

Sthita Prajna



Guru Vandana

*Ananta samsara samudratara
Naukayitabhyamgurubhaktidabhyam
Vairagyasamrajyadapujanabhyam
Namonamahsrigurupadukabhyam*

My prostrations to the holy sandals of the guru, which serve as the boat to cross this endless ocean of samsara, which endows me with devotion to Guru, and which grace with the valuable dominion of renunciation.

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FROM THE EDITORS :

Purity is the doorway to a calm and peaceful life.

Paramahansa Prajnanananda

In this issue, Gurudev focuses on dharana and dhyana , how contemplation follows the stage of concentration in the Message of the Master.

Prajnanavani talks of Divine Motherhood. "God's best gift to humankind is motherhood" says Guruji, "Be the mother of yourself, be the mother of your mind, be the mother of your own emotions, be the mother of your own thoughts, be the mother of your own ego."

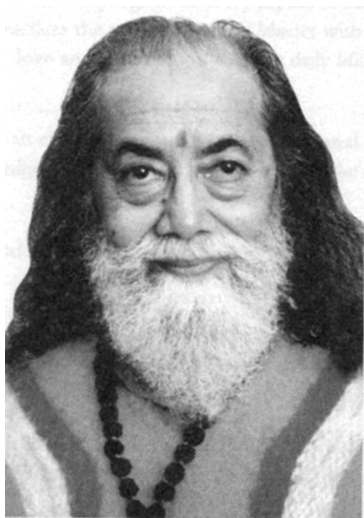
The division of Kuru kingdom in Mahabharata indicates how each human body is a kingdom divided into two parts: one part the dominion of the Kauravas and the other of the Pandavas.

The question of after life and future karma is discussed in the Law of Karma under our valuable volumes. We introduce another series with this April issue – the teachings of Avadhuta who learns from twenty four Gurus.

We bring you some highlights of the Puri – Kolkatta kriya pilgrimage and the news of the 20th International Kriya Yoga Seminar. With Guruji in residence, the Gurukulam was a hub of many activities. We bring you the news of the many activities and celebrations of Prajnana Mission.

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

CONCENTRATION AND CONTEMPLATION



What is Concentration?

Concentration and meditation are two pillars of success in daily life, both mundane life and spiritual life. People in all walks of life need concentration in their daily lives. No matter who one is, or what one does, one needs concentration to achieve success in all activities. A student needs concentration, so also does a teacher. If one lacks concentration, not only will it bring failure, but also it will waste time and energy.

First comes concentration, and then

meditation. This is why Sage Patanjali said, while discussing the eight limbs of Yoga, *dharana* and *dhyana*, concentration and meditation, come one after the other. They are correlated and causally connected. First you must have good concentration. Concentration is staying in one state or one thought for a long period of time. But the mind is restless. When the mind is turbulent, then the breath also becomes restless. As a result, you cannot focus on one activity or one point for a long period of time. So control your breath to control your life and mind. It is said, in the yogic scriptures, that one who can practice one hundred forty-four *kriyapranayama* with love, in one stretch, can get good concentration easily. When concentration is good, it is transformed naturally into the state of meditation.

The Art of Meditation

Meditation means there is no awareness of mind, thought, bodily sense, and worldly sense. How is one to

attain that state? It depends upon sincere practice of the techniques. For good meditation, one needs a few tips:

1. Have a deep desire and a place to sit and to meditate.
2. Allot some time every day for the practice of the meditation techniques.
3. Set a particular time for meditation. Accept that time as designated exclusively for meditation and nothing else.
4. Have a comfortable seat or cushion for your meditation.
5. If your body is straight, and also flexible, then you can meditate better.
6. Follow the guidelines of meditation as taught by your teacher.
7. If your belly is not overloaded with food, then you can meditate better.
8. Avoid sleepiness during your practice of techniques.

9. Maintain a cheerful state while practicing.

10. Meditate in the subtle presence of God and Masters, and maintain a prayer full attitude.

Some Experience in Meditation

Always feel that Food is within you, and is breathing through your nostrils. Do you think you have a limited body? In meditation, one is free from all the play of the mind, good or bad. When one goes deeply into meditation, the body becomes all-pervading. The Father has created all the organs of action and the organs of perception — eyes, mouth, nose, ears, hands, and legs. The Father abides within; this is *sa*. He is not only inside, He is both within and without; it is why you are alive. Your whole body is the body of God. *Bhumianta rikshavyoma*: All space inside and outside is God.

When you focus in the fontanel, you will feel that you are near the Father. If you remain there, thoughts will not come. All the time you are to say, “Lord, Lord, You, You.” Otherwise thoughts may come. Some people chant mantras and

count rosary beads to keep themselves busy and free from restlessness. Feel His living presence. He is all-powerful, and is within you, so you should know Him. You are fortunate that He is in your whole body. He is the King of kings. He has come into your body, and He is serving you constantly. He gives the appetite as well as eats the food. He is doing everything. See that He is the doer. He is telling you to feel *ham* and *sa* —”You and I are one and always have been one.” Stay focused in His abode and then you will naturally develop the ability to perceive Him constantly.

God was alone. He then decided to be many. He created every human being and gave free will to all, and as a result you all have unlimited ambitions. He has become many — many thoughts, many dispositions, many joys, and it all is the joy of God. It is why God created the universe, only for you all. He is within. He gives so many things to you. Any thought that comes, remember, it is God. Ocean and waves are one, so also thoughts and God are one. If it is a bad thought, you should

avoid it. You must remove your negatives carefully; negatives will try to come constantly. You are to face them.

Everyone is addicted to something or another. Nowadays, many people are addicted to the television or computer. Students want to keep the television on in the room even when they are studying. As a result, they are absent-minded and have no concentration. Similarly, if you stay at home to meditate, you will find many distractions. So find some time to be in a place where you can avoid tempting thoughts, and have a deep desire to meditate.

You require Concentration

You are the power of God. You should feel that you are always one with God, as the gold is one with the ornament. Fix your attention in the fontanel; feel that God is there in your head. Concentrate there. When you are meditating, you must have joy. Maintain a cheerful attitude. One day you will perceive that your whole body is God. Once you have touched the live electrical wire, your whole body is full of electrical current. Similarly, when you are

connected with God, then your whole body is the body of God. So with love, hear the divine sound, watch the divine light. That light is the super-consciousness state. Through that light, you will reach the *samadhi* state. This is the state of wisdom. *Prajnanam brahma*: Wisdom is Brahman. *Prajnana* means wisdom. It is the highest state of knowledge.

The physical body is full of delusion, which is darkness. People are always after negatives. You should remove your wrongs. If you meditate and remain in the abode of God, you can easily avoid your anger, pride, cruelty, and insincerity. Everyday, you should see that you are becoming a better person, a new self. You should practice it everyday.

In every step of your life, watch God. God is walking. God is talking. Every moment, be consciously aware that God is doing everything. Every moment, love. God has given you a beautiful body, love Him. It is the body of God, and it is

given to you as a gift. God is so kind to you that He is still breathing in you. Without breath, you have nothing. With the help of your breath, you do everything. The power of God functions in you, He is the doer.

Sit silently for a while, and ask your conscience, what is your change? What is your gain? Who are you? Is it enough? Is it God-realization? No, you are to work on the lesson very nicely, just as a student does the homework. You should practice it with utmost sincerity and love. With the practice of the proper technique, you should try to hear the divine sound. This will give you more calmness, love, peace, and harmony and, at the same time, constant divinity.

So, day and night, you should not waste your time in forgetfulness. Instead, watch every action throughout the day. Do everything with love. Try to feel the power of God. Without breath, you cannot do anything. Realize that your whole body is the temple of God.

PRAJNANAVANI - THE VOICE OF WISDOM

DIVINE MOTHERHOOD BECOME A MOTHER



Men are what their mothers made them.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

There once were two brothers who loved each other dearly. Both were farmers, and they lived in the same village just a short distance from each other. One was married and had many children, while the other one never married. One day the married brother said to his wife, "You know, I was just thinking about my brother living all alone. I thought perhaps he might be having some difficulty

getting enough food, and getting things done on his farm. I really think I should help him. But I will do it secretly, without his knowledge."

So from that time on, every night at midnight, he would go to his brother's house and leave plenty of food by his front door. Then he would go home.

Now, coincidentally, at that same time, the other brother was thinking, "My brother is married and has so many children. He must be

having so many difficulties. I must help him.” Thus he devised a similar plan to help the married brother.

During the night, he would gather up some food and put it by the front door of his brother’s house. This sweet, brotherly ritual continued for years and years. Neither brother knew who was leaving the food at their door. Then one night, when they both were bringing items to the other’s house, they met each other on the way. “Hey, brother, where are you going?” “Where are you going, my brother?”

Later, when people heard the story of the two brothers, they wanted to construct a memorial where the two brothers met. However, they could not agree on what type of memorial it should be. Should they construct a temple or a mosque or a synagogue?

The Truth is, we are all children of God. God’s best gift to humankind is motherhood. Once, while travelling through Delhi, I saw a sign on a church that said, “God created the mother because, He cannot be everywhere Himself to serve His children.” How true this

is ! Motherhood is the supreme symbol of love, service, and sacrifice. A truly successful person is one who has developed motherhood within. Every person, regardless of their physical gender, should be a mother. How? Be the mother of yourself, be the mother of your mind, be the mother of your own emotions, be the mother of your own thoughts, be the mother of your own ego. You have many children, and I have many children –our thoughts, emotions, and ego are like children. So be a mother. Every spiritual seeker should try to be a mother. Be the mother of yourself, of your own body. Take care of it the same way a mother takes care of her little baby. A mother wants to feed her hungry child good food. Just as the mother is concerned about her child, we should be concerned about our body also. Do not neglect your body. If you neglect your body you cannot be a sincere seeker. Just as the mother knows her baby should sleep, we should ensure that we get rest. Food, sleep, exercise, activities – these are all necessary for the body.

You should also be the mother of your mind. Who else is going to take care of your mind? You know the mind personally. If your body is sick, others can help a little. However the mind is so personal, so internal. Only you have an intimate relationship with your mind. Thus, be the mother of your own mind, and take care of it. Keep it healthy, keep it pure, and keep it strong!

Now you may wonder how one goes about taking care of their mind. Let's say child does not want to study but wants to play outside instead. However, the mother knows what is best. She knows that school is essential; therefore the child must do his homework. What does the mother do? She tells her child, "First do your homework, and then you can play!" Mother puts a priority on her child's homework over its play. In your mind, maintain your priorities in what you should do and what you should not do. But be careful: the mind is very mischievous and many times the mind is very weak. Often we do something which we should not do. What then is our recourse? One mother told me she had stopped

smoking, but again and again temptation still comes. We try, and then the old habit comes back again. What to do? Remember: my mind is like a child. I will take care of it. The mind is not willing to do certain things, and also it wants to do many other things. Do not let this dishearten you; it is very natural. Yes, it is a natural tendency that the mind wants to do things that are not good.

It is very easy to create new habits, but it is difficult to give up old bad habits. Therefore, create some good habits in your minds so there will be neither the time nor the opportunity to think of bad habits. When the mind is idle, when we feel lonely, when we feel depressed, that is when we go back to the old habits. When we are in the company of good people, when we are feeling more spiritual, and when the mind is more enthusiastic, there is no time to think of useless things.

Thus, first and foremost, keep your mind busy. Be the mother of your own ego. I told a group of students that I wanted to take a poll. I asked how many of them agreed that ego is bad. Next, I asked who

thought the ego is good. Many of them were not able to decide whether ego is good or bad. I also asked if anyone knew what the ego really is and how it protects us. In truth, very few understand what the ego is, and yet we judge that it is good or bad. I got a variety of answers to my question, such as “painful illusion” and “a product of education and environment.” I was given many answers, none of them bad, none of them wrong. However, if one really understands what the ego is, one will get a beautiful new outlook, and that is: the ego is not bad. Just think of an ant – if you put your foot on the ant, what will happen? It might bite you. Why does the ant bite? It bites in order to survive. If you could ask the ant why it bit you, the ant would tell you. “To protect myself.” So when the ant bites us, is it bad? No, it is natural. Whatever happens, whether it is an ant that bites, a snake that hisses, a bird that sings, a rose that blooms with beauty, or an insect that eats the petals of the flowers, all these things are natural. Whatever God gives us is natural, and this we should understand and accept.

What is ego? If you ask an ant, “Who are you?” and it could speak with a human voice, it might say, “I am an ant.” If you ask a tiger, the tiger would say, “I am a tiger.” And if you ask a human, he or she will tell you, “I am a human being.” When God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, He said, “I am That I am.” (Exodus 3:14, KJV) So this “I am” is the common feature; whether it is the ant or the tiger or the human or God, all say “I am...” But the next question is: I am what? In other words, you are, but *what* are you? Is it wrong to say that I am a man? Is it wrong to say that I am an old man? Is it wrong to say I am young, I am cold, I am hungry? It is natural. It speaks of who you are. You are something.

Who are you? From childhood, as we slowly grow we see our body undergo many changes, from a little baby with tender skin to an old person with wrinkled skin. As time goes on, we see all kinds of changes in the body. You have undergone many changes in your own mind from your childhood until today; so many emotions have come and gone.

Who am I – am young, I am old. I am small, I am tall. For one who really knows their true identity, saying “I am this” or “I am that” does not create a problem.

In Sanskrit, there is a definition of the ego. In the classical yogic scriptures, every aspect of life is nicely defined, thus there is a beautiful definition of ego. Ego in Sanskrit is *ahamkara*: “I am the doer. I am doing.” If we think that “I am superior,” that is the ego. So here are two definitions for ego: “I am the doer,” and “I am superior to others.” “I the doer” becomes stronger with body consciousness. When I feel that I am the body and I am doing everything with the body, that is the bidding of the ego. Ego begins at the age of two. At the age of two, the child develops the sense that “I am the body.” Thus the yogic literatures state that *ahamkara* means one who thinks, “I am the body.” We should know who we are. Who are you? Are you this body? Are you in the mind? If you are not, do you know why?

Let us look a little more closely at the definition of ego: “I

am the doer” and “I am superior to others.” It is because of these two attitudes we feel that others have offended us. If we do not get attention from others, then we are unhappy. However, let us look at this illustration to see the delusion of the ego. The rose blooms, and the bee comes. The rose attracts and encourages the bee to come; it is natural. If a bee goes to one flower but does not go to the other flower, does the other rose become unhappy? So, in what aspect do we consider ourselves superior to other? It is our foolishness. So what can we do about this? First, you must understand and contemplate the nature of the ego – “I am the doer,” and “I am superior.”

Now how do we deal with this “I am, I am, I am,” this constant expression of our so-called ego? All day we are thinking: “I do this, I know this, I got this, I give this.” Ego can be classified in two ways: ordinary ego and spiritual ego. There are five types of ordinary ego, all of which are related to the five chakras in the body. Ego due to having money, owning a house and car, or having a certain bank balance

relates to the money center, or *muladhara chakra*. That ego says, "I am rich," or, "I am poor." But can anybody in this world say what rich is? Am I rich? Why? Are you poor? Why? Can anyone really say "I am rich," or "I am poor?" Can anyone say "I am tall," or "I am short?" If you say, "I am tall," it is incorrect. If you say, "I am short," it is incorrect. You can only say, "I am taller than him (or her)." The same holds true for rich and poor. You can say that you are richer or poorer than someone else, but you cannot say, "I am rich" or "I am poor." Who sets the standard? It is just the ego thinking, "I am rich," "I am poor."

Ego arising from one's gender says, "I am a man" or "I am a woman," and that relates to the family center or *svadhisthana chakra*. Ego due to one's good health or food relates to the navel center or *manipura chakra*: "I am vegetarian, I am non-vegetarian; I am fasting, I am eating food." Let's say you fasted for three days and you are going around telling everybody. No doubt, you didn't fast for Christ or God, you fasted so you could tell

everybody that "I fasted." Next we come to the ego of emotion: "I am loving" or "many people love me." This relates to the heart center, or *anahata chakra*. Finally, there is the ego of religion and philosophy, which relates to the neck center or *vishuddha chakra*: "I am Hindu, I am Christian. I am Muslim," and so on. These five types of ego make up what is known as the ordinary ego.

Now let us look the other ego, the spiritual ego. Do you know what spiritual ego is? "I am meditating with my meditation technique; he is my guru; she is my guru; my guru is God-realized, your guru is not." People become egotistical about belonging to the "best religion," their scriptural knowledge, their ability to meditate, or their spiritual progress. Ego can be avoided by the sincere practice of meditation, prayer, and cultivating humility. So long as the gross "I" (ego) will not die, a seeker cannot perceive the real "I" (the soul within).

There is nothing inherently wrong in saying "I am" or "I have." God has given you a body, and so to say that it is a man's body, or a

woman's body, is it wrong? But ask yourself, "Is this body really me" I will carry the nose of my mother on my face for my entire life while in this body. Let it be long or short, no matter, I will carry it. In the same way, I must love this body my whole life, no matter whether it is short or tall. This body gives rise to body-related ideas like, I am tall or short or thin. It is natural. This body was a gift to you. Therefore you should use this body as an opportunity to evolve. A blind man cannot see, but his ability to feel things is heightened. He loses one thing, and he gains many more things. Be happy with what you have.

I knew a young man who lost his sight at the age of ten, one eye while playing cricket and the other eye in an accident. He sings so beautifully. I once asked him, "In your childhood you had eyes to see, but now you don't. Are you sad?"

He asked why he should be sad. He's a young man of twenty-four, who has finished his master's degree at the university. He said, "I had eyes, and I lost those eyes, but still I have done many things." Be happy and content with what

has already been given to you. Do not compare yourself to others and in turn become unhappy with what you do not have. Be thankful to God for whatever has been given to you. Never complain to God that He has or has not given this or that to you. Those who complain will never be happy no matter what God gives them.

One morning I told someone to smile and be cheerful. Immediately the reply was, "It is not easy." Sometimes when we are sad or upset, happiness takes away the problem. If you smile within, you smile remembering God. People are always willing to laugh at others. So laughing within should not be a problem for us.

Also, we should never compare our life with others. Life becomes troublesome when we compare. When we compare ourselves with others we either become unhappy or we think we are superior. With whom shall I compare myself? I should compare myself with somebody who is like me. Can I find anybody who is like me and compare myself to them? Can you find anybody who is exactly like you? This diversity

is the beauty of God's creation . You cannot find another person to compare yourself to because you are one of a kind. One student dresses nicely and can sing well; his friend is also a good singer but cannot read very well. Another friend plays sports nicely but cannot sing. Everyone is unique. You are unique in yourself. The unique quality in you says, "I am a rose in God's garden!" Be happy with your uniqueness – celebrate it! Say to yourself, "I am a unique creation of God. No one can be compared to me ." Therefore, if I cannot compare myself to you, how can I say that I am superior or inferior? Thinking this way gives one a great sense of joy and freedom – we cannot compare ourselves to anyone else.

If we only identify ourselves with ego, we cannot remove this complex of superiority or inferiority from our life. If I say that I am a man, I am separating myself from the animals. If I say that I am a man, I am separating myself from the animals. If I say I am an old man, I differentiate myself from others. If I say I am young, I

differentiate myself from old people and babies. If I say I am Indian, I differentiate myself from Europeans and Americans. If I forget my uniqueness, I begin to belittle myself with all these ideas. But I am unique and cannot be compared to anyone. So remember this: "I am the unique creation of God!" I cannot compare myself to others and other cannot be compared to me.

Someone once wanted to play the role of Krishna in a play. So his friends decorated him to look like Krishna, because Krishna has been portrayed in many pictures. Thus some imagination was involved. For example, they thought his skin should be blue, and he should play a flute. There was a story that once God came in the form of Krishna to see how the Lord's devotees were doing. So he went to the temple and stood outside, playing his flute. All day long, people were walking in and out of the temple, but nobody looked at him. Some people thought he wanted money because he was playing his flute, so they gave him some coins and then went into the temple. Inside the temple they

knelt down and bowed to a stone statue but did not look at the Krishna standing outside. Krishna was a bit curious about the strange people going into the temple and bowing in front of a stone statue; these people who never even noticed him. He decided to declare that he was Krishna, but everybody thought he was mad, except for a few people who went to him. So even though he declared that he was Krishna, no one believed him. Then he thought, "Maybe the priests will believe me." Later, when the temple was about to close, the real Krishna went inside and took the hand of the priest, and told him who he was. Now Krishna was really in trouble! The priest said, "If you are Krishna, then be happy in your heaven. I am happy here in this temple with the stone Krishna. Don't interfere in my business!"

Krishna was unique, and there will never be another Krishna. Jesus was unique; there will be never be another Jesus. If Jesus came again, people would not believe it. If Jesus is to come, he will come in some other way, not like we have imagined. Why? Because this is how God

expresses Himself, in manifold unique forms. God is unique and God's creation is unique. We are unique, in incomparable. You cannot compare yourself with others. I can compare my skin with your skin, but can I compare my totality to your totality? Comparison is only possible for very small aspects of our life. Do not make your life miserable with such comparisons.

In my village there were two traditional Indian cows, one black and one gray, that loved each other. Sometimes they quarrelled and would lock their horns, but then afterwards they always reconciled and licked each other to show their friendship. Whatever love animals have, we human beings lack it. We lack it because we constantly compare ourselves to others, and in turn we make ourselves small.

If we contemplate the different aspects of the ordinary ego, we will see how foolish comparison really is. Even though you may have money, you cannot say you are rich. You can only compare and say, "I am richer than you." You have a small car, but I have a big car; my car is bigger than

yours. So when comparisons come, ego becomes stronger. I am superior; I am the doer – this is nothing but the ego. Use the ego in a very intelligent way. Ego is neither good nor bad. It depends upon how we use it. It is like the biting of the ant – ego is useful for self-protection. Ego is dangerous to our hearts, but ego is also useful in helping us to grow. For instance, look at tulips. Each tulip has a different color and it maintains its identity. To think of identity is not wrong, but to compare yourself with others and think that you are superior to them is wrong.

Make your life more loving; make your life complete. Be the mother of your own life. Take care of your own ego. Be the mother of your body, and be the mother of your mind, your thoughts. Be the mother of your own emotions; be the mothers of your own ego. Take care of them and seek the qualities of motherhood with love, service, and sacrifice. Like a beautiful flower, let motherhood blossom and grow in you. If you are really a mother, if you really have the loving and compassionate nature of God,

you will not have ego. But do not be the mother of others, in the sense of disciplining or telling others what to do; first be the mother of yourself. Motherhood is the very best gift of God.

Develop these three qualities: love, service, and sacrifice. These are the natural qualities inherent in every mother. Every mother sacrifices, not the father. The sacrifice of the mother, the service of the mother, the love of the mother, is unique and beyond comparison. Be the mother of your own spirituality; you are to help yourself, no one else. Others' help is temporary, but self-help for your own growth is long lasting. When the child goes to school, a loving mother will not stay in bed and simply order her child to get up and go to school. A loving mother gets up before the child gets up; a loving mother prepares the breakfast before the child is ready and also helps the child to get dressed and go to school. Similarly, you must take care of your own spirituality. Get up at the proper time and tell your mind to sit for meditation. You must guide your mind gently but firmly,

telling it what is good and what is harmful. Be the mother of yourself. God is Mother, and God is Father. However, all-compassionate, all-merciful God is more motherly than fatherly. Jesus received so much love from his mother, but he thought of God as the Father. What joy to know that the Divine, the Beloved of our hearts, is more mother than father. God is so loving, and that love is the irresistible quality of the Mother.

How much longer will breath remain in this body? I remember a poem from one of my schoolbooks that talked about how one measures one's life. The poem's meaning was that it is better to be like a lily,

because even though it blooms for just a short time, it gives beauty to others. It is better to burn a bright lamp for a short time than to give only smoke with less fire. Although the oak tree lives for hundreds of years, and the lily only for a few days, it is better to be like a lily. Be like the lily and bring beauty to the world. Live with that outlook. How can we know how much time we have left? Live with love and a smile. There is no life without problems. Just look at the life of grass – it gets smothered with snow in winter, but still it struggles and survives and smiles, and by springtime, its problem has melted away.



8th Annual Parchi Parikrama



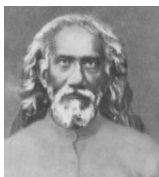
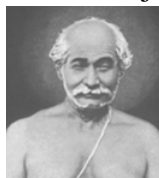
Teachings of the Masters

"Among the living, man is the best creation. He chooses one of two paths: A life as a householder or a life of renunciation. Where can be found the justification for creating differences between a householder and a sannyasi?"

Mahavatara Babaji

"The simmering flames of worldly life can be extinguished if someone maintains his internal detachment while he is going about his everyday duties."

Lahiri Mahasaya



"All work that man is capable of doing in this world, is still inferior to Kriya properly performed in unshaken knowledge and devotion."

Swami Shriyukteshwar

"Breath and mind are correlated. When your mind is restless, your breath is restless. A restless mind causes pain."

Sanyal Mahasaya



"The first rule in prayer is to approach God only with legitimate desires. Pray for their fulfillment, not as a beggar but as His child."

Paramahansa Yogananda



"Man is the manifestation of both good and bad qualities. In some people, good prevails whereas in others evil is predominant."

Swami Satyananda



"Meditation is beyond imagination, hallucination and speculation."

Paramahansa Hariharananda



"Meditation is a silent prayer."

Paramahansa Prajnanananda



PURI – KOLKATA PILGRIMAGE

Puri Kolkata kriya pilgrimage from 20-25th of January with guruji Paramahansa Prajnananandaji was a memorable event visiting many holy sites and specially places associated with kriya Masters and other great saints.

Totapuri Ashram

The event Started with a visit to the quiet and peaceful AdvaitaBrahmashram also known as Totapuri Ashram, a spiritual haven where the naked monk Sri Totapuri(believed to be the guru of Sri Ramakrishna) had lived. It is a beautiful place to meditate with strong spiritual vibrations. The ashram also has the samadhi of the great guru and the room he used with his belongings and bed. The here is a huge banyan tree on the campus where guru is said to have had the experience of nirvikalpasmadhi. Many great saints have visited this monk over the years. Gurudev Baba Hariharananda had visited this place.

Karar Ashram

Karar Ashram was another great place to visit specially for kriyavans. The kriya yoga ashram founded by Priyanath Karar later Shriyukteshwarji, the great Kriya Guru of two Paramahansa disciples – Paramahansa Yoganandaji and Paramahansa Hariharanandaji.

Our Guruji Paramahansa Prajnananandaji had also spent his sadhana period in this ashram serving Gurudev. The ashram has the samadhi mandir of Shriyukteshwarji. It was thrilling to see the small room in which Gurudev meditated and idol of his chosen deity Mother Kali. This is also the place where Gurudev had the darshan of Shri Mahavatar Babaji.

Gurudham

Next was a visit to Gurudham – an ashram established by another of our great gurus Shri Sanyal Mashashaya, a house holder yogi and the youngest direct disciple of Shri Lahiri

Mahashaya. He established this ashram in Puri, to guide and teach sincere seekers into the path of Kriya Yoga.

Anandamayi Ma

Another beautiful place was the ashram of Anandamayi Ma, a mystic saint and a personification of divine love in Swargadvar Puri. The meeting of Ma with Gurudev Baba Hariharanandaji comes to the mind of every kriyavan. Gurudev had met the mother first at her Puri ashram. From the first day they met he became her dearest child whom he called Sahib Baba. She also visited him at Karar ashram one time during the period of Gurudev's silence and seclusion demanding to see him and left after giving him few practical instructions. (River of Compassion)

Visit to Pattamandai

A 5-hour bus trip took us to Pattamandai of Kendrapara district of Odisha. Visiting the birthplace of Shri guruji was a great experience. We walked through the streets of Bandha pada his birthplace. Came across the Shiva temple that we have heard of before, where guruji as little Triloki sat and studied at the nearby canal

holding the key for the temple and also played the role of a little priest, opening the temple for those who missed the temple timings and performing abhisheka to Lord Shiva carrying water from the canal.

Visiting the little shrine of Radhakantha adjacent to the family home the family deities of Radha and Krishna that were brought from Ujjain by the ancestors) was another great experience.

We visited the house he was born (now remodelled) and the back yard and pond and hay stacks, shared some stories and made our way back to Pattamandai Dhyana mandir-Kriya Yoga ashram of Pattamandai. It was nice to meditate there for a few minutes before heading for Balashram.

Balashram- Balashram

The greatest dream come true of guruji, Baba Prajnananandaji, is Balashram our residential school for the poor and orphan children, where 500 children are provided free residence and education with special emphasis on value education. The first batch of children have graduated from the school and are in Junior

colleges or vocational schools. It was great to see the children thriving so well under the loving care of the ashram provided with every facility and extracurricular activities of dance, music and sports. The children are competing in state level and district level competitions and winning prizes. A great cause worth supporting by every one of us.

Kolkata Program

Kolkata program started on the 23rd of January when 50 participants boarded the flight to Kolkata from Bhubaneshwar along with Sri Guruji who said it is the first time he was travelling with so many disciples on board. Through out the Kolkata pilgrimage the kriya family of Kolkata extended great love and hospitality and was very helpful in taking care of what ever was needed.

Visit to Paramahansa Yoganandaji's Kolkata Home

It was a great privilege to see Yoganandaji's home in the company of guruji. The home where the great master grew up, the small room in which he meditated and had the darshan of Babaji Maharaj and also of Lord Krishna. Considered an incarnation of

love Paramahansa Yoganandaji was a born leader and a spiritual dynamo as Lahiri Baba said he would be, while blessing him as a child. His love for God and surrender and his assurance to come back till each of the disciples was realized

The same evening the kriya disciples of Kolkata extended a warm welcome to the Guru and the pilgrims arranging a venue to receive them. Swami Sadhananandaji welcomed the group and then followed a short talk by Sri Guruji.

Ghurni –

It was a great feeling to have gone to Ghurni – the birth place of Sri Shyamacharan Lahiri. Though the original house was not there we could visit where it was and the place where the family temple was where Babaji appeared to Lahiri Baba's mother when he was still an infant.

Howrah- Vijaya Krishna Residence

A warm welcome was given by the family members of Sri Vijaya Krishana (Gurudev's first Guru), when we visited the home in Howrah. There was a talk by his grandson on what the

acharyataught followed by a concluding talk by Guruji. Sri Vjaya Krishna was a great acharya who taught Jnana yoga and the philosophy of living in Truth. He was like a rishi living as a house holder, and lived at this residence in Howrah until the last day of his life.

Habibpur– The Birthplace of Gurudev

Visit to Gurudev's birth place was another great experience. The district of Nadia in West Bengal has been the home of many a great saint including Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The grandsons of gurudev gave us a hearty welcome. We could see the puja place where Gurudev has learnt to worship alongside of his father, and this worship is continued by the family even to this day. It was nice to be treading the same soil as Gurudev did especially in company of Guruji, his chosen successor.

We could also visit the banyan tree and the Ganga ghat where Shriyukteshwarji had the darshan of Shri Mahavatar Babaji.

One of the afternoons we had a beautiful visit to Sri

Rajarajeshwari temple associated with Shankaracharya Peethas. The idol of the divine mother in the main temple was simply stunning and was surrounded by 64 yoginis. We had a great festive lunch arranged by the Kolkata disciples at this venue.

Belur Math and Dakhineswar

The holy sites of Belur Math, Swami Vivekananda's residence which now is a museum of Ramakrishna Mission and Dakshineswar temple where Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa lived with Sharada Ma and worshipped Mother Kali were added attractions.

At Dakshineswar, the Divine Mother is known as Bhavatarini, a beautiful shining black idol with her right foot placed firmly on the chest of a prostrate Shiva. Both idols are contained on a thousand petalled silver lotus. She is the divine mother absorbed in whose devotion, Sri Ramakrishna is said to have many conversations with Her and many divine visions. We had a nice darshan and the Friday evening arati at the

temple was something special to participate in.

The closing ceremony

The closing ceremony of the pilgrimage was at the

Dakshineswar Temple. Sri Guruji concluded the pilgrimage with a closing remark that the pilgrimage of life does not end until one is realized.



Ghurni - Birthplace of Lahiri Mahashaya



Belur Matt, Kolkatta

MYTHS AND METAPHORS

MAHABHARATA



Evil Advisors of Duryodhana

Joy in the life of the Pandavas became instant heartburn for the Kauravas. Until that day, they thought that the Pandavas were eliminated for ever. But their plan could not succeed. Although they were heartbroken, Duryodhana had in the course of time found two evil advisors that would help him deal with the Pandavas in the future. One advisor was Karna the first child of Kunti, but still known to all as the son of a chariot driver. In a confrontation with the Pandavas that will be told later in the book, Duryodhana made him the ruler of the kingdom Anga

and thus gained his friendship. Karna always remained grateful to the generous gesture of Duryodhana. The other evil advisor was Shakuni, Duryodhana's own maternal uncle. Although this episode is not in the Mahabharata, it has been said that since Duryodhana was the cause of death of Shakuni's brothers and other family members, Shakuni made a vow to take revenge by killing all of the Kauravas, although his nephew Duryodhana did not know about his plan. Nevertheless, with his advisors now in place, Duryodhana began to feel

confident that success was soon at hand.

After the Pandavas were blessed by nuptial ties with such a royal family and having regained their strength, Duryodhana was again plotting their elimination. Everybody soon started speaking badly of the Kauravas because of the fire tragedy, which they thought was a conspiracy. Everyone was eager to see the Pandavas. The people loved the Pandavas because of their morality and sincerity, and this made the Kauravas even more envious. People did not love the Kauravas because they had notorious and mischievous natures. Because the Pandavas had won the hearts of the people, there was no other way but to bring back the Pandavas with honor to the kingdom, and thus the Pandavas returned.

Division for the Kingdom, Outside and Within

In the meantime, Duryodhana convinced the blind king, his father Dhritarashtra, to divide the kingdom into two parts. They would live in one part, Hastinapura, and the Pandavas would go to Indraprastha and make their own city and live there. The

Pandavas welcomed the proposal. Thus the kingdom of Bharata was divided into two: one part to be ruled by the Kauravas and the other part to be ruled by the Pandavas. They would each have their own kingdom and capital.

Similarly, each human body is a kingdom divided into two parts: one part is the dominion of the Kauravas and the other is under the rule of the Pandavas. Sometimes we become like the Kauravas, completely restless, running after sense pleasure, and other times we are calm, quiet, and introverted like the Pandavas. Most people have dual personalities. Often we are good, other times we are not, which is why Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa said, “You should look at a person day and night.” That means you should see the person as he or she is throughout the day, as one may give the false appearance of being a good person. Because of our divided kingdom, our lives are divided. We pose to be honest, simple, and loving, but inside, we feel different. That is why Jesus said, “Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but

inwardly they are ferocious wolves.” (Matthew 7:15) This is the divided kingdom, and because of this divided kingdom, the trouble started: rivalry, competition, and attempts to capture the kingdom of others. Usually, spiritual people are humble, where as materialistic people are strong and aggressive, Duryodhana was aggressive and Yudhishtira was humble.

The Katha Upanishad (1:2:2) describes two paths: one is the path of *shreyas*, the path of good, and the other is the path of *preyas*, the path of pleasure. While many people take the path of pleasure, only a few people take the path of good. In the path of pleasure, people are busy with their senses and are extroverted and restless. In the path of good, people use their subtle intellect and are introverted, calm, and quiet. The Holy Bible (Matthew 7:13-14) says there is a wide gate and narrow gate. The wide gate symbolizes the path of pleasure and the narrow gate is the path of goodness. The path of pleasure is associated with pain and suffering. This path appears to be attractive, but ultimately, it

is painful. The path of goodness is one of eternal happiness. The Pandavas and Kauravas symbolize these two paths. The Kauravas symbolize the path of pleasure, enjoyment, restlessness, extroversion, temptation, greed, and dissatisfaction. On the other hand, the Pandavas symbolize the path of goodness, righteousness, morality, honesty, self-control, peace, introversion, and God consciousness.

Hastinapura and Indraprastha

The names of these two capitals, Hastinapura and Indraprastha, have beautiful spiritual meanings. *Pura* means “city.” *Hastinapura* comes from the root word *hasti*, which means “elephant.” Elephants are strong and powerful animals. However, they are easily trapped by covering a pit with a grass and leaves and tying a female elephant nearby that will call for males to come. As the males come to her, they fall into the pit, and are not given food in order to tire and weaken them. Then the elephant trapper ties the trapped elephant and pulls it out of the pit. *Hastina* symbolizes elephants. Elephants are the

symbol of sense pleasure. And the Kauravas ruled in the city of Hastinapura where there was more sense pleasure. Therefore, if one's mind goes more towards sense pleasure, one lives in the city of pleasure, Hastinapura.

The capital city of the Pandavas was Indraprastha. *Indra* comes from the word "senses," *prastha* means "to exit, to go out." *Indraprastha* is the place where the sense organs have no role to play. It is a place of sense control and purity. Indraprastha was a completely barren, unused wasteland that was given to the Pandavas.

Maya, the Friend of Yudhishtira

Yudhishtira had a friend named Maya who was a special architect. In the mythological

description, Vishwakarma is the divine architect who plans everything in heaven. Maya is the architect of the *danavas*, those who live a life of duality. *Danava* and *daitya* are derived from the word *dvaita*, or duality. *Danavas* or *daityas* are those who always love material prosperity and live a life of duality. Maya Danava had exceptional skill, and he was a good friend of Yudhishtira. When Yudhishtira was thinking of building a new city in an abandoned forest area, May Danava came to help. Some people believe that Maya Danava had constructed his own city in some parts of America, which is called the Mayan civilization. It is a traditional belief in India that the Mayan civilization was the plan of Maya.

VALUABLE VOLUMES



THE LAW OF KARMA

BY PARAMAHAMSA PRAJNANANANDA

The Law of Karma

Karma Transported from One Life to Another

Since all our karmas are not being enjoyed or exhausted in our present lives, this raises the question regarding the nature and existence of an afterlife. Without some form of afterlife, where does our karma exist? The answer is, whatever religion you follow – Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism – the soul exists after death. Christianity or Islam may not believe in rebirth; instead, it describes a day of judgement after death. On this day of judgment, according to our karma (deeds), we will either be sent to heaven or hell. But there is no description or discussion about where we will go or how we will exist after physical death.

Often people ask, “Why don’t religions such as Christianity discuss the next life?” This is a very practical topic.

Suppose we are going to school, trying to complete a curriculum for a degree, and there is a rule that we must complete the program within four semesters, in two years. If we do not succeed in that time frame, we will not receive another opportunity. When we know we cannot extend the time, we seriously, sincerely, with dedication try to complete the course. On the other hand, when we have a possibility to extend the time, we would likely say, “Okay, if I do not finish this semester, I will finish next semester.” We postpone our efforts. The time limit encourages us to complete the course in a given time. In

Christianity limited time is provided to achieve the ultimate goal.

When I was working on my master's degree, I did not regularly attend class because I was more interested in spiritual pursuits, and thus, as per the rules, I was not permitted to take the examination for each individual course. Fortunately an exception to this rule existed if someone was willing to take all the parts of the exam at the same time. My thought was that even though I did not attend the classes, I surely was not wasting time. If I would have spent the class time sleeping or playing, it would have been wasteful. However, according to my analysis, I had used my time in the very best possible way. Hence, I fervently prayed to God and appeared for the comprehensive exam, and by God's grace, I got surprisingly good results. My friends were quite amazed. In fact, even I was surprised. How did this happen? It reminded me of the story of Paramahansa Yoganandaji and how he completed his bachelor's degree. Indeed, it was Yoganandaji and the masters who helped me complete my

master's degree with a good rank at the university, in the allotted time.

Since Christianity teaches that this is the "one and only life" we must use every moment to achieve the goal. But what happens if we do not?

It is not always easy to avoid negative thoughts when praying or meditating, to always be good, to try to help others. That is why Arjuna asked Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita (chapter 6), "O Lord, You are describing meditation, praying to God. If I try to meditate, if I try to pray to God, if I try to be detached from worldly pleasure, and I cannot reach the goal, what will happen?" Arjuna is directly asking what happens when we cannot achieve the goal in this lifetime. In this case we neither enjoy the world, living for sense pleasure and achievements, nor do we reach the goal. Will we miss out on both family life and spiritual life, like a torn cloud being neither here nor there? The Lord offered a beautiful response to Arjuna's question. He told Arjuna not to worry, that nothing is in vain; nothing is wasted. Whatever is achieved in this lifetime, wherever you finish, from there you begin in the next

life. The Lord said, "One might be born into the family of a learned yogi. After taking such a birth, one regains the God consciousness earned in previous lives. One then tries the utmost to achieve complete liberation."

Part of Karma Is Kept for the Future

When we do something, the impact and result is partially experienced immediately, but the rest is stored for the future. We might forget about it, but karma goes with us as we travel from place to place. *Sanchita* karma (accumulated karma) travels with us from one life to another, from one state to another. *Sanchita* karma also manifests within one life. For example, suppose we ate unhealthy food such as sodas filled with chemicals or carcinogenic food coloring, without reading the ingredients. When we read the labels on food products, we discover what is really inside. I read the label on a juice container that said "home-squeezed orange juice." Below that was a large label that said "100% Fresh Orange Juice," and under that, in smaller letters, was written, "from concentrate." People are tricked by these

methods, and they do not realize it. People are tricked by these methods, and they do not realize it. People continue to use food products without knowledge, by habit, or by eating what others are consuming. We see what others eat, thinking we should also consume it. When we visit somebody's house, they serve a particular beverage, so the next time we entertain guests we think we should provide the same drink. But just because someone does something does not mean we should do it.

Once when I was young, I had to visit nearly twenty families. It is a common practice in India to offer lemonade, tea, or coffee to visitor. When I told my hosts that I did not drink tea or coffee, they gave me a glass of water, or a glass of wear mixed with yogurt, or a glass of homemade lemonade. However, the person accompanying me did not refuse the tea, and so he ended up drinking twenty cups. By the end of the day he said, "You are intelligent. You either took water, buttermilk, or homemade lemonade, but I drank twenty cups of tea. Even when I told the hosts, 'no no no,' they insisted I take a little." You

can imagine his condition after drinking so much caffeine.

The impact of unhealthy food is not immediately visible. It accumulates in the body, and over time, its effect manifests in the form of fatal diseases. Similarly, when we imitate others in thought, word, or deed, or when we are overpowered by impulse and indulgence, we are not aware of the impact. Later the result appears in the form of suffering and misery.

We eat food without any knowledge about its contents and its effect. We may have consumed something repeatedly only to find out later that the food, such as soft drink, is carcinogenic. When we initially enjoyed the drink for satisfaction, we were unaware that it would adversely affect our health in the future. In all cases, a part of our present action produces an immediate result and another part of the action accumulates (as *sanchita* karma), producing fruit tomorrow or the next day or later.

Life of Evolution

Gurudev used to say that human beings are the result of evolution because they have passed through many lives and many experiences, and that the

human body is a little universe. That is, a human birth is an accumulated effect of birth and rebirth, many experiences. The human body is a little universe because many impressions are present within it. If we accept that we are a little universe, we must also accept that everything is within us – even the ferocious and poisonous negative aspects of tigers, lions, snakes, all the animal qualities, as well as many good qualities. Because all these past tendencies exist within us, they will manifest when the proper environment triggers them. As we journey through time with our backpack of *sanchita* karma, the necessary environment will cause both positive and negative karmas to bear fruit, life after life.

In India, people exist who can read people's faces. Some tribal people can look at a face and make very accurate predictions and assessments. When they look at someone, they can discover an animal character or predominant quality. While observing the face, nose, and eyes, they talk about the quality of that animal, not actually stating that you are that animal. It is quite unbelievable to learn how our

inherent natures are so close to animal natures. This is the result of *sanchita* karma.

How Can We Exhaust *Sanchita* Karma?

For eons, *sanchita* karma has been stored in our astral and causal bodies. Even though it will not produce effects in this life, it will travel with us to the next life along with our new karma from this life. Hence, karma is increasing in size, number, or quality every lifetime. We have past savings, and we have some present savings, and both will be with us in the next life. Nevertheless, we have the choice of whether we want to take it to the next life or finish it here.

It is said, *anantakotijanmantara*, “for millions of lifetimes you have been carrying (your karma).” Consequently, it should be clear that we are increasing our karma, not decreasing it. The karmic load always increases, especially *sanchita*. Only a small part of it becomes *prarabdha*, and we continuously add karma to our load of *sanchita*. That being the case, how can we possibly exhaust all this karma?

There is only one way, and that is through knowledge. Is it the knowledge resulting from listening to a teacher or reading a book? No, it is only the knowledge that arises from *S e l f - r e a l i z a t i o n . A h a m b r a h m a s m i .* After someone becomes realized, *sanchita* karma is exhausted, that is, the accumulated karma of millions of lifetimes is instantly gone. The darkness that has permeated a cave for millions of years is eliminated instantly with a flash of light. Strike a match and there is light; the darkness vanishes. *Sanchita* karma is like cotton, and realization is like wildfire. Just as wildfire quickly burns cotton, realization is the fire that vanquishes *sanchita* karma.

Remember, *sanchita* karma does not produce fruit in the present life; therefore, it can be destroyed. In other words, we can destroy all our savings, but we cannot withdraw it before maturity. Such is the essence of *sanchita* karma. We have a karmic savings account that will not be withdrawn for a long time. We must decide whether we wish to use this savings account as future destiny or be free from it. If we want to use our *sanchita* karma, we should not follow the

spiritual path; instead, we should focus on the world.

Sanchita karmas are destroyed with the dawn of Self-knowledge (*brahmajnana*). We should enjoy our *prarabdha* (destiny) with a practical spiritual outlook (*vyavaharikadrishti*). The seed-like subtle impressions of the entire accumulated actions lie dormant in the mental space (*chittakasha*). When people attain illumination through direct intuitive knowledge or deep meditation, they realize that they are not the five sheaths, but the transcendental reality. These people act as the witnessing intelligence (*sakshi*) during all their experiences. When subtle impression of a present action remains only as *sanchita* karma stored in *chittakasha*

(the pure form of memory) in the *manomayakosha* (mental sheath), it can no longer enchain a liberated person.

Please understand that by ignoring the spiritual path, it will take countless lifetimes to evolve. *Sanchita* cannot be exhausted without spiritual practice and realization. Otherwise, it merely accumulates in the form of good and bad karma. If we destroy *sanchita*, we can be free. As long as *sanchita* karma remains within us, we are bound. We must also wonder that since we cannot exhaust *sanchita* karma, only eliminate it by spiritual discipline and ultimately realization, can we change *prarabdha* karma, our current life's destiny? Can we influence the course of our lives?

DATES TO REMEMBER

April – June, 2019

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| April 19 | : | Birthday of Lord Buddha |
| May 10 | : | Birthday of Swami Shriyukteshwar |
| May 17 | : | Foundationg day of Prajnana Mission |
| May 27 | : | Birthday of Gurudev Hariharananda Baba |

MY GURUS

A Worldly King Meets the King of Life

In the Hindu tradition three gods form a divine trinity: Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Shiva. Lord Brahma is the creator, Lord Vishnu is the sustainer, and Lord Shiva is the god who destroys. Although they are gods, they are not *brahmachris* (celibate). In fact, all three gods are married and live with their families. The beauty of Hindu mythology is that gods live like ordinary people. No doubt their lives are of higher consciousness, but human tendencies are visible.

One day Devarshi Narada, the celestial sage, set off to visit the gods. He decided to stop at Lord Brahma's abode first. When he arrived, Lord Brahma greeted him warmly and the two friends spoke for a while, exchanging pleasantries. Shortly thereafter, Lord Brahma's wife, Brahmani entered the room; she was delighted to see Devarshi Narada. She immediately began asking questions about his travels, wanting to know

what he had been doing, whom he had seen, and where he had been. Devarshi Narada smiled good heartedly and said he had just returned from a lovely stay on earth.

"I must say, O Narada, you look unusually happy and peaceful. Did something special happen while you were there?"

Devarshi Narada nodded his head in affirmation. "I spent time in the most glorious good company. I had holy *satanga* with a gracious couple living in hermitage, a divine *rishi* and his wife. These people live simple and austere lives; they dedicate every moment to the Divine. Each and every day is spent in spiritual discussion, meditation, and prayer. Oh, and the wife of that *rishi*, she is truly remarkable. One can say she is the paradigm of beauty in every way."

Brahmani had been smiling and enjoying the conversation until the moment Devarshi Narada started commenting on the qualities of

the *rishi's* wife. After hearing Devarshi Narada singing her praises, Brahmani became a bit restless and unsettled. Human nature typically feels jealousy after hearing words of praise about someone else. Simply put, jealousy and ego are born out of comparison. We often compare and contrast ourselves with others, and as a result, we develop jealousy or ego. Moreover, deep-seated complexes often grow and develop from this.

Feeling a bit insecure, Brahmani meekly asked, "Narada, are you saying she is more divine and pure than I?"

Devarshi Narada paused for a moment to ponder her question; then he said, "Yes, I must admit, I think she is. You see, when I am in her presence, I feel a tremendous surge of love, joy, and happiness. The truth is, the bliss that I feel while in the company of the *rishi* and his wife is all the proof I need."

You can imagine what went through Brahmani's mind when she heard this. She quickly thanked Devarshi Narada for coming, then bid him farewell and left the room. Thus, Devarshi Narada went on his way.

Next Devarshi Narada visited Lord Vishnu. And because Lord Vishnu is omniscient and can foresee coming events, he immediately directed Devarshi Narada to find Lakshmi, his wife, and spend time with her. Soon an encounter just like the previous one took place. Lakshmi said, "O Narada, you look so blissful and calm. Where have you been?"

"Well, before I came here, I paid a visit to Lord Brahma. But prior to that, I spent some time on earth in the company of a wonderful *rishi* and his wife."

Lakshmi's curiosity was piqued. "Really? Who are they? Where do they live?"

They live in the southern part of Central India, and they are so nice."

Lakshmi thus continued asking questions, especially about the *rishi's* wife, and Devarshi Narada described her in the same manner as before.

"Well," said Lakshmi, "There is one more question I would like to ask you, Narada. Do you think she is more beautiful, more patient, more tolerant, and more helpful and

kind than I?" (She asked this question because Lakshmi is the symbol of serving and helping others.)

Again Devarshi Narada said that she was. Unfortunately his answer added fuel to Lakshmi's already simmering jealousy, and, like Brahmani, she quickly dismissed herself and went away upset. DevarshiNarada departed.

His final stop of the day was Mount Kailash, where he met with Lord Shiva. When DevarshiNarada arrived, Lord Shiva cordially greeted him and told him to spend time with his wife Parvati. As you probably guessed, the same situation ensued; after a short time, Parvati became jealous and left the room.

Shortly thereafter the three divine mothers met to discuss their common problem: the problem of jealousy. One of them said, "Can you believe the way Narada spoke about that woman? He kept praising her, saying she is so pure, so beautiful, so divine, so loving, so caring, so tolerant – so much better than us!"

Another mother soon chimed in, "Yes, I know what you mean. I don't believe all

those things he was saying about her either, like why she is so pure. He told me her purity was due to living in such a holy environment, because her husband is a great *rishi*. But look at our husbands; look who we are married to : Lord Shiva is a meditator, Lord Vishnu is full of tolerance and compassion, and Lord Brahma creates worlds. We live every day with these gods. So isn't it only natural that we should have more good qualities than she? Think about it — she lives on earth. It's a well-known fact that human beings have more bad habits than we do. How can she be more loving and divine and better than we are? Impossible! Let us test her."

However, before proceeding any further with this story, let us acquaint ourselves with the divine couple that DevarshiNarada was describing. The wife's name was Anasuya, and her husband, the *rishi*, was named Atri. These two names come from the Sanskrit language and have a deep spiritual meaning. Consider the name Atri;a means "not," and *tri* means "three." The Sanskrit word *tri* has the same meaning in

English. Thus, *atri* means “not three.” But what does “not three” mean? Each of us is influenced by the triple qualities of nature: *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. The sattvic quality is calmness, and purity; the rajasic quality is restlessness and activity; and the tamasic quality is dullness, slothfulness, and laziness. During the day we are all very active and busy, but we also have moments when we feel peaceful and calm. After we get home from work, finished with our duties for the day, we begin to feel a little dull and lethargic. Every one of us is influenced by the triple qualities of nature to some degree. Nevertheless, if we are calm, quiet, and peaceful, our nature is more sattvic. If we are active and restless, we are more rajasic. And accordingly, if we are lazy, dull, and inert, we are more tamasic. Hence, the name *Atri* means “one who is beyond the three qualities,” in other words, “one who is always in divinity.”

Another meaning of *atri* is that *tri* refers to the three periods of time: past, present, and future. Most of us stay in the past or in the future, very few of us stay in the present. We think about tomorrow –

tomorrow we will do this, or tomorrow this or that will happen. We also brood over the past, things that are over and done with. How many of us truly live in the moment, in the here and now? Very few indeed. A spiritual person repeatedly strives to remain the present, forgets about the past and future, and ignores all the meandering thoughts about them. A spiritual person thinks, “I am here now; thus I will live in the present. I will use this very moment, this very breath, in the right way.” Those who practice this go beyond the mundane world, and advance further on the path of Truth. They develop spiritually, especially during meditation, because at that time there is no past, present, or future. The soul within is naught but timeless spirit; it dwells in the realm of eternity. On the other hand, the body is conditioned with time, as is the mind. Thus, *atri* can mean “one who is always in timeless spirit, not attached to the body.” The timeless should be beyond the three periods of time.

The wife of the *rishi* was named Anasuya. In Sanskrit *na* means “not,” and *asuya* means “jealousy, malice, ego

and intolerance.” Hence, *asuya* is common human nature. We are not able to tolerate others and that intolerance extends their prosperity. If somebody else is happy, if somebody else is peaceful, ordinarily, the human mind is intolerant. We develop an intolerance of others’ joy and happiness. Why is Anasuya so happy? What happened to her? “Anasuya” is one who is free from all the human vices, such as intolerance, jealousy, and pride.

This is the divine couple Devarshi Narada described. Anasuya, the wife, is one who goes beyond the negative; Atri, the husband, is one who goes beyond the positive. Atri goes beyond the triple qualities of nature and their natural flow. It is not that the flow is bad, but Atri was above this flow. Together, this couple is beyond the negative and the positive. Remember, in the ultimate reality, good and bad don’t exist. Nevertheless, while we are trying to grow and evolve, discriminating between good and bad is essential. We need to do what is good and forsake what is bad. For example many people come to stay in our ashrams. While staying there, they get up early in the

morning. Even though it is expected that all should arise early, it is not a military camp where a bell rings at a specified time and everyone gets up. In other words, it is not that there will be some sort of punishment if you don’t get up. Hence, while staying there, you should get up early out of love, not out of fear of punishment. After you rise, you should meditate and do every activity with love. No doubt some can do more and some can do less; each person’s bodily capacity is not the same.

Everyone should experience the ashram as a sacred place to come together and share, a place to live with a spirit of cooperation, with understanding and fellow feelings. This attitude is only possible when we rise above our negative qualities of laziness, jealousy, and focusing on the mistakes of others. A faultfinding nature is dangerous. Whenever we find fault with someone, we should make ourselves the target of our criticism. We should analyze our own mistakes rather than finding mistakes in others. Paramahansa Yogananda wrote a letter to Gurudev Hariharanandaji a long time

ago; it is printed in many of our books. In the letter Paramahansa Yoganandaji advises not to seek mistakes in others, because doing so fills life with negativity. We should not focus on the mistakes of others, because thinking about those mistakes causes our minds to become impressed with them. In the same vein, when we focus on good things, beautiful things, our minds become impressed with those positive things. As is our minds, so will be our outlook. As is our outlook, so will be our minds. They are interconnected. Atrina Anasuya were beyond both positive and negative; they were a beautiful couple living a God-conscious, happy life.

The three divine, loving mothers came together to find a way to verify whether Anasuya was as good as DevarshiNarada described. Is she real beautiful? Is she really chaste? How can we know? How can we test? The three mothers sat together like teachers in a school. They decided to prepare a test for Anasuya. They agreed that the first thing to do was to ask their husbands to go to her and test her chastity, to confirm whether

she was pure chaste, and beautiful. They also had to decide what the test should be. When their plan was finished, they disclosed it to their husbands who were not at all happy with what they heard. Nevertheless, to please their wives, they consented.

A short time later the three gods in the guise of three hungry Brahmins knocked at the door of the poor, humble couple and asked Anasuya for a meal. Anasuya was alone because Atri had left to meditate in solitude and would not return until later that evening. After asking for some food, they told Anasuya they had a special request. What the request? They said they had taken a special vow and that whoever serves them food must do so without any clothes covering the body. This test is really critical for a devout and chaste Hindu woman because in the Hindu tradition a guest is considered God: Whoever is knocking at your door is God knocking at your door. Every guest who comes to your house is considered God; no one is excluded. The Taittiriya Upanishad says, *atithidevobhava*. *Atithi* means “guest,” and this passage

means, “You will love and respect your guest as God.”

If Anasuya welcomes the guests and agrees to serve them in the manner they requested, she is not pure. On the other hand, if she refuses their request, she is not fulfilling her duties as a householder to welcome and serve every guest. So this was her test. No matter what she did, she would do wrong. If she said, “No, I cannot serve you,” she is not doing her duty. And if she says, “I will do as you ask,” she is not doing her duty. Such is the crisis we face in our daily lives. Should I do it, or shouldn’t I?

The divine trinity of Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Shiva, in the form of three Brahmins, were welcomed by Anasuya and invited to stay. After hearing their request, she was faced with a problem, and the three special visitors were wondering how she would deal with it. Anasuya told them to please make themselves comfortable while she prepared some food. As she was cooking, she was trying to devise her own plan. The one thing she knew for sure was that she would fulfil her duty without comprising her purity.

Then she prayed, “O God! If I am truly pure and chaste in this critical situation, bless me now to remain the same. Let these three Brahmins be like three babies.” Because of the innocence of this lady of purity and chastity, and because of the heartfelt sincerity of her prayer, the three Brahmins transformed into three babies. Then, in the presence of the sweet babies she completely removed her clothing. She likewise removed the clothes of the babies so the babies were also naked. Anasuya then placed these three babies on her lap and began feeding them. They came to eat, so she fed them. They wanted her to be naked, so she made them naked also. This is the beauty of spirituality. If you decide to do something, do it with love, do it with prayer. The impossible will become possible. Never lose hope. A life of prayer, a life of devotion, a life of dedication can work wonders; it can manifest miracles in daily activity, in worldly situations.

The three loving, divine mothers were waiting for their husbands to return — but they did not appear. Somewhere faraway on earth, the three husbands in the form of three

small babies were still on Anasuya's lap. They were so happy and content they didn't want to leave. The three mothers became ever more impatient wondering where their husbands could be. To make matters worse, they didn't know how to find out what happened to them. But someone could help, and that someone was Devarshi Narada. Devarshi Narada is also known as the mischief-maker — and mischief-makers like to discover things that will expose the truth. Indeed, it was Devarshi Narada who masterminded this play in the first place, with the sole intention of revealing the truth.

Devarshi Narada soon arrived at their door and inquired how the three mothers were doing. In frantic unity, they all quickly explained that their husbands had gone to earth quite some time ago to visit the woman he had told them about, and they were really worried because they had not returned.

“Why were they visiting her?” Devarshi Narada innocently asked.

“Well, you see it's like this, we sent them there to test her, to see if she is really as

pure and beautiful and chaste as you said. We wanted to know whether she is better than we are. However, they have been gone so long that we are concerned, wondering why they have not returned. Will you please go to earth and find out what is going on?”

Devarshi Narada went to the hermitage where Anasuya lived. When she heard him outside, she opened the door and let him in. Upon entering the room, Devarshi Narada was surprised to discover that the three mighty gods were now three little babies, perfectly content and happily playing on the floor, without even the slightest urge to return to their abodes. Upon seeing this, Devarshi Narada gracefully excused himself and went back to give his report to the three mothers. He informed them that Anasuya was very powerful, and through her prayers she had turned their husbands into tiny infants. The divine mothers were now very worried, so they asked Devarshi Narada what to do. He told them that the only way to get them back was to go to Anasuya's door and tell her that the babies were really their

husbands and then beg her to return them. It was their only hope because the babies were perfectly content to remain there.

So the three mothers went down to earth and paid a visit to Anasuya. When she opened the door, they asked, “O noble one, can you please grant us one humble request?”

Anasuya smiled warmly and said, “Please, my friends come inside and tell me what you need.”

The three mothers thanked her and explained that the three babies playing so cheerfully on her floor were, in truth, their husbands. And they wanted to know if she would kindly free them so they could return to their rightful homes.

“Surely you can take them back. They are all very nice, but I have no interest in keeping them here. Please look them over carefully and choose the one who is your husband, because all these babies look the same to me.”

The story goes that each of the mothers picked up a baby. And as soon as they did, the power of Anasuya’s prayer disappeared. Hence, in the arms of Lakshmi was Lord

Shiva; in the arms of Parvati was Lord Brahma; in the arms of Brahmani was Lord Vishnu; all three mothers were wrong in their choice. They felt embarrassed and ashamed. They all decided to appear in their divine forms and bestow a special blessing on Anasuya and Atri. The *rishi* couple bowed to them with utter humility.

“What do you need?” the divine trinity asked.

“O holy ones, we don’t need anything. We already have everything we need. Seeing all of you, receiving your *darshan*, holding you tenderly on our laps — what more could we possibly ask for?

However, the gods and the divine mothers were insistent, and Atri and Anasuya did not wish to insult them by refusing their divine gift. Thus, Anasuya said that the greatest blessing they could have would be for her to give birth to a child born with the qualities of the divine trinity; the qualities of Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Shiva. Thus, the three gods lovingly blessed the couple. In an instant they vanished and returned to their heavenly abode.

THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI

Sutra 27

God as the Primordial Sound OM

tasyavacakahpranavah||27||

Word Meaning

tasya – Of Him;
vacakah– representation or
expression; *pranavah* –
omkara, om sound

Translation

The word that expresses
Him is *pranavah* (om)

Commentary by ShriLahiri Mahashaya

His representation is
pranavah. As a lighted lamp
is self-luminous, likewise in the
state of deep meditation
(*samadahi*), *pranavah*, or the
omkara sound, is perceived.

Metaphorical Explanation

This sutra explains the
means of surrender, the path to
know and to love God. In the
Bible (John 1:1), there is a
description of God: “In the
beginning was the Word, and
the Word was with God, and
the Word was God.” Here the
Word and God are inseparable.
This Word the Hindus call

pranavah (Om), the Christians
Amen, and the Muslims *Amin*.
It is the primordial sound, the
continuous divine sound that
yogis hear.

Vachakah means
“representation,” “expression,”
or “manifestation;” God being
self-luminous, this *om*
(*pranavah*) is the spontaneous
and natural manifestation. It is
also known as *pranavah*.
Pranavah has many meanings
and connotations:

pra-nava – ever new
eternal sound

prakrishtenanava –
proper way of expression of
love

pranavah – *omkara* and
prayer

nadabrahma – God as
the Word or sound

As God is omnipresent,
this sound is omnipresent. As
God is beyond time, this sound
is timeless. As God is pure love,
the yogi experiences that love
through this sound. It dispels
all restlessness of mind and
cleanses one’s life. It removes

all obstacles from the spiritual path. It is the supreme mantra. One must learn the secret of this mantra from the teacher directly.

This *pranavah* or *omkara* or *om* should really be listened to instead of merely chanted. The yogi, a sincere meditator, knows how to meditate on this *om* without physical or vocal utterance.

Om or *aum* represents past, present, and future: gross, astral, and causal; God, guru, and disciple. In the Mundaka Upanishad (2:2:4), there is an elaborate description of *pranavah*. The Shvetashvatara Upanishad

(1:13-14) explains the practice of *pranavah* as a means of meditation and realization. The Taittiriya Upanishad (1:8) and the Bhagavad Gita (8:13) glorify *pranavah* or *aum* with manifold means.

O Seeker! Fortunate is one who has found the guru or the guide on the spiritual path. Blessed is the one who has learned the art of listening to this *om* sound, the inaudible voice of God. This sound will take you to God, as this sound is God itself. Listen to it continuously, with love. It is the means of better concentration and deeper meditation.



20th IIKYS at Gurukulam

ACTIVITIES OF PRAJNANA MISSION

20th IIKYS : The 20th Intensive International Kriya Yoga Seminar was inaugurated on the 14th of January , the auspicious day of MakaraSankranti. The one week program was of intense activity beginning with a predawn sankirtan, 3 guided meditations, classes of Guruji on the theme “Healthy mind and Healthy life “and cultural programs. Sri Sannyal Mahashaya’ smahasamadhi day and birthday also occurred during the seminar timeand were celebrated at the Guru Mandir. The great grandson of LahiriMahashaya, Malaya Baba was also a guest at the International Seminar.

During the closing ceremony of 20th IIKYS, Guruji stressed more on the practice of Kriya. He advised the residents to get up early and practice for 3 hours. He asked the participants to make their homes real ashrams, to watch their breath day and night and also watch their own transformation.

Gita JnanaYajna at Puri- The Annual Gita Jnana Yajna at Puri Town Hall from Jan 20-22, was well attended to listen to Guruji’s talks on Karma yoga.

There were also 3 day talks at Pattamandai and Kendrapapada.

Prasara Bharati : Guruji was an invited speaker at PrasaraBharati – Bhubaneswar. In his talk on spiritualism Guruji said, spiritualism should be measured as how much one has given in terms peace, joy and bliss to others, for the joy of giving.

Odisha Economic Association : At Odisha Economic Association, Kendrapada, Guruji talked of Vedic Model of Development. The so called development of destroying nature should be replaced by Vedic Model of Development which is to preserve and protect every living being.”Vedic India has large human resources, not used in a dignified, practical and pragmatic way,” Guruji said, – we have to rethink on how to improve and re establish.

Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of Kendrapada College : Guruji gave a reformative talk on the proper utilisation of the knowledge received and contributing back to the society and gratitude for the teachers who taught. Arththa alone is not enough- one has to

be aware of Paramartha in life. “I have taught arthashastra” Guruji said, “and now I am teaching Paramarthashastra.”

Matru Ashram : The foundation day of Matru Ashram was celebrated on the 31st of January, where Guruji talked about the importance of satsang and called upon the mothers to be the instruments to bring about constructive change in the community

Saraswati Puja at Balashram : Balashram celebrated Saraswati puja in the divine presence of Sri Guruji with all the students participating.

Gita Chanting Competitions : Hariharananda Gurukulam, Purihas successfully completed the project of promoting Gita study among the youth by holding state level Gita chanting competitions for students.

A gathering of 700 people including the parents and guardians, judges, volunteers, disciples and district level coordinators participated in the two day event. 60 winners

were selected from 264 students participating at the state level in five groups.

Soumyasveta Behera, a blind student studying in junior college at Bhubaneshwar, chanted the entire Gita of 18 chapters and was awarded a gold coin by Guruji.

For the year 2019, the first Chapter of the Gita is selected for deeper study and a written test willalso be conducted.

May the blessings of the Gurus be upon all those who have supported this noble project and we look forward to your continued support.

Prachi Parikrama : Paramahansa Prajnananandaji led the 8th annual Prachi Parikrama (holy walk around the sacred river Prachi), followedby manyrevered monks and disciples from around the world.

Mahashivaratri : Mahashivaratri was celebrated at the deva Mandir of the gurukulam with an elaborate abhisheka, worship of Lord Shiva and an all night vigil.

Visit our web site:

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

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Visit to Balashram



Matru Ashram Foundation Day