Science speaks of the evolution of life on the planet earth, while spirituality explains the evolution of consciousness in each living being. In this verse, Lord Shiva refers to the highest state of evolution, which is a result of conscious and continuous effort.

The concept of *tri – karana* or the ‘three instruments’ encompasses thought, speech, and action. The purpose of the mind is to think: of speech is to communicate; and of action is to accomplish various goals in the material as well as the spiritual world. The three concepts, therefore, represent thoughts, words, and deeds.

First comes the sublimation of the mind and then its dissolution. Through the practice of spirituality, impurity in the mind is eliminated, allowing the mind to regain its original peacefulness. In order to acquire control over speech, it is important to speak truthfully, lovingly, and for the good of others. It is also helpful to observe silence regularly; this is a training ground for the mind and tongue. All activities performed through the senses, should be an act of yoga directed towards the union, avoiding trouble or disunity.

The VivekaChudamani teaches, *cittasyashuddhaye karma*: “All activities should aim at inner purification.” It is essential to follow the spiritual teachings of the guru regularly and sincerely with love and devotion. Only in this way can a devotee attain the state where all the instruments (mind, speech, and action) become redundant, or non-existent.

Lore shiva compares deep meditation to a dreamless sleep as an external allegory to explain the state of the dawn of knowledge. If meditation is accompanied by thoughts, it becomes similar to a sleep full

of dreams. Knowledge of Brahman can only be achieved when the sincere mediator, filled with inner purity, goes beyond the mind.

Verse 60

*ekai nisprah santah
cinta nidra vivarjitah
bala bhavah tatha bhavo
brahmajnanam taducyate*

Translation

**Remaining secluded;
free from desires; peaceful;
devoid of thoughts and
sleep; with the attitude of a
child; is the state of
brahmajnanam.**

Metaphorical Interpretation

This verse offers a concise explanation of the state of Self-realization. In order to obtain spiritual evolution, Lord shiva elucidates on the following requirements:

i) *Ekaki* means ‘alone’ or ‘secluded.’ Most human beings seek the company of each other. Living alone is a painful burden. Loneliness brings on sadness and even depression. But a spiritual seeker like to be alone. To live in seclusion is to develop the art of Self-mastery. Seclusion becomes the price of greatness. Internally, to be free from

thoughts is the true meaning of seclusion. If the mind is truly free, nothing can disrupt it.

ii) *Nispriha* means 'lack of desires or ambition.' Expectation is the propelling force behind the cycle of birth and death. The only way to break this vicious cycle is to ruthlessly analyse the needs we have in life and eliminate all unnecessary desires. The world is full of transitory worldly pleasures, unless a devotee firmly upholds *nispriha*; the state of *brahmajnanam* will always be elusive.

iii) *Shanta* is equivalent to 'peacefulness.' The Sanskrit word is derived from the root word *shama* i.e., 'control of the mind and senses.' Ordinarily, the mind is turbulent and the senses are restless. But rigorous discipline helps to promote the state of peace.

iv) *Chintavivarjita* literally means 'free from worries and emotions.' Through the practice of breath regulation, inner tranquility can be procured. Breath-control leads to mind-control.

v) *Nidravivarjita* means 'free from lethargy,' 'laziness' and even 'sleep.' Sleep is a state of pervasive ignorance.

vi) *Balabhava* is known as a 'childlike state.' Spiritually evolved people have a childlike attitude, devoid of worry, expectation, or negative qualities. Jesus often said that a child could enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

All these indicators are permanently seen in spiritually advanced people who live immersed in a life of completeness and love.

Verse 61

*slokardhena pravaksami
yaduktam tattava darsibhih
sarva cinta pari tyago
niscinto yogaucyate*

Translation

I will explain in a nutshell all that has been said by seers and sages. Yoga is that state where giving up all thought, one is established in a thoughtless state.

Metaphorical Interpretation

Tattvadarshi is a person who has experienced the state of Truth, becoming established in wisdom. Through the practice of yoga and meditation it is possible to secure fulfilment.

In this verse, Lord Shiva gives a precise explanation of

the path of yoga. Yoga is not only a path; it is also a way of life. Since yoga is the state of complete tranquility, devoid of all thought, it automatically leads to the ultimate state of experience.

Sage Patanjali described yoga in the following terms, *yogahcittavrittinirodhah*: “The art of eliminating thought waves.”

The Bhagavad Gita has numerous definitions of yoga, *yogahkarmasukausalam*: “Perfection in action is yoga” (2:50).

samatvam yoga ucyate: “Equanimity is yoga” (2:48).

viyogam yoga sangitam: “Separation from duality is yoga” (6:23).

In the Shvetashvatara Upanishad (2:4), yoga is described as, *yuktenamanasa* : “Yoga is the state of uniting the mind with the Supreme.”

The world and worldly activities are below the *ajna chakras*, in the five lower centres. When the mind is filled with mundane matters it becomes restless, turbulent, and ambitious, leading to endless activities and conflicting emotions,. But if the mind rises

towards the *ajna chakra*, becoming peaceful and tranquil, it is freed from negative propensities. Once attention is fixed in the *sahasrara*, the mind dissolves into nothingness.

Lord shiva defines yoga as the art of the evolution of consciousness – from restlessness to calmness, and ultimately to the state of *samadhi*, or complete union with God. Yoga is the state of freedom from the restless play of the mind.

Verse 62

*nimisam nimisardham va
samadhi madhi gacchati
satajanmarjitam papam
tat ksanat devi nasyati*

Translation

O Devi, if samadhi (realization) is attained even for a second or a split second, the sins accrued over a hundred births, can be destroyed instantly.

Metaphorical Interpretation

The experience of samadhi can last for a single moment or for a prolonged period of time, bringing with it the transcendental state of superconsciousness and perfect union with the Absolute. Such an experience transforms a

person completely. There is no longer any separateness, only oneness with God and the entire creation, which ultimately brings love and eternal bliss.

To grasp this point more clearly, two concepts, *samadhi* and *papa* need more elaboration:

1) *Samadhi* is made up of *sam* + *a* + *dha* + *kvip*. *Sam* means 'completely' or 'beautifully,' *a* is 'to bring' or 'to uplift,' *dha* is 'to behold' or 'to establish,' and *kvip* is 'the state.' Therefore *samadhi* means 'a state where there is complete establishment of consciousness in the indwelling Self.'

The word has many additional meanings such as 'collecting,' 'composing,' 'concentrating,' 'profound or abstract meditation,' 'concentration of the mind on one object,' 'perfect absorption of thought in one object of meditation, know as the Supreme.'

Samadhi also means continuous balance of *dhi* or 'the intellect,' a state of perfect equanimity. It is the last limb of yoga described by Patanjali. *Samadhi* can only be

experienced as the result of sincere practice and deep meditation.

2) *Papam* – *patiraksatiasmatatmanam* – means 'the cause of downfall and destruction.' The literal translation is 'evil,' 'sinful,' 'wicked,' 'vicious,' 'mischievous,' 'destructive,' 'inauspicious,' 'malignant,' or 'bad fortune.'

Individuals are made up of karma accumulated from past lives; karma produces *punya* or 'merit' and *papa* or 'demerit.' Positive activities breed good results and sinful actions produce suffering. Positive and negative karma does not balance or neutralize each other. The role of karma has to be played out.

However, in this verse, Lord shiva assures his devotees that to become established in *samadhi*, even for a brief second in time can give lasting freedom from the accumulated sins over a hundred lifetimes. Purity and eternal love are the very essence of spiritual life. Encouraging a seeker to go beyond vice and virtue eventually will lead to liberation.

GO - NAVARATRI AT THE GURUKULAM

Since time immemorial India has understood the value of cows and cattle and their contribution to creation. A Vedic rishi declared, *gavahvishv asyamatarah*: “The cow is the mother of creation.” Our modern analytical minds will ask whether this statement is true. Is it a fanatic or dogmatic idea, or is it a scientific truth?

Modern science and research have corroborated the Vedic view. The cow is the only creature that has the ability to preserve and purify the five elements of earth, water, fire, air, and sky. The cows’ milk and milk products are a most nutritious food for humans; their urine and dung are sources for countless Ayurveda medicines for treating human ailments; their dung and urine are natural fertilizers and pesticides and a healthy ingredient for natural and organic farming. Touching a domesticated cow creates new energy in the body and balances *prana*. Cow dung is a good source of bio-gas that is used for cooking, lighting, and

other work. Cattle energy is used for ploughing, local transport, and even pressing oil seed, sugarcane and many other tasks, even drawing underground water. Now modern science is attempting to generate electricity from cow dung.

Humans have the ability to recognize the value of this divine gift and work to preserve cattle populations on humanitarian grounds as well as for maintaining a healthy earth environment. Since the Vedic period the *rishis* taught us to love and protect cows for our well-being.

From the first moon in the bright fortnight of the month of October-November (Margashirsha) until the ninth moon, this year occurring on the 20 to 28 October, Go-navaratri is celebrated - nine days dedicated to the holy cows. This year a grand celebration takes place in the holy city of Puri, Odisha, India. Many events will occur such as the SurabhiMahaYajna (a Vedic fire

ceremony that gives new strength and energy to protect cattle), the Surabhi Mantra Sadhana (chanting the Surabhi mantra for peace in the world), seminars and symposia regarding the benefits of indigenous cattle populations for health and holistic life, presentations about natural organic farming, and presentations about the cow and Ayurveda. *Satsangas* will be led by reputed monks of India, and there will be cultural programs and exhibitions.

This program will be conducted with the blessings of H.H. Shankaracharya of Puri, Shri Swami Nishchalananda Saraswati Maharaj, and the patronage of Gajapati Divyasingh Deba, the King of Puri. The program will be blessed by many divine

personalities such as Pujya Shri Rajendra Dasji Maharaj of Vrindavan, Sri Sri Ravishankar Maharaj of Art of Living Foundation, Pujya Swami Gurusharananandaji of Ramanreti, Gokul, and many others. Paramahansa Prajnanananda will preside over the entire event.

Our Hariharananda Gurukulam, Balighai, Puri has taken a very exemplary role in preserving indigenous cattle and using their qualities to benefit human health, food production, and agriculture.

All of you are cordially invited to serve and take an active role in this noble mission of preserving creation and bringing peace in the world. You can make a positive contribution by participating in the nine-day celebration (Go-navaratri).



Celebration at Kriya Vedanta Gurukulam Chicago

YOGA AT A BRAZILIAN COMPANY

Our ashram at Brazil conducts a weekly class on benefits of yoga and open meditation on every Wednesday afternoon at the Arizona, a Brazilian company, who specialize in marketing and digital media. (Arizona.com.br).

About 20 people attend the session.

Topics covered include (Based on Guruji's books and lectures):

Yoga in practical life
Body mind and soul
Benefits of yoga
Anxiety, stress, fear, death

Practical class in breathing

After one year of this program, the company management conducted an evaluation of the benefit of this class on the staff and had the participants answer a simple questionnaire. The response was very positive and the company gives a fixed donation every month also. Within this year 12 people (including some

family members) were initiated into Kriya and the program is referred to other local companies. The company also displays books on kriya yoga in their office.

Some testimonials from participants:

"First of all I'd like to say that I am extremely grateful for this moment that Arizona offers us weekly. It is a great gift. I believe that the main gain I have is the improvement of my self-analysis and self-awareness, and with this significant changes in some behavioral patterns."

"Significant gain of self-awareness. Helping to make the life choices in a better way. It helped to see other perspectives not seen before. It helped to better understand the differences. It helped to suspend the judgement."

"I believe the Emotional Balance generates more productivity, and motivation in the professional and personal life."

“Many gains, being the most important ones to: learn to look within, to know to look at the other and understand some meanings of life.”

“Emotional balance, breadth of knowledge and spiritual connection, good use of our body for the daily improvement, share and apply in family the visions and different ways of facing the world.”

“The main gains I’ve had were in relation to the reduction of my anxiety and the chance of being able to recharge to remain steady towards my objectives.”

“I think that the impact was huge in the emotional balance and motivation too, but in the end, I gained much productivity, I was more active and focused. The conscious breathing helps a lot in the concentration.”



Initiation program at Brisbane, Australia

AROUND THE GLOBE

Ashrams and centers around the world celebrated the birthday of guruji Paramahansa Prajnanananda on the 10th of August with special prayers, worship and meditations

Mother Center USA celebrated the 20th foundation day retreat from 16th – 23rd of September in the divine presence of Paramahansa Prajnanananda.

Temple of Compassion – our Texas ashram celebrated their first Foundation day program from 23- 26 of September in the divine presence of Paramahansa Prajnanananda.

Celebrations of Paramahansa Yogananda's 125th Birth Anniversary

The 125th Birth Anniversary of Paramahansa Yogananda was celebrated in several parts of Odisha with cultural programs and Gita

chanting and recitation competitions.

A retreat and pilgrimage to the sacred sites associated with the life of our great Guru Paramahansa Yogananda were held in California in the company of our Guruji Paramahansa Prajnanananda from the 8th to 13th of September.

A public lecture and Program was held at Houston Texas to commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of Paramahansa Yogananda on the 23rd of September 13, 2017, in the presence of Paramahansa Prajnanananda.

A public lecture and program was held at Dallas, Texas to celebrate the 125th birth anniversary of Paramahansa Yogananda on 27th September in the presence of Paramahansa Prajnanananda.

Visit our web site:

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

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