

Sthita Prajna



Guru Vandana

*Satyanandasvarupaya bodhaikasukhakarine
Namo vedantavedyaya gurave buddhisakshine*

I bow to my Guru preceptor, the essence of truth and bliss,
who is the cause of integrated knowledge and happiness, the
knower of Vedanta (upanishadic truth), and the divine witness of
the intellect.

Verse 328 / Guru Gita

CONTENTS

VOLUME 16

ISSUE 2

Sub	Page No.
• GURU VANDANA	3
• EDITORIAL	5
• MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER	6
• DATES REMEMBER	9
• MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR	10
• PRAJNANAVANI – PURIFYING THE MIND...	12
• THANKSGIVING DAY	19
• PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANDA	21
• TEACHINGS OF THE MASTERS	22
• MYTHS AND METAPHORS MAHABHARATA	23
• VALUABLE VOLUMES	30
• YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI	40
• STORIES TO LIVE BY	42
• AROUND THE GLOBE	44
• ANOTHER MILESTONE IN...	45

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

FROM THE EDITORS :

My body shall pass but my work shall go on. And my spirit shall live on. Even when I am taken away I shall work with you all for the deliverance of the world with the message of God. Prepare yourselves for the glory of God. Charge yourselves with the flame of Spirit.

Paramahansa Yogananda

With this New year issue, we conclude the yearlong 125th Birth anniversary celebrations of Paramhansa Yogananda around the world. (Jan 5, 2017- Jan 5, 2018).

In Message from the Master, Gurudev talks of the need of moderation and balance in every step of life and how a life of moderation is the foundation of success.

Prajnanavani discusses how surrender to God purifies the mind and helps in disciplining the mind.

Our Myths and metaphor series continues with Mahabharata and the first exile of Pandavas is described.

Our series on Valuable Volumes, The Law of Karma, continues with an elaborate discussion on the dynamics of karma and how to avoid karma.

The Mahasamadhi day of our beloved Gurudev was observed in ashrams around the globe with special seminars, worship and meditations. Hariharananda Gurukulam commemorated this special event in the divine presence of Guruji.

No sincere effort is unfulfilled, but the result depends upon the intensity of practice is discussed in the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali.

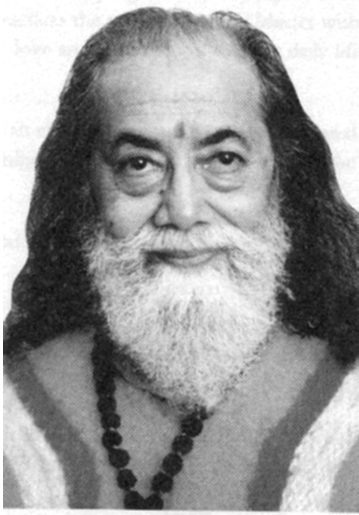
The International Go Navaratri Mahotsava was held at Puri by the International GoNavaratri Mahotsava Samiti , under the direction of our Guruji Paramahansa Prajnanananda in the month of October.

We bring you many other messages, the news of the many activities of Prajnana Mission and events around the world. We wish our readers a happy and holy new year and thank them for their continued support.

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

FOLLOW THE MASTER

MODERATION



Human life is a rare chance and opportunity to grow. Life is short and there are ample obstacles, but in spite of that, you have immense strength and potentiality. To achieve success in life, you need to be careful, moderate, and balanced. An intelligent lifestyle and practical way of living will give you constant alertness and a taste of reality. You have to live long, and be strong and God conscious. The Vedic blessings speak of living a life of a hundred years. The Isha Upanishad (mantra 2) teaches:

*kurvanneveha karmani
jijivisechatam samah*

“Always performing works here, one should cherish to live one hundred years.”

Only humans can realize God, with self-effort and preferential choice. Some can achieve liberation through the grace of the realized one, which is very rare. To live is to work. No one can escape this. In the Bhagavad Gita (3:5) the Lord said, “No living being can stay for a moment without working.” But while working, people forget their real nature and their goal. They get attached to the fruit of action and pleasure and pain. However, if you lead a life of activity, and think that work is worship, then you will get salvation. There is no doubt about it. The presence of God is all over the material world.

In order to live in the world, you need material things. Some people think money is not necessary for spiritual life. This is a misunderstanding. Money is required in many stages of

your life. Money is essential, but it is not everything. It helps to fulfil daily needs and to make life easy and comfortable. However, one should not become too engrossed with it because it develops one's ego and vanity for riches. Also, it should not create fear or insecurity. Money might help you in your religious practices and indirectly help for your realization, supporting you to fulfil your desire and helping in your liberation.

The Vedic scriptures speak of four-fold goals: *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*, a disciplined life, material accomplishment, fulfilment of legitimate desires, and liberation. You are born for the fulfilment of these four things. All accomplishments are possible as long as there is breath. Without breath, you have nothing. Breath is holding your life, so breath is the real *dharma*.

So, for all our material needs and their fulfillment, we need money. We all have come here to this program from a long distance and money was essential for our travel. Money is also needed for maintaining family life. Every day you must

earn money, because every day you need to spend money for food, housing, and so on. The money centre is at the bottom of the spine. Remember God while you are earning money. There is fire in every centre, and your breath is your oblation. So watch god in every breath.

In the second centre is the fire of passion. You must have a sound body and limited enjoyment. You should be very careful about your second centre of physical pleasure. Family life and physical relationships are useful, but one should be moderate and disciplined. One should not allow the mind to be mad for enjoyment. While in family activities, one should keep the mind on God.

The next centre related to food. Food keeps the body active. It gives strength and vitality. The mind is formed from food. This is *manas*. Your appetite comes from God, from the fontanel. To eat moderately and intelligently, with deep love for God, is a practical prayer. This is your Kriya. You need moderation in life, in food, enjoyment, in talk and activity. How long should you work? How long should you rest? You

should analyze this and live intelligently. It is written in the Bhagavad gita (6:17):

*yuktahara-viharasya yukta-
cestasya karmasu*

*yukta-svapnavabodhasya
yogo bhavati duhkaha*

“The path of meditation requires a moderate, regulated life, avoiding too much or too little food, work, and sleep, or use of the senses. The attention must abide in the soul all the time. For such a person, yoga destroys all sorrows.”

A life of moderation is the foundation of success. Moderation and balance are necessary in every step of your life. Even contemplation and meditation should be limited. Lord Buddha was a king’s son, who left his house in search of Truth. Later, Buddha decided that he would not stop meditating until he was realized, so he let his body become diseased. Later, he was too weak to pursue his spiritual practice, and he realized that moderation was needed, and he started to eat.

You have endless desires for money, pleasure and possessions. The more you get, the more you want. The Bible,

the Upanishads, the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali, the Brahmasutra, and the Torah all emphasize moderation. You have to find a limit and a balance in all these needs.

When appetite comes, think that God is giving it to you. You can live with very simple food. In southern India, people follow the principle of plain living and high thinking. Sometimes they cook the whole meal in one pot with rice, dal (lentils), and vegetables. Many presidents, Vice-Presidents and scientists of India are from the South. They are extremely educated people who eat simple food. They make yogurt and churn it with water, adding a little salt and chili, which then becomes buttermilk. Their dress is also very simple. They work and live all over the world. Make your food simple and wholesome, and it will give you a long and healthy life.

Lord Buddha ate the simplest food in the forest. The five Pandava brothers: Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva, spent twelve years in the forest and the thirteenth year in seclusion, incognito, living a simple life, with prayer and contemplation.

In the Bhagavad Gita, it is said, sleep moderately. If you avoid sleep, your brain will be tired, and if your sleep too much, you cannot have a good brain. Similarly, in meditation, when you pray or study, be regular and moderate. If you live a life of moderation, as the Lord said, your practice of yoga will make you free from all miseries and suffering. Be moderate and disciplined in every aspect of your life. This is the steady path for your growth and success.

DATES TO REMEMBER

January – March, 2018

January 5	: Birthday of Paramahansa Yogananda
Jan 14-20	: IIKYS
Jan 18	: Mahasamadhi of Bhupendranath Sanyal
Jan 20	: Birthday of Bhupendranath Sanyal
Jan 22	: Saraswati Puja
Feb 13	: Maha Shivaratri
Mar 2	: Holi Festival
Mar 7	: Mahasamadhi of Yogananda
Mar 9	: Mahasamadhi of Shriyukteshwar

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

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 to all of you as we celebrate Christmas and New Year. This week we bid goodbye to 2017 and welcome the New Year, 2018.

Usually we use the word “merry” with Christmas, and we use the word “happy” for the New Year. Merry means cheerful and lively, and happy refers to a feeling of contentment and pleasure. Past and future rests on the present. Yesterday and tomorrow depends upon today. It means we must be aware of how we spend our every moment of our lives. A moment becomes a second, a minute, an hour, a day, a week, a month, a year, and a lifetime. If we waste a single moment, ultimately we have wasted our lives. In the chain of life, when one link is weak, it can make the whole life

weak. How can we be merry and happy during every moment?

The first key to happiness is to avoid looking for faults in others. Last year we decided to try to be free from our faultfinding natures, and now we can assess how we fared. The second key to happiness is to not judge others. Faultfinding and judging others are two sides of the same coin. Life is busy with discussing people, events, and even our clothes or food. We never hesitate to criticize others and judge them. If we had the power, we would not hesitate to punish others in many ways. This endless karmicplay makes life miserable. Where is happiness?

The third key to lifelonghappiness is to bring smiles to the faces of others. Swami Vivekananda said, “If you cannot help others with your two hands, pray for them and bless them with your two hands.” If we cannot help

others, at least we should not hurt them. The masters say that the hands that help and serve are holier than the lips that sing and chant. We should take every opportunity to put smiles on the faces of others with our compassionate, loving, and serving attitude. This will create more happiness in our lives. One who is sincere and hardworking is never sad or depressed.

We must learn to use every moment of our lives. We should always know our friends and enemies. There is no greater enemy than laziness and procrastination and no greater friend than effort and endeavor. Precious time is wasted with laziness and procrastination. We should be careful, cautious, and conscious.

I want to conclude with the words of a Himalayan saint. He told me in my youth when I was wandering in the Himalayan valleys, *beta*, *vyastraho our mast raho*: “My child, keep yourself busy and active and at the same time cheerful.” It has remained in my heart like a *mantra*.

Again on the occasion of this divine week, I pray to God to give us strength so we can be free from our weaknesses and aberrations and make our every moment fruitful and productive, not only for ourselves, but also for others.

Wishing all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

With Love,
Prajnanananda

PRAJNANAVANI - THE VOICE OF WISDOM

PURIFYING THE MIND THROUGH SURRENDER



*Mind is the cause of bondage
and mind is the cause of
liberation*

When I was a little boy living in India, we were given new clothes on special occasions, such as *Ganesh Puja* and *Saraswati Puja*. Putting on new clothes was such a happy time. My brothers and I were always anxious to see each other in our new clothes, and we also were anxious to find out how everyone liked the clothes we were wearing. This little ritual started at home, amongst

brothers, and continued when we went to school, amongst friends. It was a common practice after receiving new clothes to first place them on the altar as an offering to God, because it was by His Grace they were given to us. Only after we expressed our gratitude were we allowed to put them on. We also had to bow down to every elder member of the family, and in school, we had to bow down to the teachers.

You may be wondering what my memories of receiving

new clothes have to do with the mind. Clothes symbolize the mind. If the mind is clean – if it is fresh and new – it is full of joy and happiness. If we offer our mind to God, more happiness comes. If the mind becomes humble, bowing down to others, others will bless us. For instance, as children, when we hugged our mother, did she push us away? No, she tenderly held us. We hugged her with our little arms, while she held us with her bigger arms, and we were completely protected by her. That is the manner in which one should be humble.

Because mind and clothes are similar, just as there are different ways of cleaning our clothes, there are different ways of cleaning our mind. In the previous chapters, we learned that mind is the cause of all our troubles. Mind is the playground of emotion and the field of action and reaction. The mind gives us the ability to analyse and reflect upon our lives, and it is the mind that helps to communicate with others. Thus, the mind is the instrument, which guides our ego, emotions, intellect, and the direction in which we proceed

in life. But even more importantly the mind is the cause of bondage and liberation. If we want to be free, it is achieved through the mind. If we want to be in trouble, it is caused by the mind.

Purifying the Mind through Surrender

As you recall, the first thing I did when I received new clothes was to offer them to God. This is what you must do with the mind. Mind in Sanskrit is *mana*. This word has two syllables *mana*. If you reverse these two syllables, it becomes *na ma*. *Nama* has two meanings: “to surrender” and to “to bow.” It symbolizes humility. Remember, our mind is nothing but the playground of ego, in the form of individuality, activity, and possession. Hence, we become humble by surrendering this mind, ego, and saying, “O God, whatever I think is mine, is not really mine. Everything is Yours.” What really belongs to you? Everything you have will one day be left behind. Where did you get the talent and intelligence to achieve things in your life? Are you the one who created those skills? Are they not gifts that were given to you? During the

inaugural ceremony of Gurudev's Centenary in Balighai, a monk came who wore only a sack made of jute. He arrived without any notice on the first night of the program although he was scheduled to come on another day. He immediately went to Gurudev's temple and sat with us on the dais. That night he gave a very inspiring and powerful, yet very simple, talk. He told us, "When I first saw this beautiful temple of the gurus, I thought, 'Since this temple is so beautiful, the one who created it must be even more beautiful.'" Then he said, "Each day, while looking at this world – the stars, planets, flowers, fruits, trees – I think, 'It is all so beautiful. Undoubtedly, the One who created it must be even more beautiful' This was the attitude of that humble monk, and this is the attitude we need. Let us never forget that the Creator is greater than His creation. Imagine how skilful, how beautiful, how loving, how creative this Being is. Hence, becoming humble is the best way to clean our mind. When we become humble, we bow and say, "O Beloved, all that I see is You. If this breath stops,

where am I? Let me not be foolish and cherish this little ego and all these fleeting emotions. I am Yours and You are mine. Help me to manifest. Your goodness and beauty, My Lord, my life is in Your hands." Sometimes those who take the path of devotion surrender so completely to God they think of nothing else. Such great should become beacons of light for the entire humanity.

I read a story about a *sadhu* who went to Puri (In India) for the first time during the Chariot Festival. When he arrived in the city, there was already a huge crowd. One of the people in the crowd was a renowned holy man from Brindavan who was concerned that he might not get the *darshan* of Lord Jagannath because there were so many people. Thus, he asked the *sadhu* for some advice. "Do not worry," the *sadhu* told him. "The one who brought you here will take care of you. He will arrange everything." What a wonderful way to go through life! Imagine how carefree and happy you would be if you entrusted your life to God.

A few years ago, I flew from Europe back to India

during the chariot Festival. As soon as I arrived, I went to the hospital to visit two people who were critically ill and at death's door. After I left, I received a phone call from someone letting me know that I should come quickly because the temple was about to close and I would not be able to see Lord Jagannath. The first thing I do when I arrive in Puri is go to the temple. I never eat any food until after I have seen Lord Jagannath. Thus, on my way to the temple, I said to the person accompanying me, "If Lord Jagannath does not want to feed us today, then I will not eat today." What happened after we arrived at the temple that day was really amazing. When we entered the temple campus, we discovered that the temple was indeed closed. The campus was filled with thousands of police officers, because it was estimated that close to a million people were there. I bowed down outside the main temple and I thought, "Maybe today Lord Jagannath does not want us to eat food."

In India, there is a traditional belief that if somebody offers you food from the temple, you are never to

refuse it. They respect the food from the temple even more than the deity. A few minutes later, as we were standing in an inconspicuous corner of the campus, a stranger with a dark complexion approached me and said, "Hey Babaji!" He said it in a very playful way – not with respect, not with disrespect – but in friendly manner. "Hey Babaji, you want to go inside?" I told him I could not go in because the temple was closed. He laughed and said, "It is closed for others, not for you."

I thought, "Why is he saying this? I am such an insignificant person."

The man said, "Wait here. You will have *darshan*." He went inside the temple and brought back some really hot food. He put the cooked, spicy, delicious rice in my hand and said, "Eat."

Now I was faced with an inner conflict, because I promised I would see Lord Jagannath before eating any food. How could I eat this food first and then to inside the temple? I silently stood there as the man repeated, "Yes, yes." For me, breaking my promise was next to impossible; but then I knew if I did not eat,

I would be disrespecting the *mahaprasad* (sanctified food) in my hands, which is also not good to do. Finally, the man said, “Eat! What are you thinking? Eat!” So, I ate. He came back three to four times, bringing handfuls of food and telling us to eat. Then he brought us some water to wash our mouths and hands. When were done, he told us, “You stand here. Soon three painters who paint the deities will go inside, and when they go in, you follow them.” He said this with such confidence, and then disappeared. We stood there a few minutes. Just as he said, three painters came with a priest. These men took our hands, and pushed us through the crowd. When he got to the entrance, they told us to go inside. Some of the people were objecting, but the priest just looked at them and said, “No!” Suddenly there was pin-drop silence. We were now inside the temple with the three painters. Usually nobody is allowed to be there while the paints are painting. As we stood there, I thought, “O God everything is You. If You want to do something, you do it. You can make the impossible,

possible – which we later then think is easy. We like to make a lot of plans; however, whatever is not Your will, will not happen. Out of ego we say many things, and for this reason You wanted to play with me. It was out of ego that I did not want to take food before seeing Lord Jagannath, but You wanted to change my will to Your will: ‘First you eat and then you will see Me.’”

Surrender is Easy for those Who Love God

It is not difficult to change our will to God’s will when we love Him. Often people say that since they do not know God and they cannot love Him. But I tell you, it does not matter. One does not have to know God to love God. Did you know your great-great grandfather? Not likely, and yet when you see a photo of him, you love him, and you are happy to tell others who he is. You love him because you believe he is your great-great grandfather.

After his master’s *mahasamadhi*, Swami Vivekananda, who was just a young monk at that time, travelled far and wide in India, and was often invited by kings

to stay in their palaces. Once he visited a king who did not believe in god in the forms that Hindus usually do. Through his own experiences and teachings of the masters, Swami Vivekananda realized that form and formless are one, like ice and vapor – there is no difference. However, this king often ridiculed people who worshipped deities. One day, Swami Vivekananda stood inside the palace and pointed to a huge portrait of the king's father adorned in all his royal attire. The young monk addressed the king's minister and said, "Sir, take down this picture."

"What?"

"Spit on it," said Swami Vivekananda.

"Are you mad?"

It is just a piece of canvas with some paint on it. Why don't you obey me?" Swami Vivekananda replied.

By then the king was completely enraged. Swami Vivekananda asked him why he was so angry.

The king said, "Do you not realize that because you are disrespecting my father, you are also disrespecting me?"

The monk asked, "Who is your father? Do you think that your father is this painting? It is nothing more than a piece of canvas and some paint."

"Do you take me for a fool!" said the king. "I know the painting is not my father. Nevertheless, it reminds me of his presence. When I look at it, I remember how much I love him."

The wise monk then said, "O King, in the same manner, there are people who look at tree or a star or a flower or even a statue, and feel the presence of God. While looking at those objects, they feel much love and reverence for the One they represent. These people are no different than you, therefore you should not criticize them." That day the king got a big lesson.

Why should it be difficult to love God? You owe your very existence to Him. He brought you into this world, and breathed in your nostrils the breath of life. It was God, who fed you in your mother's womb. And when you were born, God gave you food from your mother's breast. Like a loving mother and father, He provided and cared for you throughout

your entire life. In the Bible, there is a beautiful story where Jesus asks, "Look at the birds of the air: they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?" (Matthew 6:26) no doubt you have seen little birds tirelessly collecting their food for the day. They are not greedy, and they

do not worry. They are happy with whatever they get. Is it not amazing that each and every creature on this planet was given just what they need to survive? Does this not tell you how much God loves His creation? Should we not be filled with gratitude to be the children of such a loving Mother and Father?



Procession in Puri - Gonavaratri

THANKSGIVING DAY

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 on the occasion of Thanksgiving Day, which we are celebrating on November 23 this year.

Life is a flower that blossoms over the course of time. It is colored with beauty when we cultivate thanksgiving in our daily lives. This thanksgiving should not be limited to mere words or even an attitude; it should be reflected in our actions. This is the foundation of spiritual life. It adds dynamism to daily life.

Let us reflect a bit more seriously. We are humans. We have been dependent upon parents, family, society, a country, and even the entire human civilization of the past and the present. We must also depend on the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space. We must live in a healthy environment with countless living beings such as bees, butterflies, cows, horses, and dogs. Have we ever thought

about their roles in our lives or how they help us grow and improve our lives? Do we consider expressing our love or some reciprocal dynamic action that will help maintain their health and provide support, so they can provide for us?

When I think about my physical existence on this earth, I am deeply humbled with gratitude to my parents, and especially my mother, who sacrificed so much to raise me. This gift cannot be reciprocated in any manner. What can be said about offering thanks or gratitude? If we spend a little time with those who supported us and serve them with our own hands, saturated with love, this is true thanksgiving. We can offer ourselves to everything in the world, even the apparently most insignificant aspects, such as an earth worm or an ant, a sunrise or a full moon night. We should be always grateful and thankful for the farmer who grew our food with sweat and toil. If we cannot cultivate love and thankfulness, and ultimately thank God, how can we realize that we are human beings in

God and God in human beings? We must be practical and dynamic in our thinking and acting. Our expression of love and gratitude should not be limited to empty words; it should be rooted in the true spirit of sacrifice.

We are humans, and we are children of God. We have God-like potential for love and creativity. The Holy Bible (1 Thessalonians 5:16—18) says, “Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances...” If we follow these dictums and live in love and joy, our lives will be joyful and useful. Life is so short and so transitory, we should not

waste it on trivial pursuits. We should make our lives beautiful with love and gratitude.

Let us reflect upon a verse of William Wordsworth;

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,

Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,

To me the meanest flower that blows can give

Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears

I am truly thankful and grateful to all of you for the love and kindness you have showered on the journey of my life. I send my love and prayers to all of you.

With Love,

Prajanananda



Guruji with Sri Shankaracharya, Puri

PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANDA

“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. You must remember this, once that relationship is formed.”

Paramahansa Yogananda

“My body shall pass but my work shall go on. And my spirit shall live on. Even when I am taken away I shall work with you all for the deliverance of the world with the message of God. Prepare yourselves for the glory of God. Charge yourselves with the flame of Spirit.”

Paramahansa Yogananda



125th Birthday Celebration of
Paramahansa Yogananda at Cuttack

Teachings of the Masters

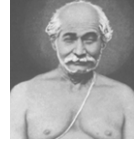


"It is not proper to unnecessarily mention the name of the guru. By this, he is belittled."

Mahavatara Babaji

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

Lahiri Mahasaya



"According to Kriya Yoga one will surely reach the ultimate goal if one keeps one's inspiration fixed on the ideal and one's attention completely absorbed in the soul."

Swami Shriyukteshwar

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

Sanyal Mahasaya



"Suffering is a good teacher to those who are quick and willing to learn from it."

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

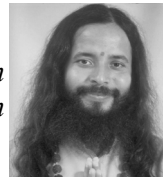


"Every religion teaches the formlessness of God. Kriya Yoga teaches how you can reach that formless stage."

Paramahansa Hariharananda

"When the wave merges back into the ocean becoming one with the ocean, it will attain perfection."

Paramahansa Prajnanananda



MYTHS AND METAPHORS

MAHABHARATA

THE FIRST EXILE OF THE PANDAVAS



Now the question came: who would be the crown prince? Although inwardly Dhritarashtra had a weakness for his sons, especially Duryodhana, he was afraid of the Pandavas' popularity. Thus, since Yudhishtira was the eldest, Dhritarashtra had no other option but to appoint him as the crown prince. According to tradition, Yudhishtira was to be king, as he was the eldest son of all, the son of King Pandu. Duryodhana, on the other hand, was the eldest of the Kauravas, and even though his father was the eldest brother, he was not the king because he was blind.

Nevertheless, due to his vanity and lust for power, Duryodhana wanted to be the king.

Ambition in Life

Knowing the qualities of Yudhishtira and Duryodhana, whom would you choose to be the king? If it were a democratic vote, then the one hundred Kaurava brothers would surely vote for Duryodhana. This is democracy. In a democracy, if there are not many good people, then it is possible to get a bad leader. Once, journalists asked a spiritual person in India why he did not enter into politics and give a better direction to the country. He replied, "Who will

elect me? There are so many Kauravas and they need a Duryodhana, they do not need Yudhishtira. Therefore, who will elect Yudhishtira?” One can become a king either by quality and tradition, or by jealousy, strength and manipulation.

The role of the crown prince was to be trained to undertake the administration of the kingdom slowly so that he could be an able king in the future. As the future king, Yudhishtira became the hope of the entire kingdom. After Yudhishtira was appointed the crown prince, he and his brothers undertook a tour of the conquest of the kingdoms located to the east and south of their kingdom. During this conquest, many things happened. In Sanskrit, it is said, *pararashtranirjeta svarashtra vardhana*, which means “conquering the territory of the enemies and creating the prosperous atmosphere of your own kingdom.” This what a spiritual seeker should do. A spiritual seeker should try to eliminate the territory of the enemies and should try to bring prosperity to his life. Who are the enemies within you? You

are to deal with your enemies; never think that others will come help you be free from them. Others can only encourage you.

Train Yourself

A child is to walk. The parents and the child’s siblings can encourage the child to walk to them. At best, for a while, they will hold the child’s hands, but they will eventually expect the child to walk alone. If you always hold the child’s hands, he or she will never learn how to walk. Similarly, the guru, the teacher, and the scriptures help us by giving us a hand to hold onto and walk with, but ultimately, we have to walk by ourselves. Indeed, there is no other way. When you have to walk by yourself, you have to eliminate your enemies: your weaknesses. Suppose in childhood the parents wake up the child to get up early. Then later in life, an alarm clock is used as a wake-up call. But often we do not get up when the alarm clock rings. Although it is so nice to sleep a little longer on cold winter mornings, we have to get up. If we get up late for school, then our teacher will reprimand us. We might feel a little ashamed as well as have a guilty

conscience. We have to train ourselves to get up on time. Through training ourselves in various areas, we learn on our own.

When Gurudev went to live in the ashram, there was no one physically present to guide him. His Gurudev Shriyukteshwarji was no more and Yoganandaji was residing abroad. You can imagine how much struggle he underwent. The opportunity that we have now is like spoon-feeding. We get so much care. In spite of that, if you do not accept discipline in eliminating your weaknesses and enemies, then who can help you? During programs or training, participants get up early and follow the schedule, but when a teacher is not there, one must develop that same self-discipline. We need the confidence to say, "I will do that, nobody else!" and in turn, we need to practice it.

In my personal life, I did not wear a watch until I started my first job. I finished high school and college, and even when I first started my job, I was the most punctual person on every occasion. How could I do this without a watch?

Even though I wear a watch now, it is just to see the time, but is not used as an alarm clock. There is no need to use an alarm clock or to have others wake you up. When I was staying at Karar Ashram, I had to go every morning to teach at the college. Gurudev used to come to my room early in the morning so that I could have the opportunity to bow down at his feet before I left. I had to walk from the ashram to the bus stand at about four o'clock in the morning. Then after work, I would again go to the ashram to be in the company of my guru-preceptor. That was my lifestyle.

One day, I overslept and heard Gurudev's footsteps walking towards my room. Immediately I jumped up and ran to the bathroom and, within two to four minutes, I had cleaned myself because I did not want to be late and have my guru-preceptor waiting for me. Consequently, if that type of discipline comes out of love, it will persist.

Unending Envy

When Yudhishtira became the crown prince, he conquered his enemies to make his kingdom prosperous. Think

of your enemies and eliminate them. Think of your kingdom: the kingdom of love, prayer, and meditation, and let it be prosperous. The Kauravas became envious and wanted to eliminate all the Pandavas. Duryodhana devised a secret plan. He convinced his father, “Since the Pandavas are so powerful and good, why don’t they begin a new city? Let them go to a place called Varanavata and live there and do their work.” The Pandavas were humble and honest. They agreed. Duryodhana made a plan to construct a temporary house for them that was made of *jatu* (wax smeared with animal tallows) that was highly inflammable. It was his intention to send Purochana, his minister, and the five pandavas and mother Kunti to live there. Purochana was to set fire to the house while the Pandavas and mother Kunti were sleeping; thus, then it would be declared an accident and all the Pandavas and mother Kunti would be eliminated. However, Vidura knew about this secret plan as well as the Kauravas’ evil minds. After the pandavas had gone to the house, Vidura sent a message to tell the

Pandavas what was going on. Moreover, Vidura also sent a person to dig a tunnel for them to escape from the house when it caught fire. If they simply escaped, then again a search for them would go on. However, if others were burned instead, it would leave no doubt as to their survival. Hence, the night when the house was to be set on fire, the Pandavas invited Nishadi, a tribal woman, along with her five children to stay in the house. Metaphorically, *nishada* means tamasic nature with the five children of drowsiness, doubt, sloth, laziness, and confusion. In spiritual evolution, one has to get rid of these qualities. That night when the house was set on fire, the Pandavas with their mother escaped through the tunnel door and left the place.

Spiritual Message

The scriptures are beautiful. Every incident has a meaning or a message. The name Varanavata comes from the word *varana*:

varayati atmalabhah iti varanah

“That which inhibits or prevents the strength of one’s own self is *varana*.”

The suffix of *varanavata* is *vatu*, which means the place of weakness where inner strength decreases, or the place of ignorance. Are we not living in a place of weakness and ignorance? What happens if we are not strong and intelligent, or our advisor is not good or we do not follow our teacher's instructions? All troubles will surely come and make life miserable. That same thing happened to the Pandavas. However, when the difficult situation came, they escaped. Although they went to Varanavata, the place of weakness, they were not weak because they had the good advice of Vidura. *Vidura* consists of two words, *vid* and *ura*, which mean "movement and knowledge." *Vidura* means "propagation of knowledge." Vidura was the propagator of knowledge and always spoke the truth. In the Mahabharata, Yudhisthira, Vidura, Shishu are the examples of extreme truthfulness.

Purochana, the name of Duryodhana minister, consists of two words, *pura* and *rochana*. *Pura* means "body", *rochana* means "pleasant, attractive, of good taste." Thus,

purochana means "body consciousness, attractive body, attachment to the body." This minister made the plans on behalf of Duryodhana. This *jatugriha* symbolizes the body of five elements made of wax, amber, and tallow. This body is made of tallow. Thus, the body is highly inflammable and can burn into ash. The five Pandavas and mother Kunti lived in this temporary house. As was mentioned, the secret tunnel or passageway was inside the house. The body is the house and the secret tunnel passage is the spiritual, or spinal, path in which one escapes. Who is Nishadi, the tribal woman? *Nishada* symbolizes the tamasic quality such as sleep. The Pandavas, on the other hand, represent both the rajasic and sattvic qualities. In order to escape through the spinal passage, the tamasic qualities must be given up. The three universal qualities are tamasic, rajasic, and sattvic. The tamasic quality makes one lazy, sleepy, lethargic, and confused. The rajasic quality makes one lazy, sleepy, lethargic, and confused. The rajasic quality makes one restless, agitated, and full of

activities and agility. The sattvic quality makes one peaceful, calm, quiet, humble, and of clear vision. The tamasic quality cannot help us in our evolution, which is why it was called *nishadi*. Nishadi and her five children were sleeping in the house when the Pandavas escaped. Sleep is the symbol of *tamas*.

Immediately the news came that the Pandavas were dead. The Kauravas rejoiced, "Our enemies are gone." Nevertheless, Vidura knew the secret story and that the Pandavas could not be eliminated. Those who did not know the entire story, however, became sad. There were three categories of people: some were sad, some were happy, and others were impartial and neutral. Likewise, with every incident, we become excited or apathetic, sad or unhappy, or impartial and neutral. A person with the rajasic qualities will have either excitement or depression.

Living in Seclusion, the Door of Asthana

The Pandavas and mother Kunti no longer wanted to stay in the kingdom. Instead, they wanted to go secretly to

another kingdom and stay incognito so that nobody would recognize them. Since they were young, strong, good-looking, and born into a royal family, as well as rich with many divine qualities, people would easily be able to recognize them. Consequently, they wore *brahmin* clothes without their weapons and travelled from place to place. Eventually, they came to a place known as Ekachakra Nagari. *Ekachakra* means "one chakra." Our body is the city of seven major chakras located in the spine and the brain. The Atharva Veda (10:2:31) says:

*astacakra navadvvara
devanam pura ayodhya*

"The body is a city of eight chakras, nine doors, and otherwise called the city of Ayodhya, where the Divine resides."

Alas, here it was, the city of one chakra. Where is the city of one chakra? Leaving the wax house through the tunnel implies entering the brain and leaving the six lower chakras and one hidden chakra inside the lower part of the brain, located near the pituitary or *ajna chakra*. One has already escaped through the

spinal column and has already entered the brain. While traveling, when the Pandavas entered the brain, they found one Ekachakra Nagari. Gurudev said, “You have seven chakras, but if you look from the top, all seven chakras become one. If you look up from below, you will see many chakras.” This is the example given by many spiritual masters.

If you stand below and look up, you see there are many, but if you go to the sky and look at the earth from outer space, it looks like one. Ekachakra Nagari is the place of unity. There, they got the news that the kingdom of Panchala has a *swayamvara*, the ceremony of choosing a groom, by Princess Draupadi, the daughter of King Drupada.



Cleaning Puri Streets



Feeding the Gomata

VALUABLE VOLUMES



THE LAW OF KARMA

BY PARAMAHAMSA PRAJNANANANDA

THE LAW OF KARMA

The Three Categories of Karma

When we begin to understand the concept of karma we will never ever blame God for anything that happens to us. We will realize that we are responsible for all that happens to us. As we sow, so shall we reap

-J.P. Vaswani

While traveling on the journey of life, we each carry our own karmic baggage. Along the way we remove some old karma from the bag to use, and we put some new karma into the bag. We have been traveling this path for such a long time. We have been traveling this path for such a

long time. We have completely forgotten about some of the consequences stored in our bag. We do not know what we are carrying or how much. Some of us have grown weary of this journey and want to finish it. Of course, many wish to continue, and they are welcome to do so. We can continue this journey for a long time and thereby make it longer and longer. However, while we travel in this world we must experience opposites: pleasure and pain, success and failure, fame and blame, and so on. We encounter these situations and pass through them. When there is pleasure, we are happy; when there is sorrow, we are unhappy. But those who want to reach the state without

sorrow, with only bliss – they must try to empty their bag.

How can we empty the backpack or at least organize it? To live successfully, we must learn to skillfully navigate the intricacies of karma and its nature. Karma means any action, and in ordinary parlance it is understood to mean the fruit (result) of an action.

Three Forms of Karma

Karma as action can be classified in three forms: *kayika* (physical), done by the gross, physical body; *vachika* (verbal, words), spoken during verbal communication; and *manasa* or *manasika* (mental, in the form of thoughts), from mental deliberation. These karmas are listed from gross to subtle. It is not easy to have control over *manasa* karma, thoughts, which arise in the mind day and night.

Karma as the result (fruit) of action can also be classified into three categories: *kriyamana* (present action or karma yet to be created), *sanchita* (accumulated or dormant), and *prarabdha* (already in the process of fruition or delivering results, current destiny). When we do something, the result may not arise instantly; it might take

some time for its fruition. We should examine these three kinds of karma to see how they affect us.

Sanchita karma is karma accumulated over countless lifetimes. We carry this karma in our backpacks when we are born. A small part of this *sanchita karma* is *prarabdha* (destiny, fate) that will fructify in this lifetime. *Prarabdha* is working before we enter the mother's womb. *Prarabdha* bears fruit in the current life. It determines, for example, into which family we are born, our place of birth, our gender, and many other conditions. Ordinarily, we do not have much control over *prarabdha*; however, we have complete control over *kriyamana* karma. During our current lives, our actions become *kriyamana* karma (continuation of karma). We create karma with instant results; however, some of this karma is also added to the accumulated results in our backpack that will bear fruit at a future date.

Destiny, the Dynamics of Karma

Prarabdha karma is our destiny. Most of our *prarabdha* karma is with us

throughout our lives. Our bodies are the product of destiny; they stay with us until death. So will many other conditions associated with our birth. Although destiny is not easy to change, some *prarabdha* karma can be changed with strong willpower, regular prayer, meditation, and the grace of holy people. Since most of what we have in our bag will manifest in the future, not in this life, it will be carried into the next life. How then can we ever become free? Are we a slave of our destiny or a maker of it? These questions are asked many times. Although destiny (*prarabdha*) is determined by past karma, in the present we have ample freedom to accumulate good karma, and we can also overcome a good portion of our so-called destiny. When describing karma, the *rishis* of India often use the example of a hunter with a bow and arrows. There are three possibilities: an arrow has been shot; it is aimed and ready to be released; or it is still in the quiver. The arrow already shot that is in the air on its way to the target is *prarabdha* (destiny); it will produce a result. Once an arrow is released, the hunter

has no control over it. It is not easy to change that arrow's direction. The arrow will surely hit and destroy the target, creating new karma. Consequently, a person must live through a result of previous actions. *Prarabdha* karma has already been initiated and is difficult to stop.

Kriyamana, Present Action

The arrow in the bow that is ready to shoot is *kriyamana*, present action. This arrow can be stopped or dropped. The hunter controls this arrow as long as he is not emotional. A choice can be made whether to shoot. If a hunter is rational and willing to listen to healthy advice, he can prevent an undesirable result. For example, someone might ask him why he wants to kill an innocent animal. The hunter is thus encouraged to let the animal live. Although he was about to shoot, he stopped because of an intervention.

This intervention, this interference, is divine. In the presence of the master, in the presence of holy books, in the presence of good company, intervention manifests, preventing deleterious behaviour. A hunter might

completely resign from a lifestyle of killing. The hunter may have one hundred arrows in the quiver and another arrow in hand, but if an arrow is not shot, bad karma will not be produced. We must be very careful when an arrow is in hand; it is quite possible that we could create destructive consequences.

The load of arrows in the quiver, accumulated for future use, is *sanchita* (deposited), unused karma, which a hunter can avoid. The arrow in the hand represents present action; the hunter has complete control over whether an arrow is shot. These karmas can easily be destroyed when we truly have the desire and very strong determination. We must learn to say, “Whatever has been done is done; it is over. I will try to free myself.”

Although it was stated that we cannot control an arrow that has already been shot, we actually have a little control. We may not have complete control, but we can control it to some extent. Some yogis say there are ways to escape this karma. For example, if a hunter realized that shooting a deer was a mistake

and thus tried to save it. Or if the hunter or someone else made a loud noise causing the deer to run before the arrow reached it, the hunter would be free from the karma. Therefore, yogis say that we can be free from all forms of karma. The Bhagavad Gita (4:37) says, *jnanagnih sarva-karmanibhasmasat-kurute tatha*: “With the fire of knowledge, you can burn and eliminate all your karma.” When the Lord says *sarva karmani*, he means “all forms of karma,” because *sarva* means “all.” So *prarabdha* can be destroyed to some extent. Other yogis believe that *prarabdha* can be destroyed to some extent. Other yogis believe that *prarabdha* cannot be destroyed, that destiny cannot be changed. Are we slaves of our destiny? The answer is that destiny has an effect, but we do not have to enslaved to it. Who can avoid this slavery? – Those who are conscious and prayerful, those who understand the law of karma and intelligently follow the spiritual guide’s instructions. Faithful seekers are not slaves of their destiny. Unfortunately, others are. Those with spiritual

intelligence know the way to escape.

How to Avoid Karma

The *rishis* sometimes use the concept of seeds to describe karma. The seeds that have already been sown will become plants; we do not have any control over them. Those seeds represent our destiny – they will produce a result. However, the seeds still in the packet, we can destroy. How? The yogis tell us that any seed that can germinate in the future can be roasted. Once a seed has been roasted, it is unable to germinate. It may still look like a seed, but it is unable to sprout and grow. The *rishis* says that we can roast the seeds of karma with the heat of prayer and meditation.

P a r a m a h a m s a Hariharananda, my adorable master, often sang a song about an intelligent fish that knew how to escape from the net spread in the lake. The song says that when the fish moved closer to the fisherman's feet, it could easily avoid the trap of the net. Similarly, we can escape the law of karma if we are at the feet of the Divine. The fire of knowledge, the fire of meditation, the fire of prayer,

and the fire of good company enable us to be at the feet of the Divine. These fires burn all karma.

***Samskaras*, the Impressions**

Although we can burn all karma, a little *samskara* (impression) will remain. Even after attaining God-realization a few impressions remain. When a realized person returns to body consciousness, a trace remains – here *samskara* means “a little trace.” Thus, even after realization a trace of *prarabdha* manifests. This is because the body is a result of *prarabdha*. Our mother tongue is due to *prarabdha*. So, a trace of *samskara* remains as a part of *prarabdha* with a realized one who is free from all karma. This can be explained using the example of a fan in a room. If the power is disconnected while the fan is moving at full speed, the fan continues to move for a while due to the inertia of motion. A realized person has some karma going on, even though they are disconnected from all desire.

The most important aspect in life is *kriyamana* karma, the karma of the present. We must be extremely

careful during any present action; we must be conscious and prayerful and sincerely aspiring for inner growth, gaining control over what we should do and what we should not do. We must be careful to not abuse and indulge the senses. Some people like to eat chocolate, but if we unconsciously keep eating more and more, it will surely create a negative result.

Yogis classify sugar, salt, white flour, and sometimes butter as white poisons. Sugar, and salt are addictive. If there is a little less salt or sugar in the food the tongue immediately reacts. Once we taste a little salt or sugar, the tongue tells us, "Eat a little more." But if we are strong enough, we can stop eating before we overindulge. We can also stop negative speech, as well as many other negative *kriyamanas*. Be determined – "I will be good. I will do good. I will see good. I will be nice to others as much as I can. I will try to improve myself." This is *kriyamana* karma. So, what should our goal be? Whatever we do from moment to moment from this day onwards, we should do our best.

We must discipline ourselves and try to improve.

Spiritual Attitude

Spiritual pursuit, God-conscious living, prayer, meditation, and seeking the grace of God and the masters, is the only way to be free from the burden of karma. There's is no other way. We must say: "No! Enough is enough! Here and now I want to make a turn. I want to change the course of my life." When we adopt this attitude and determination, we will move forward and not look back. Why? What is the goal? Whatever is in my karmic backpack – I will destroy it! Why should I continue to lead a life of suffering and misery?

According to Lord Buddha, "Life is suffering, and the cause of suffering is desire and expectation." Cessation of desire is cessation of misery. To live, there are some necessities. We need certain things to survive, but we should not have endless desires. We must separate our need from our greed. Whatever comes to us, let us accept it. We should not run away from our problems, neither should we plan too much. Live in the

present moment, not in the future, not in the past. Make a vow to live a life of God consciousness, a life of knowledge, and a life of love.

The Bhagavad Gita (4:37) says that nothing is purer than knowledge. Knowledge is the fire that burns and eliminates all karma. What kind of knowledge destroys karma? What knowledge can make us free? It is Self-knowledge. Who am I? Who is God? What is my relationship with god? When we are established in that knowledge – which is called *samadhi* in the language of the yogis, “pure love” in the language of the devotees, “established in truth” in the language of the wise – when we are established in that truth, in Self-knowledge, in pure love, we are free. For example, when I was asleep I was suffering because I was having a dream about a fierce tiger that filled me with great terror. Upon awakening from that dream, I still had the sensation of fear in my body. However, once completely awake, I could see that it was not really a forest, it was my bedroom. Where is the tiger? It was only a phantom in my mind. To be

awake and not live a life of fear, a life of anxiety, a life of unnecessary sorrows, to change your life to one of love, God consciousness, and knowledge, depends upon one person, and one person alone. Many times we decide to take a stand, to make a real change in our lives, but somewhere along the way we become weak and again return to the old trap of karma. To be free, to be established, we need strength, and determination – I will do it!

Even when we know the way, we still need to walk towards the goal. Knowing the way is not enough. Having an idea of the goal is not enough. It is really quite simple: if you do not walk, if you do not try to advance, you will not reach the goal. From time immemorial, saints, sages, and divine incarnations have been calling to humanity: “Get up! Get up! Go! Do not look back. God has given you two eyes on the front of your face. Go forward! Quit looking back all the time!” People always say, “Why is this happening to me?” It is happening because of karma. Something you did, knowingly or unknowingly, is producing a result. When your clothes are

dirty, clean them. Go forward: that is the way.

Elimination of Accumulated Karma

We have accumulated karma since the beginning of our journey. Is it possible to destroy *sanchita* karma accumulated over countless lifetimes? Former Soviet Union President Gorbachev once spoke at the United Nations and said that American leadership wanted the entire world to be free from nuclear weapons, but they did not want to eliminate their own weapons. He was pointing out that if you want the entire world to be peaceful, you must start with yourself. If we want peace in the world, we should practice what we preach. This is a strange world. We give advice to others, but we do the opposite. On the spiritual path we must first transform ourselves, and then we can advise others.

Our dilemma is how to free ourselves from the burden of the accumulated karma of many lives, which we carry in our backpacks. We have one assurance: *sanchita* karma, accumulated karma, is not going to produce fruit in this life. Thus, we are assured that we

have a period of freedom. For example, if we have a fixed deposit in a bank for twenty-five years, that money cannot be used for twenty-five years. *Sanchita* karma, accumulated karma, will create fruit in coming lives, not this one. The key is, if we can be completely free in this life, *sanchita* karma will not bear fruit at all. If we are liberated, we are free from the burden in our backpack of karma. If we cannot be totally free in this life, we still have some choice over what will give fruit in the next life. We must be clear. Accumulated karma will produce results in the next life in the form of destiny, but we can shape the destiny of our next life with a very goal-oriented, meaningful lifestyle now. In our present lives, especially during the last part of our lives, the thoughts that predominate when we leave our physical bodies will create the ground for our destiny in the next life. The last thoughts will be the deciding factor creating our destiny and selecting our karma – the karma will attract our destiny and manifest in our next life. As a consequence, if we cannot completely eliminate our *sanchita* karma in this life,

we can control what kind of karma comes forward in the next life. We hold our next life in our hands. Remember: freedom is our birthright.

Freedom from the Clutch of Karma

The ninth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita contains a beautiful statement, *api cetsu-
duracaro bhajate* (9:30), “Even a heinous person who has done many bad things in the past, but who turns his mind towards Me, loves Me, that person is very dear to Me.” God is love. God is loving and kind. Many people have a fear of God. Why? If you have ever read the Quran, you know that it begins with: “Allah, who is all merciful and compassionate.” In the Bible, Jesus tells us that God is love. And in the Upanishads, we are told that the Creator is *sat chit ananda svarupa*, “immortal, conscious, and blissful.” The scriptures do not tell us that along with being a god of love, God is also a God of anger. On the contrary, God’s love is much more than tiny human love, our miniscule worldly love – which is actually only a shadow of love. Think about how much a mother loves her baby. Even if

the baby passes stool on her clothes, the mother will love the baby and clean it with great tenderness. We all are children of God, no matter how old the body is. In the eyes of God, we are children; but our egos tell us – “I am big.” When our ego diminishes, and we accept ourselves as the children of God, God the loving Mother will clean us, and take us in Her compassionate arms.

One day a devotee was conversing with God, “O God, I have been praying for You to come to me. Why do You not come?” In response, God told the devotee, “My child, you have only been praying for a few days. I have been patiently waiting for you for lifetimes, wondering when my child would stop its play and call out to Me.” This same thing happens to us; sometimes we want to play, sometimes we want to cry. We may even spend time meditating with the teacher at an ashram or a retreat, but when we go back home, the world is attractive and alluring. The play of the world makes us think: “I should do this, I should do that.” Indeed, that is what human life and human misery is. Keeping the

goal constantly, steadily in front of us is not so easy. That is why very few people attain realization. But the choice is ours. We choose how to live, how to change our lives. We must not blame God or blame others; we must look at ourselves: "I will finalize my journey back to God. I will establish my relationship with God." It is very easy; it is very difficult. It is very easy to establish the relationship,, but it is very difficult to maintain it. It is very easy to get admission to a school, but is very difficult to continue to study for a long period of time. It is very easy

to be initiated into a spiritual practice, but to continue practicing day after day without a break is difficult. So, what to do? It depends upon us. Will we continue moving in the wheel of karma...again born, again living, again dead, again born...? How many parents have we had? How many families have we been born into? How many places have we lived? We do not remember. Thousands of times, millions of times, we have repeated this cycle. But are we truly ready to be free? If so, it all depends upon us.



Children's Day at Balashram

THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI

Sutra 22

Intensity of Desire

mrdu-madhyadhimatratvat-tato pi visesah

Word Meaning

mrdu – gentle or slow;
madhya – medium or moderate; *adhimatratvat* – extreme or intense; *tatah* – therefore; *api* – also; *visesah* – specialty or remarkable

Translation

Success varies according to the means adopted to achieve it: slow, medium, or intense.

Commentary by Shri Lahiri Mahashaya

In that there is also distinction of inferior or superior such as:

mrdu *tivra samvega*—mild, yet intense

madhya tivra samvega—medium, yet intense

adhimatra tivra samvega—remarkably intense

Metaphorical Explanation

No sincere effort is unfulfilled, but the result

depends upon the intensity of practice. The *samvega*, or spiritual acceleration, discussed in the previous sutra, is of three types: mild, medium, and intense.

The pain of separation is the cause of divine reunion. Then the pain of separation is intense, the effect is equally remarkable, and the result is immediate. Here the separation is the feeling that reminds us of our ignorance of the Lord. Depending upon the intensity of desire, one exerts energy to accomplish reunion.

Without past *su-samskara* (good merits acquired in the past) one does not get the desire to follow the path of meditation and spiritual upliftment. In many cases, there is desire but no proper means. Here “means of meditation” implies good health, finding a true guide, support from the family, congenial place and time, and a good intellect to comprehend life.

In the Bhagavad Gita (7:3), the Lord says:

*manusyanam sahasresu
kascid yatati siddhaye
yatatamapi siddhanam
kascinnam veti tattvatah*

“Among thousands of people, rarely someone tries to attain perfection (*yoga siddhi*). Among uncountable seekers someone might know Me in reality, that is, attain the state of perfection.”

O Seeker! Do not feel despair upon hearing all this. Already you have accepted the path of yoga. This shows your past good deeds. Now you need sincere effort to overcome all the obstacles that you face. Nothing can obstruct you in your journey, Follow the path. Walk diligently. Shun all lethargy and idleness. The

cowards and the weak lose hope, looking at the distance and difficulties on the path, but you are brave and strong.

Listen, even the Lord has said in the Bhagavad Gita (9:30):

*api cetsuduracaro bhajate
mamananyabhak
sadhureva sa mantavyah
samyagyavasito hi sah*

“Even if a person of the vilest conduct meditates upon Me with undivided devotion, he is to be thought of as a noble one, for he has indeed rightly resolved.”

Thus, do not lose hope in your spiritual progress. Practice with love, as you are taught by your guide.



Children's Day at Balashram

STORIES TO LIVE BY

CULTIVATING PATIENCE

One-day sage Narada set off to visit the Lord. Along the way he found two seekers, one meditating in a cave and the other under the tree. When they had finished their practice both seekers were surprised and delighted to have the darshan of Narada and they both greeted him with due honour.

When they learned that sage Narada was on his way to see the Lord they decided to ask Narada for a favour. They implored, "Great sage, would you kindly ask the Lord how much time we both need in order to reach realization?" Touched by their heartfelt request Narada agreed. Later when he was with the Lord Narada remembered the question of the seekers and conveyed it to the Lord. The Lord thoughtfully paused a moment and then finally said, "Tell the one who meditates in the cave that it would take him

twenty years to be realized and the one who meditates under the tree that it would take him as many years as the number of leaves on the tree. Sage Narada bid farewell to the Lord and set out and on the way stopped to communicate the Lord's assurance to the seekers. When he told the cave dweller that the Lord said it would take him twenty years to be realized, he responded, "What?! I have to stay in a cave and meditate like this for twenty years?! If that is so it is better to leave my sadhana right now and try again in the next life."

Then Narada told the other seeker that it would take him as many years as the number of leaves on the tree under which he meditated. Tears instantly came to the seeker's eyes and he said with excitement, "At least God assured me that one day I would be realised! It does not

matter how many life times it takes. Such divine assurance is enough.” Shortly after that the grateful seeker reached realization. How? In yogic language, one complete breath

is equivalent to one lifetime. One inhalation is a birth and one exhalation is a death.

The message of the story is that we must cultivate perseverance and patience.



Children's Day at Balashram

AROUND THE GLOBE

Activities of Prajnana Mission Go Navaratri Mahotsava

A unique auspicious and elaborate event was celebrated at JagannathPuri during the month of Kartika, Oct 20 - 28, 2017.

Since time immemorial India has understood the value of cows and cattle and their contribution to creation. A Vedic rishi declared, *gavahvishvasy amatarah*: “The cow is the mother of creation.” Since the Vedic period the *rishis* taught us to love and protect cows for our well-being.

From 20 to 28 October, ParamahansaPrajnanananda presided over the Go-navaratri - nine days dedicated to the holy cows - celebration in Puri, Odisha, India. Many events took place, such as the Surabhi Maha Yajna (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* were led by reputed monks of India, and there were many cultural programs and exhibitions.

Balashram is progressing well on all fronts and recently celebrated children’s day in the divine presence of Guruji, Paramahansa Prajnananandaji.

Mahasamadhi day of our beloved Guruudev was commemorated worldwide in all ashrams with special worship, and meditations. The celebration at Hariharananda Gurukulam in the Gurumandir, conducted in the divine presence of guruji was attended by countless disciples who offered their homage.

H a r i h a r a n a n d a Gurukulam celebrated **Christmas and New Year** in the divine presence of ParamahansaPrajnanananda with special meditation and a candle parade.

ANOTHER MILESTONE IN KRIYA HISTORY

A NEW ASHRAM IN AUSTRALIA

P a r a m a h a m s a Prajnananandaji's was in residence for a short week in Australia ashram in Castle Hill (our temporary ashram – a rented property). During this visit, with Guruji's guidance and crucial support, our work to establish a permanent ashram has speeded up. During Baba's stay our bank loan also got approved and granted and many loving Kriyavans came forward to offer their support for this noble endeavour of finding a permanent ashram.

Indeed, we did find a beautiful property in Lisarow (Central Coast, NSW) that Baba has visited during his visit and which was liked by everyone. We have pursued and secured this property just one day before Gurudev P a r a m a h a m s a H a r i h a r a n a n d a j i ' s Mahasamadhiday.

Set in an elevated position with a rural outlook, this building sits on 4.4 acres of green

pastures and rolling slopes. It has a private court yard and has beautiful views from every room, with plenty of sunlight and sea breezes.

The property has a boundary fencing and also a large dam and ample potential for further expansion. With two resident monk teachers the ashram would serve all centres in Australia, including Tasmania and also New Zealand and Fiji.

With the help and support of the worldwide kriya family, we hope to expand the ashram and serve the kriya community nationally and internationally in future and spread the message of our great masters

We have also just launched our brand-new website with outstanding and collaborative work by many loving Kriyavans. We are so grateful to Guruji for his guidance and inspiration and to all the helping hands on all fronts who have made this dream come true.



Pictures of the New Ashram
Australia

Visit our web site:

www. prajnanamission.org

For current information.

E-mail: seva@prajnanamission.org / contact@prajnanamission.org