

Sthita Prajna



Guru Vandana

*Akalpajanmakotinam
Yajnavratatapahkriya
Tahsarvahsaphaladevi
gurusantoshamatrataha*

By merely satisfying the guru preceptor, all yajnas, (fire ceremonies and sacrifices), observances, activities and kriyas, that one practiced through millions of births become fruitful.

Guru Gita 249

CONTENTS

VOLUME 17

ISSUE 2

Sub	Page No.
• GURU VANDANA	3
• EDITORIAL	5
• MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER	6
• PRAJNANAVANI – THE SELF AND...	11
• TEACHINGS OF THE MASTERS	22
• CRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR MESSAGE	23
• THANKSGIVING MESSAGE	25
• MYTHS AND METAPHORS MAHABHARATA	27
• VALUABLE VOLUMES - LAW OF KARMA	33
• DATES TO REMEMBER	39
• YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI	40
• STORIES TO LIVE BY	42
• AROUND THE GLOBE	45

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FROM THE EDITORS :

Let us cultivate love in our hearts more every day. Let this New Year be the year we celebrate love in our lives in thought, word, and action.

Paramahansa Prajnanananda

Message of the Master talks of time and tide waiting for no one. One should utilise every moment of time and feel that it is God who is working through you.

Prajnanavani talks of humility and simplicity as essentials for a spiritual life.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, the message from Guruji says, “Thanks Giving should not be just or one day; it should be celebrated every day, every minute, every breath and every moment.”

In the New Year Message, guruji says, “Let us analyze our past year and prepare a new vision for the next. Let us learn from our mistakes and failures.”

The story of Draupadi in Mahabharata illustrates how will power, unity determination and strength are the pre requisites for achieving success.

Law of Karma continues with the discussion on – sanchita, prarabdha and kriyamanakarma.

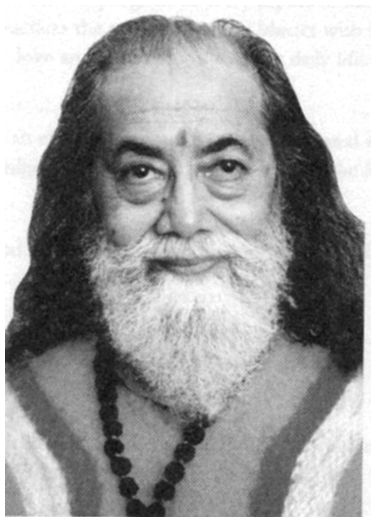
Yoga Sutra of Patanjali comments on Guru as the personification of the power of Grace, compassion and love for god.

Detach and attach emphasizes on how to progress in life one should be ready to give up certain things and accept some other things.

We bring you many messages, and news of the many activities and celebrations of Prajnana Mission and of our activities around the world.

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

TIME AND TIDE



Time and tide will wait for no person. Time is constantly going. It was morning. We sat for meditation, and now it is evening. Tide means the stream of the river. The flow of water is not stagnant, it is constantly flowing. They are both restless. Time is restless, and tide, the stream of the river, is also restless. When the time passes. You cannot pull it back. So if you utilize every moment, then you will perceive God. Time is God. And in the time, what you perceive, is the perception of God. So you should utilize

time. One who wastes time is wasting precious life.

Take time by the Forelock

Take time by the forelock. The forelock is the hair on the front part of the horse. You can completely control the horse not by pulling its tail, but by pulling the forelock. It cannot do anything else. In the same way, we should catch hold of the forelock of time. This means we should utilize every moment. Many people work nonstop, day and night. But they are forgetting Truth. Who was working? Only God. You should work, and you should feel that God is working through you. You should talk, and you should feel that God is talking through the mouth. Then you are utilizing time wisely. Because every moment time is going, and every moment time is giving you an opportunity for your own evolution. Know thyself, know thyself, know thyself. Why is time going? Why is the tide going?

The tide, the stream of the river, is going to the sea. Our time is going. Time is eluding us to the ultimate goal, to God. If you equalize it, and if you do not equalize it, every moment will elude you until death. In KathaUpanishad (2:1:10), it is said, "He attains death who does not feel God in every moment through his work." If you always perceive God is doing everything, then you are experiencing immortality. We are deathless children. We are prototypes of God's thought. We are immortal. Everything is immortal. My knowledge is going through your brain. If you receive and retain it, it will remain in the astral body. It is immortal. Even in your next birth, when you come, that will come with you. If you are in Truth, if you feel that you are the immortal soul, then you will always feel immortality, and you will know that you are the power of God. God is eternal. You will merge in God. This is oneness. This is certain.

Every moment you are dying. You were once a little baby — one month, two months, five months, six months, one year, two years,

five years, and so on. I was also like that. That baby (which was you) is here, and that child will grow old, and will look old, and after that he or she will go to the grave or the cremation ground. But there will be a balance sheet of all that has transpired in the previous lives and in this life. It is all stored in the box that we have brought with us into this life. It will also store what you have accumulated in this life. So if you earn more spirituality in this life, then in your next birth you will come with these qualities, and you will be born as a spiritual person. Since you are an immortal soul, then why should you forget God? It is all in your own hands.

If you see many, and if in the many you do not see one soul, then you are earning death. Every moment, you are dying. And if you see many, and if you perceive that they are the same soul that is abiding in everyone, then you are earning immortality, and at the same time you are getting constant liberation.

This is the time to earn God. Do not postpone until tomorrow. Has anyone seen tomorrow? Now sit calmly, and

hear the divine sound in the whole room.

Body and Soul

There are two worlds inside you, and without them, you cannot get light. One is positive, and is light, the soul. Another is negative, the extrovert world. The candle is the body, and the fire is the soul. There is power in each candle, and light in each candle, but it is unmanifested. If a candle comes in contact with a burning candle then it can have fire in it. Similarly, you have unmanifested wisdom. If you come in contact with a person of knowledge, slowly your unmanifested knowledge will be transformed into superconsciousness, cosmic consciousness, and wisdom. Knowledge is light. Ignorance is darkness. If you feel the light burning in the pituitary, then automatically you will achieve Self-realization. You will hear the divine sound and feel the vibration. But two things are required: body and soul. This is the body, and in the body is the presence of the soul. If the body is not there, then you cannot get light, or Self-realization.

In Mundaka Upanishad (3:1) it is said, “there are two birds; one is the body, and the other is the soul. One is eating, and the other is not.” Just as if two friends are together, with two mouths. One bird is eating with the mouth, and another is not eating, but is feeding, allowing the other to eat. So if that soul bird is not in the body, then you will see no light, you will have no pleasure. We are always getting pleasure from the universe. But the body bird is not the one who is eating(enjoying). It is the soul who is allowing you to enjoy the world. The soul is there, and without the soul, He cannot give you any enjoyment. You get much enjoyment and also pain by Him. And through these, you are to see God. Through pleasure and pain, seek Him. Both will surely come by turn. If you do not get pain, then you cannot evolve. The sorrow is not sorrow, it is for pleasure. So you should always watch the soul, which is formless in your body, and also you should love this body. If the body is not there, then there is no pleasure, no enjoyment, and no sorrow through this light, soul, and the

candle body. You should always see the light.

The Art of Meditation

If you do not meditate deeply, sincerely, regularly, wholeheartedly, and with love, you cannot feel the presence of God in your every action. It is just like a tire of a car that is constantly rotating. We get thoughts; one goes and another comes. The path of the chakras in the body is the path of the spiritual journey. Feel that without the soul, the driver, the wheel cannot move inside the spine, constantly rotating like a wheel of money, pleasure, food, emotion, religion, and soul; and again, soul, religion, emotion, food, pleasure, and money.

The human body is made of five elements: vacuum (space), air, fire, water, and earth. The body is the playground of the soul. From earth you smell flowers — flowers grow from the earth. With the water of saliva, we eat, and put water in the entire body. Then with the fire, we put food in the stomach, and it is boiled by Him through inhalation, so we can see with the eyes. If you do not eat food for some days, you cannot open your eyes, and you cannot

see any light. The main struggle for people in the material world is with the coccyx (earth), sacral (water), and lumbar (fire) centers: money, pleasure, and food. Through these three, people are engrossed and absorbed in the material world, so they do not fight to remove the tendencies of these three centers.

The kingdom of heaven is within you. If you want to enter heaven, you must be humble. That is why it is said that it is not possible for the rich to go to heaven if they have pride. So if you have wealth, give it to the poor for charity, and keep something for yourself so you can maintain your livelihood sufficiently. The Vedas, the Upanishads say, that if one earns a lot of money, give money to the poor. If you earn a little money, still give money for charity, and God will love you. Many poor people cannot earn much money.

The heart center is the place of air. We inhale air, and thus we are alive. We have the sensation of love and compassion at this center.

The cervical center, which is the center of vacuum, or space, is the fifth center.

Everything is the vacuum. If the vacuum is no longer, then inhalation is no longer. Then if the body is cremated, after two hours there would be no existence of the body. Permanently it would be gone. It would merge in the earth. All the body's water would evaporate and go into the

clouds. The fire would merge into the sun-fire, and the air would merge into the super-air, the all –pervading air, and the vacuum (space) would merge into the vacuum (space).

After creating this human being, this body of five elements, He entered into the body.



Texas Ashram foundation day

PRAJNANAVANI - THE VOICE OF WISDOM

PRACTICAL WISDOM FOR A HUMBLE LIFE



Spirituality teaches us submission, surrender, and to share and care. Meditating with eyes closed is no doubt the best practice, but the truth is we cannot sit with our eyes closed and meditate twenty-four hours a day. We need to open our eyes and be active. Since we keep our eyes open longer throughout the day than we keep them closed during meditation, let our eyes always be filled with love, compassion, and humility. Let us try to acquire the compassion of

Buddha, the compassion of Christ. Kept humility is at the forefront of all we think, say and do.

Simplicity is another name for humility, Where simplicity thrives, duplicity and hypocrisy do not exist. Babies and little children show ample evidence of simplicity. If we want to be humble like little children, we must imitate their good qualities. If we want to be around little children, we need to speak in a manner they can understand. We cannot talk

philosophy with a child. Sometimes, when playing with little children, we must kneel or even crawl. If we want to play with children, we must be like a child, and that means we might have to bend. Accordingly, if we want to be with anyone, we need to come to their level and speak in a way that enables them understand what we are saying. When we behave like this, what happens to ego? When we are humble, ego disappears; we become loving.

Individualism is common in modern society, but unity is the foundation of spiritual life. Where humility and submission are prevalent, togetherness and amity result. We must submit to God and God's will, then we can live harmoniously in the world.

Gracefully Accepting Our Shortcomings

People love hearing words of praise and appreciation. Very few can accept criticism. Nevertheless, criticism from others can be a boost and an eye-opener. Criticism can be like bitter food that may not be palatable, but is good for health. We should readily accept criticism, but we should not be critical of others.

If we truly want to be humble, we must sometimes accept criticism with patience. Swami Shivanandaji of Rishikesh taught, "Bear insult; bear injury. Adjust and accommodate." If anybody points out our mistakes, we should not try to justify our actions, nor should we be reactive or ashamed. Rather, with love, we should accept that we have made a mistake. It is a very good practice.

In Christianity the simple practice of confession helps us improve ourselves. However, I am not telling you to confess your mistakes to others; rather, you should confess your mistakes to God and yourself. You should admit to yourself that you did something wrong. If you are strong in your humility and love, and you perceive a person that you hurt might be helped by your confession and apology, then you can do so in a loving way. It will heal the wound of the hurt person and he or she can grow with forgiveness and love.

Confession is the beginning of humility. Sharing our weaknesses with others is a step we can take to cultivate greater humility. But sharing

weaknesses should be done carefully, as sometimes people will take advantage and exploit us. However, sharing our weaknesses with a good friend who can help us can lift us up. Additionally, sharing our weaknesses with younger people can boost their morale and strength.

The Beauty of Bowing

In 1994 ShriGurudev was leaving Europe and returning to India. Some of us went to the airport to see him off. A good number of disciples surrounded him while he was seated in a wheelchair. I was standing close to him with a notebook, writing down his teachings. When it was time for his departure, nanny people bowed to him. Those passing by stared at us with curiosity, as so many Westerners were surrounding an old man and bowing down. While standing there, I observed their faces and reactions. Many of them had a disapproving look rather than one of appreciation. They appeared to be thinking, "What are those people doing? Why are they bowing to another human being?"

In India we are taught from childhood to bow to

everyone. ShriGurudev was one of the youngest members of his family. During celebrations or when elderly relatives visited the family, the younger family members must bow to all the elders. When he was young, he sometimes told his parents, "I am bowing to all, but no one is bowing to me." One day his father told him, "Yes, now you are bowing to everybody, but the time will come when so many people will bow to you that you will tire of it."

In the Old and New Testaments we find many references to bowing. We must be clear when we bow that we are not bowing to an individual or to please someone; we are bowing to god, who is in all. It is a sign of humility, and it brings us nearer to Him. In many Western churches people kneel at the altar. In Islam, people bow while they offer their daily prayers.

Bowing is also excellent exercise. It is yogic practice, good for the health of the body and the mind. Moreover, it is a sign of humility and adoration. The practice of bowing in a temple or church or any holy place is a good practice. In

the Catholic tradition when the Pope visits any country, he kisses the soil when he arrives. It is symbol of respect, humility, and submission.

A Life of Humility and Prayer

Humility is the dissolution of individuality and the surrender to infinity — this is the purpose of humanity. The dissolution of individuality means attributing less importance to our false identity and ultimately surrendering to infinity. Infinity refers not only to God, but also to the family, society, nature, the world, or in other words, the entire creation. In essence, humility is submitting to everyone and everything. It is a conviction: “My life is not only for me, but for everybody. Whatever I have is not only for me, it is also for others. If I am praying, I will not only pray for me, I will pray for everyone.”

In most of our ashrams, before eating breakfast, we say the “Simple Prayer” of Saint Francis that begins with “O Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.” In the evening before we eat food, we say the “Universal Prayer” of Swami Shivanandaji of Rishikesh, “O

adorable Lord of mercy nad love.” I often wonder, do we sincerely practice what we pray for every day? Praying without practicing is not effective, and will not lead to spiritual progress.

Our prayers, our chanting, and even our study should not be just verbal or formal; it should not be mechanical chanting or mindless repetition. Prayer should be an outpouring from the heart. Prayer is not merely an utterance of words, but an expression of inner love with sincere intention to be put into practice.

Once a young parrot lived in a hermitage of some *rishis*. It developed the ability to speak, chant, and understand just like a human. When the parrot was older, it left the hermitage and became the leader of a parrot community. Because it was wise, it taught the others how to live. This parrot told them, “Look; we should be intelligent. We are living in community, and we need to go out and collect food. Sometimes danger might appear, but how can we know when something is dangerous? If you see food in an unlikely

place, where food does not belong, you should not go near it. Repeat and always remember these instructions:

‘Bird hunters come and spread food at strange places.

Setting the net, the hunter is there.

Don’t go there to eat; otherwise, you will be trapped.’”

They all chanted in chorus every day and memorized the instructions. It was like a morning prayer to them.

One day, while on a quest for food, they stopped to rest in a tree. Below, a hunter had just set a net and spread some grains on top of it to trap birds. Seeing this, the parrots in a chorus started their morning prayer. When the hunter heard their chant, he was shocked and disappointed. He thought, “O God! Who taught them such things? They are all talking, and they are talking about my trick! Surely, this is my unlucky day.”

Nevertheless, while chanting the verse, one bird after another flew down and began eating the grain. Soon, all were trapped the excepted

the wise one. The wise parrot was sitting at the top of the tree observing the miserable condition of his community members. The hunter was excited, and at the same time, he was surprised to see the strange behaviour of the birds, chanting one thin and doing the opposite.

When all the birds were trapped, the wise bird told them, “My friends, you did not practice what you were taught and have been chanting daily.. You memorized important instructions, but you did not follow what you learned, I will tell you one thing you must do. You must all lie there, silent and lifeless. When the hunter starts to untie the net, I will give you a signal. When you hear the signal, you must immediately fly away and take the net with you.”

Having achieved such an easy and quick success inflated the hunter’s ego. “Just look at all those parrots! Never before have I trapped so many at one time!” When he noticed they had all stopped moving, he thought, “Maybe they are in shock. Now is a good time to cage them.” So the hunter started untying the net, but as

soon as he did, the wise parrot shouted, "Fly!" At once, all the parrots flew away. The hunter was astonished, because not only did he lose the birds, he also lost his net. That morning the parrots learned the importance of practicing what they had been taught.

In the morning when we pray, "O Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace," are we an instrument of peace for the rest of the day? Are we an instrument of love? Are we an instrument of compassion? Are we an instrument of forgiveness? Spiritual life is not mechanical or monotonous; it is dynamic. It has more elements of love, humility, and compassion than ordinary life.

Love Without Expectation

Love is the center, and creation is the circumference. All are hungry for love, all want to be loved and appreciated. But how much do we love others? Everyone expects others to be loving toward them, and yet they do not show love toward all. Our loving attitude, interactions, and actions will naturally bring more love into our lives.

When we are moving toward others, others will love

us. But we must not love others with the expectation of having it returned. The simple rule is that if we love others, they will love us in a natural way. There is no need to expect something back from people. ShriGurudev said, "The more you give, the more you receive. The more you love, the more you will be loved. The more you teach, the more you will learn." It is very simple lesson to remember. If we criticize others, we will be criticized. If we speak badly of others, others will speak badly of us. The more we give, the more we receive. Whatever we give, we will receive more of the same.

Hence, we should be humble and practice humility faithfully. It is not just theory; it must be practiced. One who has humility can quickly forgive others. We should not keep the improper actions of others in our hearts and minds. We should not entertain such thoughts as, "He did this to me," or "She is mean." When we are practicing spirituality with a group, we should be especially caring and forgiving. When people know that we are practicing the special art of spiritual life, they expect a lot

from us. Moreover, when we wear a specific monastic colour of clothing such as white, yellow, or saffron, people will naturally place demands on us. When someone lives in an ashram and teaches others, people expect them to be very nice. It is their expectation, and it could be said that is their business and not ours, and indeed that is true. Nevertheless, they will expect our behaviour to be disciplined and kind. Hence, in our behaviour, in our nature nad in our character or conduct, we should always try to be humble nad loving.

The Transitory Nature of the World

Time is passing. Time waits for no one. Day after day, time is flying by. Who knows what will happen tomorrow? Life offers no guarantees. We have all been given the opportunity to love and serve others as a living presence of the Divine. Let us use this precious opportunity in a very practical way, and live with humility.

Death is the truth and reality of life. Once we are born, death is inevitable. Most of us forget this bitter truth, but

if we want to grow in humility, we must always remember death, and we must remember that death can knock at our door at any time. When we understand that the breath is currently with us, but there is no certainty about the next breath, then attachment, pride, and arrogance will find no accommodation in our lives.

Death is a great teacher. We see people dying every day, and yet our minds are not kindled with the flame of knowledge. Blessed are those who remember death with love, and prepare every moment with humility and surrender to be received by God with love. Remembering death is the greatest strength. It is not a sign of weakness or a depressed attitude; it is real strength that creates more humility and develops efficiency.

Being in this family of the world, meeting countless people from different continents, I often get the news of someone's death. We should all be joyfully prepared to welcome death at any time. But, to do so, we must invite god, love, humility, and compassion into our lives.

Since we do not know what will happen tomorrow, we

should be loving, humble, and caring today. If there is something we can share, we should share it with joy. Ordinary human beings are selfish and possessive, but spiritual people are caring and loving; they happily share with others. A spiritual person does not hesitate to go without food in order to feed someone who is hungry. However, although it is appropriate to share good things, when we are occupied with negative thoughts and feelings, we should learn to digest these ourselves. We should try to share only positive things such as love, motivation, inspiration, and kindness. In Hindu mythology Lord Shiva is the symbol of taking poison and blessing others with peace and harmony. We must never give others our poisonous thoughts, actions, or emotions, only our blessings.

Have a Humble, Positive Attitude

As is the vision, so is the creation. As is the mind, so is the emotion. As is the love, so is appreciation. God is beautiful, and so is God's creation. In this creation everything is beautiful because everything is created by god.

The beauty of life lies in seeing the beauty in others. As is our mind and attitude, so is our perception and practice. Everything has value in this creation, and it is our humble and positive attitude that can discover that worth and value.

Speaking well of others and appreciating others is not flattery. We must not speak negatively about others or purposely try to flatter them. When we are humble, we become impartial and unbiased. Love and goodness flow naturally. Respect for others and their opinions is a form of humility. Justifying oneself and condemning others is ego and stubbornness. When we appreciate others, it helps them grow and encourages them to be better people. For success in life, we must never be boastful or take pride in our accomplishments. We should be like Nanda and Yashoda in the Shrimad Bhagavatam, who always gave credit to God for any success.

The Key to Prosperity and Progress

We all want to be successful. We all want prosperity and progress, but many of us do not know the

secret for these achievements. When you want prosperity and progress, be humble. Many times, with a little success or achievement, we develop ego and pride, which act as an obstacle to progress. We should be grateful and thankful for any success, and we should not stop there, we should move further onward with love and prayer. Our beloved Shri Gurudev said:

*jataiamar du hath
bhoreuthedhone
tabuamarhoyenijana e
katharoyemone
amibhulena jai
bedonapaishayanesvapane*

“However much prosperity or wealth might come to me, O god, I should never forget that I am yet to know the Truth. Let my desire to unit with You, O Lord, remain like a sharp pain in the realm of my dreams, even during sleep.”

Humility and Truth are one and the same. One who is humble realizes Truth. The Manu Smriti (2:121) states:

*abhivadanasilasyanitya
mvrddhopasevinah
catvaritasyavardhant
eayurvidyayasobalam*

“For one who is respectful, and humble, who serves and loves the old and the wise, the four aspects of life will flourish: namely, life span, knowledge, glory, and wealth.”

Earlier it was said that we should think less of ourselves and more of others, speak less about ourselves and speak more of others. The feeling that we are not better than others is humility. When we love god as the Omnipresent One, we will feel His presence in all. Ego and arrogance will then naturally fly away, and we can be humble in the presence of God. God loves a humble heart.

We should never look down on anyone. When we are helping someone, we should view it as a God-given opportunity to serve. We should be thankful for having the opportunity to serve others. We should learn to help and serve others in silence.

Some spiritual masters define humility as restraining ourselves from excessive vanity. It is said that humility is the root, spirituality is the shoot, and divinity is the fruit. The root should be well

protected with love, prayer, and submission.

Humility Sets Us Free

Only a humble person can be free. He or she can receive and shower divine grace that is laced with love and compassion. Humility is not a sign of weakness: in fact, it grants enormous power. Humility offers complete freedom from the desire to impress, to be right, or to get ahead. Frustrations and losses have less impact on a humble person, whereas ego engenders jealousy, hatred, and arrogance in every step of life. A humble person confidently receives any opportunity to grow, improve, and reject society's labels. Humility promotes contentment, patience, forgiveness, and compassion. A humble person never demands recognition and reward; he or she willingly accepts being lowly and unnoticed. On the other hand, ordinary people always want to be seen and recognized. To cultivate humility, we must spend time with humble people.

Humility loves, serves, gives, and surrenders. If we sincerely want to taste freedom, the first step is to cultivate humility in the eyes of God as

well as in the eyes of other people. Humility is the key that opens the door of freedom and closes the door of downfall.

Know Thyself

The noted preacher Charles Spurgeon defined humility as "making a right estimate of one's self." Who am I? Indeed, this is a fundamental question and deliberation. Reflection on this question can shed light on the reality of life, and in turn, make us truly humble. When we honestly estimate and assess ourselves with naked eyes, we can easily see both sides of ourselves, the light and the dark, like the sides of the moon. Honest assessment helps us rid ourselves of our false vanity and wrong projections.

Humility is being modest, reverential, and even politely submissive. It is the opposite of aggression, arrogance, pride, and vanity. It is said that charity begins at home, but humility always begins in the heart. It provides us with significant control over the negative emotions that can drive us down the wrong path. Humility changes our attitude, outlook, and actions. It is a common experience that all geniuses,

spiritual people, and even sincere leaders are humble. A humble life is a fruitful life.

Therefore, let us commit ourselves to acknowledging and correcting our faults. Let us be quick to forgive others and forget any wrongdoings done to us. Let us cultivate grateful hearts and share what we have with others. Let us always

remember that life is grace and our lives should be dedicated to loving and serving God and His beautiful creation. A humble heart is a graceful heart. Let us never forget God and the real purpose of life. Above all, let us earnestly practice humility daily. Only humility can lift the veil that covers immortality.



Foundation Day - Miami Ashram

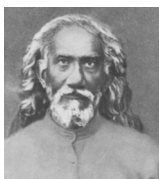
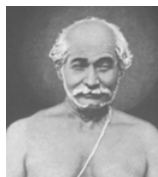


"It is not proper to unnecessarily mention the name of the Guru. By this, he is belittled."

Mahavantara Babaji

"There is no work without desire. Work which is duty bound is also born of some desire."

Lahiri Mahasaya



"Men of wisdom are neither deluded nor haunted by the spectre of birth and death. One should, without being inordinately confused by the words of wise men, follow strictly their methods of Kirya."

Swami Shriyukteshwar

"The purpose of breath-control is to keep the body and mind free from negative vibrations."

Sanyal Mahasaya

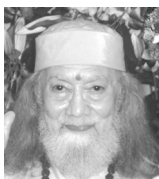
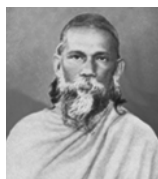


"Behind the light in every little bulb is a great dynamic current; behind the weaves, vast oceans, and behind the individual lies the Supreme Spirit."

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



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

Paramahansa Hariharananda

"A true Guru is humble, always God conscious always ready to forgive and guide with love and compassion."

Paramahansa Prajnanananda



CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR MESSAGE

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 as we celebrate Christmas, bidding farewell to the past year and making ourselves ready to welcome the New Year.

Year after year time passes; nevertheless, we live with the hope that this year will be better. Every day we waste our time and life as we wait for tomorrow to come. What foolishness! Has anyone seen tomorrow?

Is there any guarantee of tomorrow? The masters teach us that we should be practical and active every moment, every day, and make determined progress here and now. But do we think like that? Are we ready to take a positive step at this very moment? If we can't do something now and here, we do it nowhere. Delay does not respect God. Procrastination is a thief of time. But we tend to delay, to wait until tomorrow. We must be up and doing now.

Jesus came to us. How long did he stay? What example did he provide? He taught us to love all. He taught us not to sleep. Is it not so? Did he not teach that "The Spirit is willing, but the body is weak?"

We think great thoughts, and that is nice. But if we do not act in the right way, we are merely daydreamers.

How should we receive the New Year? First, we should celebrate Christmas. But how? By being inspired by Jesus and preparing for the New Year.

Jesus said we should love our neighbours and forgive everyone. A "neighbour" is not the person whose home is next to ours, it is everyone who is present next to us, whether in the market or in the office. Let us look at the life of Jesus and become motivated to pursue spiritual life. He also advised us to love our enemies.

Let's analyse our past year and prepare a new vision for the next. Let us learn from our mistakes and failures.

Failures reveal our mistakes and are better friends than our successes. Failure teaches us more.

Let us grow. Christmas and New Year occur in winter to teach us how to live in winter so we can welcome the spring and summer.

Let us turn our lives in a new direction. Let us bring a new hope into our lives. Let us be always positive and practical. Let us cultivate discrimination by ignoring trivial things and harvesting positive and practical things. Let us love and serve all creation with

humility. Let us not pollute our minds with negative thoughts.

In the Holy Bible (Proverbs, 10:42) it says, “Hatred stirs up conflicts and love covers up all wrongs.” Let us cultivate love in our hearts more every day. Let this New Year be the year we celebrate love in our lives in thought, word, and action.

Again, on this special occasion, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

I pray for all of us, and I pray for your all-round development.

With Love,
Prajnanananda



Gita Competitions - held by Prajnana Mission

THANKSGIVING MESSAGE

Loving and Divine Soul,

Let the Choicest blessings of God and Masters be upon all of you. I take this opportunity to pray for you as we celebrate Thanksgiving, as we spend time with our dear and near ones, and as we express our love and gratitude.

This social celebration started in the West, but it is not quite well accepted in many places. Giving thanks should not be just or one day; it should be celebrated every day, every minute, every breath and every moment. We survive by the grace of God and nature, and with the help of countless living beings, including plants and animals. Our lives are enriched by family, friends and society. When we flourish with the help and support of countless people, we often forget them and sometimes ignore them.

What should we do? During the ordinary business of daily life, we should offer our thanks to others. Many times, we chant the mantra, "Thank

you" but that is not enough. Offering gratitude is an inner attitude. It causes us to express our appreciation to others and offer our love to them for their presence in our lives.

Selfish people with a little power or a little success do not hesitate to ignore the source of their achievements. We pridefully promote ourselves as spiritual people, and we boast about ourselves. Is this human life? This behavior completely violates spiritual principles.

Let us be humble, let us be loving. Let us be caring. Let us spend time with our old parents or family members. Let us not avoid them thinking that we are busy; let us not show them our superiority because we have thousand important things to do. Let us always be ready to serve others without anyone asking. Let us always be calmly active and actively calm. Let us pray for others and especially for the entire creation. Let us be grateful to Mother earth and nature. Let

us actively preserve nature and protect others.

Let us celebrate thanksgiving by transforming our selves by practicing humility, simplicity and service to all.

On the occasion of this Thanksgiving celebration, I offer my love and gratitude to

all of you for your kindness and support, inspiration, and motivation. What I am today is because of God, Gurudev, my family members, my teachers, and countless people like each of you.

I bow to all of you with love and gratitude.

With Love
Prajnanananda



Dubai Retreat

MYTHS AND METAPHORS

MAHABHARATA



To achieve success in life, we have to exercise our willpower. That willpower is within us. But if we do not use it, we cannot achieve prosperity and success in life. The Pandavas, in a miraculous way, not only escaped from the fire, the great disaster, but also they escaped through a tunnel and went into the city of one center, or Ekachakra. While they were traveling together incognito with mother Kunti, they went to the *swayamvara* of Draupadi, where their life partner was chosen. According to the condition set for the *swayamvara*, Arjuna became successful in reaching the

target, and so Draupadi went with the Pandava brothers to their home.

Drupada's Worry

Drupada was trying to determine who these five brothers were, as they looked heroic. Drupada's son Dhristadyumna thus went to inquire about them at night, just like a spy. The Pandavas were living as guests in the home of a potter. Dhristadyumna hid outside and listened to their conversations. Draupadi had cooked food and told Kunti that she had finished cooking. Kunti said, "Whatever you cooked, take a portion of it, offer it to

God and give the food to the *brahmins* as alms. Whatever is left, divide it two equal halves. Give one-half of the food to that son, who looks a little big. The rest will be divided into six parts, four parts to be given to the four other brothers and the last two parts are for you and me.” They all then went to bed on grass mats made of *kusha* grass covered by deerskin. While lying down, the five brothers were talking like friends. However, they were not discussing scriptures, values, and morality as *brahmins* would have done. They were talking about warfare and archery and the lifestyle of warriors and *kshatriyas*. Why? When two doctors meet, they talk about medicine. If two alcoholics meet, they talk about alcohol.

Worry Became a Celebration

Dhristadyumna reported this to his father Drupada: “I think they are not *brahmins*, but *kshatriyas*. It feels to me that they are the five Pandavas.” Drupada did not believe this because he had heard the Pandavas were dead and their family had done all the death rituals assuming that to be true. When a person dies in a Hindu

family, Vedic ceremonies and rituals are done. Dhristadyumna did not agree. He said, “No, I believe that they are alive. I believe that the middle one who fulfilled the target was none but Arjuna.” King Drupada started rejoicing. They sent their priest to invite the five brothers.

The truth was then revealed by Yudhishtira, the eldest Pandava, because he never uttered lies: “We are indeed the Pandavas. But one thing has happened. We have to fulfil our mother’s words that all five of us will marry your daughter.”

The father was in trouble: “I think it seems unethical and an uncommon practice. It has never happened like this before.”

Yudhishtira said, “It is my mother’s wish, and she is always truthful. I accept my mother’s words. And, like my mother, I have never told a lie. I do not know much about scriptures, but I know of some examples. In ages past, seven great sages were married to a lady whose name was Jalila.”

While talking about this, Sage Vyasadeva appeared and smiled. He knew the past,

present, and future. He told Drupada, "What Yudhishtira says is true. There is nothing wrong if the five brothers are married to Draupadi. I will now tell you who they are."

Sage Vyasadeva Tells the Story from the Past

Sage Vysadeva narrated that long ago all the *devas* started to do a *yajna* (fire ceremony) in the holy place of Naimisharanya. As they wanted to do this fire ceremony altogether, they made Yama, the Lord of Death, the leader who takes the vow to finish the fire ceremony without any obstruction. One who takes this vow to finish it has to give up all his authority. You can imagine the consequences of the Lord of Death renouncing his duty of taking away departed souls and causing death to people according to their Karma. The population on the earth went on increasing and increasing, and there was a major population explosion. Nobody was dying. This fire ceremony continued year after year. Some of the celestials were also concerned. Consequently, they went to Lord Brahma and said, "We are afraid of the increasing population of human beings."

"You are all immortal." Lord Brahma said. "Why are you afraid?"

"Nobody is dying now and because of that our workload is increasing since we have to take care of all of them," they replied.

Lore Brahma said, "You all go together to the fire ceremony, be united, and complete it quickly. Now go take a dip in the Ganga."

On their way to take a dip in the Ganga, Indra, who rules in heaven, saw a strange thing. A beautiful lotus was floating in the Ganga. He wanted to know the source from where the lotus was coming, and upon further investigation, he found an exceptionally beautiful lady standing there. Teardrops from her eyes were gently falling in the water, and every teardrop became a lotus. Indra asked, "Who are you? Why do you cry? Can I help you?"

Without looking at him, she told, "If you want to know what is going on, you can come with me," She took him to the peak of a mountain. There he found a strange scene. An extremely young man with a well-built body, looking like a

yogi, sitting in *siddhasana*, a special posture of Hatha Yoga, was playing the art of love with another young lady. The lady who brought him there then disappeared. Indra asked them who they were, but they did not pay attention to him. While he was talking, Indra became a wooden statue, unable to move or go anywhere. After a while, the couple opened their eyes, and said, "Why did you come here? You made a mistake. You crossed your limit to come here. If you want to know what is going to happen to you, you can go to a special spot, open the stone cover and look at what is going on." Indra regained his strength, opened the stone cover and found inside four other people who were sitting and looking like him. He became confused. The young man said, "You are the fifth one. Go inside. I am closing the door. The four people were previous Indras. Because of their mistake, their time has come to be born as human beings. The four people whom you see were previous Indras who were born through the blessings of Dharma, the lord of death, lord of values and virtues, Vayu, the lord of wind, and the celestial physicians."

Then Sage Vyasadeva continued, "This is the story of the five Pandavas in their past lives. Draupadi was the daughter of a *rishi* once upon a time, staying in the hermitage in the Himalayas. She was exceptionally beautiful, but she could not find a husband of her own choice. So, she went on meditating on Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva came to her and asked what she wanted. She said, "Give me a husband." She repeated this statement five times. Lord Shiva blessed her, "You will get five beautiful husbands because you asked five times." That daughter of the *rishi* was thus born as the daughter of Drupada."

Draupadi, the Inspiration

This news that the Pandavas were not dead was not only revealed to Drupada and his family, but it came to be known publicly through some secret agency. Not only were they alive, but also they were married to Draupadi. Another name of Draupadi is Krishnaa, the divine willpower. She symbolizes willpower. *Draupadi* is derived from the words *dru*, meaning "quickly" or "upward," *pada*, meaning "feet," and *i* meaning "energy."

It means the feet are the symbol of movement and to move upward quickly with energy (strength), spiritual energy. Hence, Draupadi is the symbol of spiritual energy that helps upward movement. Draupadi means “inspiration”; if we are inspired or encouraged in the work that we do, then we progress quickly. Draupadi also means “higher goal”; the five chakras should be used to reach the goal of life. Kunti took care of these five brothers in their childhood, raised them up with all virtues and goodness, and now Draupadi had to take care of them, binding them together, so they could achieve everything. As a result, she was the binding force for the five Pandavas. With willpower, determination, unity, and strength, they could achieve success. Draupadi is the power of determination to take these five qualities, or centers, upward to unite with Krishna (the soul within) and reach the ultimate goal of success. All five centers are important. In meditation, Draupadi is the binding force of the five Pandavas, the five centers in the spine. Money, physical pleasure, food, emotions, and religious practices can pull you

up or down. Draupadi, the one who is able to move upward, could take them up. When God has given us money, body, strength, heart, and intellect, let these qualities be used to reach a higher purpose of life. None of the five centers or chakras is bad. However, when dealing with money, sexuality, food, emotions, and religion, one should always be conscious of reaching the goal of life. Every center should be used properly, not misused or abused. When the five centers, or the qualities, are directed towards a higher purpose of life (*draupadi*), there is excellence in the centers. Draupadi was the source of inspiration for the five Pandavas. Whenever one forgot the goal of life, she reminded them of the goal and the love of Lord Krishna.

When one is caught in pleasure and negative qualities, one does not give proper attention to the higher purpose of life. Often, we start anew life with much strength, but then because of weakness or temptation we soon forget the purpose or goal and go back to our old ways. Draupadi was the source of inspiration, the symbol of encouragement, the

binding force of the five Pandavas. In other words, the five divine qualities were together, and they were married to a higher purpose. If there is a higher purpose in the monetary power of a person, then money can be used in a good way. If there is a higher purpose in the family life (second center), the couple will live a life of spiritual evolution, not an ordinary life. Even if they have children, they will be spiritual. If there is a higher purpose in eating and getting

strength in the body and mind, then one can achieve success easily. If the heart is transformed with higher goals, the lower propensities and ego or emotions cannot stand as obstacles. If there is higher purpose in life, one finds a meaningful religious and philosophical life, easily overcoming petty happenings. In every center, we should have a *draupadi* within: inspiration, encouragement, and a meaningful and purposeful life.



Go Navaratri Program - Odisha

VALUABLE VOLUMES



THE LAW OF KARMA

BY PARAMAHAMSA PRAJNANANANDA

***Sanchita* Karma, the Accumulated Karma**

*The moment I have realized
God sitting in the temple of
every human body, the
moment I stand in reverence
before every human being
and see God in him — that
moment I am free from
bondage, everything that
binds vanishes, and I am
free.*

- Swami Vivekananda

Ordinarily, animals and humans live with fear. Animals have fear of death and torture. In addition to this, human beings have other fears. Typically, human beings feel fearful and insecure, and this attitude is saved for the future. Just as we save money for a future crisis, a good part of the *kriyamana* karma is stored for

future use. Individuals are not aware that their karmic load is constantly increasing.

Karma Accumulated

All actions, physical, verbal, or mental, do not instantly yield harvest; some will manifest in the future. Karma accumulated for the future is *sanchita* karma, accumulated or deposited actions. *Sanchita* (*sam-chi-ta*) is derived from the root verb *chi*, which means “to pluck or to collect.” *Sanchita* is *samyakchita*, nicely collected or accumulated karma with the potential to create results in the future (heaped together for future use). *Sanchita* is the sum of all past karmas—all actions, good and bad, from past lives—that follow us to the next life. Out of all this karma, we choose a

small portion during each lifetime, which is known as *prarabdha* karma, a collection of past karmas that are ready to be experienced during the present life. From the heaps of karmas, whichever ones we enjoy or suffer during the present life are known as *prarabdha*.

In the case of *kriyamana* karma, we have freedom of choice; for example we have the option of staying or leaving, eating or not eating doing something or not. Suppose we have to speak. There are three possible choices: to speak well, to remain silent, or to speak poorly. We are free to choose, but once the action (karma) is accomplished, we have no control over its consequences. The choice whether the fruit of the *kriyamana* karma will happen immediately or be deposited (as *sanchita* karma) for the future is no longer available; the result will surely arise. Thus, we must take great care in all that we do.

The word *sanchita* comes from the root word *sanchi*. The original verb is *chi*, which means “to collect.” *Chi anachayana* means

“collecting or collection,” and *pushpachayana* means “collecting flowers.” On the other hand, *sanchi* means “to preserve” or “to save” after collection. Suppose every time we earned money, we spent it. We would have no savings; *sanchita* is the opposite of that. Normally people save some income for future use. *Sanchi* means “to put together to preserve, to protect, to save for the future.” *Sanchita* karma is karma that has been saved. Consequently, it must have originated in the past. It has already been gathered and collected by every individual. *Anantakotijanmanam* means that for millions of lifetimes we have saved karma, which is *sanchita* karma.

As we perform actions during daily life, we must be careful to act intelligently and consciously, determining whether what we do is truly good. Many times it is not. The Bhagavad Gita (18:60) says:

*svabhavajenakaunteyanib
addhahsvenakarmana
kartumnecchasiyan-mohat-
karisyasyavaso pi tat*

“Any action that you refuse to perform out of delusion, bound by your own

duty, born of your own innate nature, you will helplessly have to do, O Kaunteya (Arjuna, son of Kunti).”

Even when we do not want to do something, sometimes we feel compelled by old habits. Our old habits and old nature make us act even when we do not like it, and later on we repent. When we lose our tempers, we later become unhappy for our lapses. We often ask ourselves why we were angry and said hurtful words. Why did we do it? We did it because we are not conscious. When it comes to *kriyamana* karma, that which we are presently doing, we have a lot of freedom if we live intelligently, consciously, prayerfully, and focus a little attention on our thoughts and actions. As Gurudev used to say, “In every action remember God, your life will be more beautiful.”

Karma with Curiosity

Once a cowherd boy had to take cows to graze in a solitary place. Every day he would sit on a mound of soil while the cows were grazing. He noticed that whenever he sat there, he had more energy, wisdom, and intuition.

Moreover, when he sat there, everything he said was the truth. When a problem emerged among people in the village, he could assess the situation accurately, and his judgment was very precise. One day the news of this boy’s predictions and decisions reached the king. The king decided to ask the boy some critical questions. When he asked, he received very appropriate answers. As soon as the boy left the mound, he was ordinary; he knew nothing. The king became curious and wondered whether it was the nature of the place that made the young boy so different. The king ordered that the mound be excavated. Underneath it they found a beautiful throne and steps leading to the throne. On each step was a statue of an angel. When the king tried to climb to the throne, on each step an angel statue would say, “O King, before you climb up, listen to a story and answer my question properly. If you cannot, my presence will leave the throne.” In total there were thirty-two steps. As the king climbed them one by one, up to the throne, the thirty-two angels gradually left the throne and it became ordinary. The king’s curiosity caused the karma of

losing the throne's specialty. The innocence and simplicity of the cowherd did not affect the sanctity of the throne, but the desire and curiosity of the king did.

Every day we are faced with choices. For example, we think of visiting a holy place: Should I go or not? Staying home will be more comfortable. Going may be more virtuous. If I go, how will I get there? And so on, there are many questions and many choices. While we are living in the world, we have choices and freedom during every step of life. This leads to *kriyamana* karma, and a portion of these actions is stored as *sanchita* karma.

Many roles and Many Karmas

Living in the world we perform many roles and karmas. Herein we are playing the roles of students and teachers. Very simply considering the karma of a student, we can see it offers plenty of freedom. However, with regard to the karma of a teacher, there is little or no freedom. The teacher must go to the designated hall to teach the class; it is not the teacher's choice. A designated seat is

reserved for the teacher; the teacher does not choose where to sit. The teacher must address the assigned topic; again there is no choice. But the student can choose whether to participate in the class, where to sit, whether to be attentive or unmindful. Whenever we choose, we perform continuous action (*kriyamana*) and a part of it is accumulated as *sanchita*, to be harvested in the future.

Every individual is unique. Even twins born a few minutes apart are different. In fact, some twins have completely different personalities. Astrologists know that a few minutes difference in birth times alters destiny. Many common factors exist, but the destiny is not exactly the same. Throughout the journey of life, we travel with a backpack of our past lives, including experiences, expectations, and above all the load of karma. In this backpack we accumulate and save karma, and its effects.

The Seed and the Fruit

Karma (action) is the seed, and the result is the fruit of action. Many times we see that people doing wrong karma do not experience the result

instantly. As a young boy, I used to wonder why someone doing something wrong did not receive punishment right away. I thought if the punishment was instant creation would be a better place because we would be afraid to commit mistakes. For instance, suppose person told a lie. If that person was immediately unable to speak, he would know that he had lied. Others would also know why he could not speak. With this instant result, surely, no one would tell a lie. Likewise, if someone did something wrong with their hands, such as hitting someone or stealing, immediately their hands would be immobilized. If we received an immediate result, nobody would do wrong and creation would be better. We like to think that we are more intelligent than God. Sometimes we even judge the actions of God. We often ask God why He is doing this or that. Do we think God is incapable of knowing what is happening?

When I was a child, I asked God why people were not immediately punished after committing a mistake. God's reply came quickly in the form of another thought, "My child,

if everyone instantly got punished for their mistakes, My creation would be full of disabled people. Everybody would be crippled. Only a countable few in this world are free from mistakes, because most people commit errors." Out of compassion, God gives us time to correct our mistakes and be better. Gurudev used to say, "Mistake is not for mistake, it is for correction." Yes, a mistake may have been made, but mistakes are for our evolution. We must rectify ourselves. God is saying, "O my child, don't you know that I love My creation. I love each and every part. I give every person a chance to grow. Even when humans err, I love them. I give them a chance to change."

Freedom of Choice in Action, but not in the Fruits of Action

Every individual has the freedom to perform karma(act), but has no freedom to control the consequences. The divine law of providence is in the hands of the Divine. It is just and good for every individual. Most people want positive consequences, happiness, and prosperity, but very few

undertake good works. Sometimes we see good people suffering a lot. This is nothing but the play of karma, not only the present *kriyamana* karma, but also the past *sanchita* karma becoming manifest.

Sometimes we do something and nothing ever comes of it; there is no apparent result. We may wonder, “Are my actions futile?” the answer is no. Remember, no karma, no action, will ever exist that does not bear fruit. Good or bad, anything we do will produce fruit today or tomorrow. In general, our deeds produce consequences in this life as well as an impression that is accumulated as *sanchita*. *Sanchita* karma, the load of accumulated karma, always increases; it does not decrease. Sometimes people complain because they have been praying and meditating for years, but do not see a result. If you have ever felt this way, do to worry, the result will come; you need a little patience.

Investment of Karma

People love to invest their savings for the future. In daily life, we unconsciously save karma for the future in the form of *sanchita* karma, deposited

karma, accumulated day after day, month after month, year after year. This karma could not possibly be exhausted in the present life. *Sanchita* means “saved” or “savings.” In the language of modern times, *sanchita* means invested karma, like investing money in stocks; one day we will get it back. On Wall Street the market value of a stock might go down, but in the stock market of karma, the amount does not go down so easily. The different karmas in our backpacks create differences in our nature and appearance. Everyone has a different appearance, different behaviour, a unique nature—everything about us different from others. This multiplicity, this diversity, reveals the karmic content of our backpack, but we do not know how much karma has been deposited, saved, accumulated, for us, in us.

Where do we store this karma? The yogis, saints, and sages say that the karma accumulated year after year, life after life has been deposited in the astral and causal bodies. The gross, physical body that we inhabit ends with this life. This *sthulasharira*, the physical body, is *prarabdha*, our destiny.

When we leave the physical body, we do not leave everything; something travels with us—the astral and the causal bodies go with us to the next life. The astral and the causal bodies are the storehouses of all our karmic impressions, the seed form of all our karmas. When we die, we take this *sanchita* karma with us, and when we are reborn, the *sanchita* karma is present in our heads.

DATES TO REMEMBER

January – March, 2018

January 5	: Birthday of Paramahansa Yogananda
January 14-20	: 20 th Anniversary of IIKYS
January 18	: Mahasamadhi of Sannyal Mahashaya
January 24	: Birthday of Sannyal Mahashaya
February 10	: Saraswati Puja
March 7	: Maha Shivaratri
March 7	: Mahasamadhi of Paramahansa Yogananda
March 9	: Mahasamadhi of Shriyukteshwar

THE YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI

Sutra 26

God is the Guru of All

*s a p u r v e s a m -
apiguruhkalenanavacchedat*

Word Meaning

sa – He (Ishwara, God);
purvesamapi– even of the
earliest; *guruh* – preceptor,
master, teacher; *kalena* – by
time; *anavacchedat*– not
limited by

Translation

He is the Guru even of
the earliest teachers since He
is not limited by time.

Commentary by Shri Lahiri Mahashaya

(That) Ishwara (God) is
not conditioned by the time.
Being beginningless, He is
superior to Brahma (the
creator), etc.

Metaphorical Explanation

In the previous two
sutras, a clear picture of
Ishwara (God, the Lord) was
developed. However, such
knowledge of Ishwara cannot
help the seeker to have a close
and personal relationship with
Him, so there remains the

possibility of doubt about how
to love god and how to be
united with God.

In the Shvetashvatara
Upanishad (6:18) and the
Bhagavad Gita (4:1), there is a
beautiful description of God as
the teacher, or guru. God is
the source of all knowledge and
God is the mouthpiece of all
knowledge. God is the master
and guru of all knowledge. God,
with infinite potentialities and
endless possibilities, has been
teaching the art of perfect
living. As God is the teacher
from time immemorial, so God
is not limited by time. Time
cannot measure knowledge and
time cannot limit God. God is
ageless and timeless.

In spiritual life, a sincere
seeker needs a guide, a
preceptor, who can show the
path clearly and who, with
infinite compassion, can enable
the seeker to overcome the
obstacles on this slippery path.

This sutra can be
understood in two ways:
Consider the guru as God and

love, and thus, serve and follow the guru with implicit faith, or consider God as the Guru of gurus, and thus, let one find the path to god through the guru.

Guru means the true revealer of the Self and Self-knowledge. In essence, God is the Guru. If one studies the Guru Gita and the Guru Tantra, one can understand the inner principle of the guru; one can get knowledge of the guru. The one whom we love as a guru in human form is the physical manifestation of God's love as Guru. But in reality, guru is the Self, the Supreme Self, the Purushottama in the Gita (Chapter 15). So never impose humanhood on the guru. Instead, through the guru, try to experience divine love and

wisdom. The relationship between the guru and the disciple is pure and unconditional. It is only for spiritual evolution.

O Seeker! Pray to God to reveal the guru to you. Avoid ego and pride. Once you find the guru, serve him or her with love and follow the practical spiritual instructions as imparted by Him. Remember, the guru is the personification of the power of grace, compassion, and love of God. Never run after name and fame. Seek god in the guru and love the guru as the manifestation of God's love. Guru as God transcends the limits of time. Through such love and surrender, Truth will be revealed to you.



Go Navaratri at Temple of Compassion, Texas

STORIES TO LIVE BY

DETACH ATTACH

Life is a spiritual journey on which we grow and evolve. We live with and depend on other beings and material objects. With the passage of time, we develop likes and dislikes, and become attached to and reject certain things. Such polarity creates division, and as a result, we experience a constant flow of conflict, confusion, and discontent. If we truly want to lead a yogic life, we should learn how to live with everything and everyone in both understanding and integration.

Since my early school days, I have been influenced by the teachings of Swami Sivananda Saraswati of Rishikesh, a great yogi of modern India. Among his lessons is a practical one about detachment and attachment, in which he spoke of what it means to have spiritual and yogic lifestyle, the art of practical living. To detach from negative tendencies and to attach to virtues and positive

values is the path for spiritual life.

What is Detach and Attach?

When a baby is in its mother's womb, it is attached to her by the umbilical cord. When born, its cord is cut, but new types of attachment to its mother and other family members are created. A newborn is also united with its mother when it breastfeeds, but as it grows, the baby becomes less and less dependent on milk and eventually wants to eat other solid foods.

The everyday process of walking — something we do from the time we wake in the morning until we retire at night — is also a continuous process of detachment and attachment. Walking requires us to lift (detach) one leg off the ground, move it forward and then place it on the ground (attach) once again, after which we repeat the same process with the other leg. We cannot move if we keep our feet on the ground

(attached), nor can we stand if we try to lift (detach) both legs at one. Hence, even in the simplest and most familiar day-to-day activities, we must become well acquainted with the art of detachment and attachment.

The Path of Ripening

To explain the process of human evolution and even mature living, my master often gave the example of a tree. After the tree blooms, it slowly develops tiny fruit, which are connected to the flowers for their growth. The wind, birds, hot weather, and even humans might cause the fruit to detach from the tree before they ripen. The fruit that remain part of the tree (attached) will drop off (detach) naturally when they mature. No effort is required; separation comes at the end of the fruit's development process.

Similarly, human beings have to attach to and detach from certain things in order to evolve. Some of us suffer a lot because we are blindly attached to people, places, and things. To overcome this suffering, we should learn about the process of detachment and attachment and willingly accept it as a natural process in the

cycle of life, understanding, and love.

As a Child Grows

Toddlers are attached to toys, but when they grow a little, they become more interested in books. Babies are attached to their parents and other relatives, but when they are school aged, they want to spend more time with their playmates and friends, and thus slowly start detaching from their family unit. This process of detachment is quite natural, but parents are often overly attached to their children and do not allow them to grow up and become independent.

Detaching by Closing Our Eyes

When we close our eyes to rest, we try to quieten our thoughts or worldly activities or objects. Eventually we arrive at the deep sleep stage, and this is when inner detachment happens naturally, even from our body. During sleep, we forget our own body. Then, as soon as we wake up and open our eyes, we connect again to the mundane.

Somewhat similar to the process of sleeping is sitting for reflection, contemplation, or meditation. Intelligent people,

who do so very naturally, detach themselves from the outside world and become absorbed in the topic of their reflections. Sleep as well as reflection, contemplation, and meditation allow us to relax and make us free from the tortuous play of the mind.

In Our Daily Life

Throughout the day we get dressed and undressed several times. We organize our living space and free it of any unnecessary clutter. We store any unused food in the refrigerator or cupboards after cooking. We chop vegetables and fruits and throw away the peelings and the inedible parts. These are simple examples that carry a message of detachment and attachment, and show us how we can easily free ourselves from certain objects without feeling too much emotion. When it comes to relationships or particular incidents, however our emotional attachments are strong and attempting to free ourselves from them is not always easy. A ripe banana's skin can be peeled very easily. In contrast, removing a green banana's peel can be quite difficult. This simple example

speaks of our own inner transformation. My master often said, "When fruit ripens, its color, taste, aroma, and texture changes. In a similar manner, our nature and behaviour also change when we mature." We become a more loving and kind person, and our attitude to ourselves and others changes.

Change Is Possible

One lesson we must learn in life is that in order to really change, grow, and progress, we have to be ready and able to give up some things and accept others at any time. But because our old habits, preferences, and bonds of association are strong, accepting change is not always easy. We are attached to people, places, situations, food, clothing, culture, language, and even to our living space and its contents. We must remember that any emotional or obsessive attachment is an impediment to human development.

The journey of life is a constant flow of change. We have to accept the passing of time, learn to be in the present, and move slowly from one situation to situation that comes our way.

AROUND THE GLOBE

Europe and the Americas

After a hectic schedule of retreats and seminars in the ashrams of Europe and Americas of celebrating the foundation days, Guruji participated in the 6th Balashram trek .

The 6th Balashram trek

The sixth Balashram Trek to raise funds for Hariharananda Balashram took place in the Rift Valley of Tanzania from 21st October to 27th Oct 2018. Guruji and the participants travelled together in the beautiful Rift Valley, which is home to several Maasai communities. The Maasai are one of the great nomadic tribes of Africa. Led by Maasai guides, the trek began from the foothills of Mount Longido trekking across the floor of the Great Rift Valley to the foothills of the Crater Highlands. This area is also home to many animals and birds in their unique natural environment.

The trek was organised by Charity Challenge who have a lot of experience organising treks of this type. The

fundraising aspect of the trek was co ordinated by Kriya Yoga UK, to raise monies for Balashram, the residential school for disadvantaged children of Orissa, India. The school now provides for 477 children whose welfare and lives have been greatly supported by the donations generated by these treks in previous years.

Go Navaratri Celebrations – Nov 8-18, 2018

“Go Navaratri is the time for us to awaken and create peace and prosperity....through new understanding of the Mother Cow.”

P a r a m a h a m s a Prajnanananda, Go Navaratri 2018

P a r a m a h a m s a Prajnananandaji presided over and participated in the Go Navaratri festivals celebrated state wide and nationwide in India, with several spiritual dignitaries participating. The programs included talks, worship, and fire ceremonies to benefit spiritual growth, as well

as for the healing and rejuvenation of the environment and all beings.

10th anniversary of Dubai Kriya Centre and Retreat

P a r a m a h a m s a Prajnananandaji along with Swami Samarpananandaji and Swami Divyaswarupanandaji was at Dubai for the celebration **Gita Chanting Competitions**

To promote the study of Gita and encourage moral and spiritual values among the youth, Gita chanting competitions were held by Prajnana Mission at the sub district, district and state level in Odisha with several thousand students participating. The grand finale of the competition and prize distribution was held on the 29th and 30th of December 2018.

The 9th Annual Girls Orientation Camp for Social and Spiritual Awareness for Girls was organized and conducted by the HariharanandaMatruashram at Kendujhara district at the

AdivasiVikasaSamiti from 20-24thSeptember, 2018. Over a thousand Girls participated in the program. Prayer, chanting, yogasana classes and human values was the theme of the inspiring retreat.

1st Go Navaratri Celebrations at the Temple of Compassion, Texas Ashram

For the first time in the West, Temple of Compassion – our Texas ashram celebrated the nine day, festival of Go navaratri. The special event was well attended. Go puja of our brahmi cows in the morning and evening, guided meditations, and talks on significance of Mother cow were very inspiring and enlightening. Fire ceremonies – Chandihavan on the 8th day and Bhagavad Gita havan on the 9th day were the high lights of the program making the whole atmosphere sacred and divine. Several kriya yoga monks, lead by Swami AtmavidyanandaGiriconducted the ceremonies.

Visit our web site:

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