

Sthita Prajna



Guru Vandana

*sûcakâdiprabhedena guravo bahudhâ smrtâh̃
svayaṃ samyak pariksyartha tattvaniṣṭhaṃ bhajetsudhîḥ*

There are various types of teachers, known by various names such as *Suchaka*, etc. A wise student should observe and test the Guru; then follow and serve the one who is established in Truth.

Guru Gita 272

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FROM THE EDITORS :

Dear Reader:

“We are God in human beings. We should live with courage, strength, and optimism. Fear spreads when the mind is weak.”

– Paramahansa Prajnanananda

The onset of this year has seen the whole world in a calamitous state experienced only once in one’s life time. An invisible virus, COVID-19, has created panic, uncertainty, and fear in the lives of people. These are the times that we need to bring more harmony, love, and understanding not only with others but also with *prakriti*, Mother Nature.

Due to the present situation and to comply with the Government regulations, the celebrations of Paramahansa Yogananda’s 100 years of going to the West have been suspended until further notice. Online sessions are organized to support the *kriyavans* with their regular prayers and meditation.

“The Goal of Life” is a very apt Message from the Master to reflect upon during these times. Prajnana Vani elaborately discusses how to overcome sorrow.

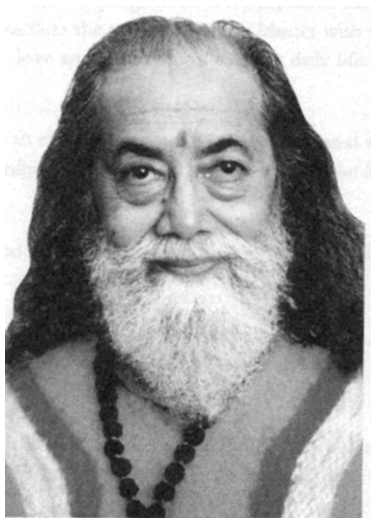
In this issue we have from Mahabharatha the incident where Shakuni is preparing Duryodhana to invite the Pandavas for the play of dice. The Law of Karma explains a paradox: ‘Are we really human? Or are we animals in human form?’

Also included is the message of Shri Guruji providing courage and inspiration during these tumultuous times of COVID-19. And as usual, we have news from around the world and activities of Prajnana Mission and other ashrams around the world.

We pray to God and Gurus to keep us healthy and positive. Let there be peace and harmony everywhere.

MESSAGE FROM THE MASTER

THE GOAL OF LIFE



The goal of life is to reach the shore of immortality, using the human body as the boat. By this boat, one has to cross the ocean of life and death and become immortal. This can be achieved only by the perception of the Self. We cannot easily perceive it, since we are enmeshed in the jungle of matter – the body and mind. To the ignorant person, the body is the Self; whereas to the learned, the ego appears to be the Self. Needless to say, both are deluded.

The different waves that arise in the *citta* (memory)

cover the Self. A slight reflection of the Self is perceived in these waves that cover the Self. These waves are the *samskara* (the sum total of the impressions of our actions). The real nature of the Self cannot be realized so long as a single wave exists in the lake of the *citta*. As soon as all the waves subside, the meditator attains *nirvikalpa Samadhi* or seedless state. The seedless state is attained when actions no longer form impressions in the subconscious and, therefore, cease to bind. In this state, all veils are lifted and the Self is perceived, shining in Its own glory.

Life on earth is characterized by incessant changes. The Bhagawad Gita refers to the world as full of unhappiness, the abode of miseries, and is transient. The sages of yore declared from direct experience that “Truth is One.” And the goal of human life is the realization of this Truth. The Mahabharata declares that contact with this

universe is as temporary as the contact of a log of wood with a flowing river. Therefore, the message of the ancient sages to humanity is, “Ye children of immortality, know thyself as the Infinite. Become the All. That is the Supreme Blessing.”

Life is precious; yet short. The time of death is uncertain. Self-exertion means *purushartha*, which can lead us to the highest goal. The kingdom of peace is beyond speech, beyond thought. It is a positive state of spiritual attainment. It is our center, our ideal, and goal. It is the perfect awareness of the Self. The goal of life is the attainment of Self-realization.

Moksha or liberation is the *summum bonum* (the be-all and end-all) of life. It is the fulfillment of life’s purpose. The bondage of life and death on earth, as well as on other planets, no longer exists for him who has attained *moksha*. The real object of life is the realization of this freedom. Realization of the identity of the individual soul with that of universal soul is liberation. By annihilating the individual ego, we reach true universality. We attain life eternal, a fuller life.

Each person is the master of his own destiny. He can do anything and everything. *Prarabdha karma* is under his control. By utilizing free will, he can attain the highest realization. In fact, there is nothing impossible under the sun for him to accomplish. He has incapacitated himself, because he has forgotten the power of his real Self.

The goal of life for all beings is happiness, peace, satisfaction, security, knowledge, and immortality. This desire for perfection springs from the Self, the image of God within us. The perfect image of God within us is seeking to express Itself through each individual. The only way to realize this fullest expression is to unite our isolated consciousness with the ocean of cosmic consciousness — God. Paramahansa Yoganandaji says, “An individual wave rising out of the ocean is bound by the laws of change. It is born, it exists, and it dies. But when the wave realizes, that it is but a manifested form of the sea, when it knows that the sea has become that wave and all other waves, when the wave knows that it is the sea, then it knows

that although its form may change, it is never lost or annihilated.”

Similarly, our individual existence can become immortal only by acquiring the immortality of God. Our consciousness can become unceasing only when dissolved in the cosmic consciousness of God. Our joy will be unending, ever-existent joy only when united with ever-new joy of God. Self-realization means knowledge of one's own Self and its identity with Brahman or God. Then one goes beyond time, space, and causation. This state is, in reality, the beginning of the original status of humanity and not a new acquisition. Karma is the cause of bondage, or imperfection. Desires produce karma and mind produces desires. Only by merging the mind in the cosmic or universal mind are the desires destroyed. Becoming desireless, a person's actions do not bind him. He becomes free.

The essence of religion lies in the personal experience of the Divine. By *sadhana*, this becomes possible. *Sadhana* means any spiritual practice that enables the aspirant to realize God. It is the means by which

one can attain the goal of life. *Sadhana* is merely a means to an end. It presupposes some discipline for that specific end. In religion, *sadhana* includes all the religious practices and ceremonies that lead to the realizations of spiritual truths. *Sadhana* is religion in practice.

To love God we must know Him in our consciousness, not through books or philosophy. Only then can there be genuine love. Spiritual practice is the means to that knowledge. From action comes knowledge, there can be no real love, only sentimentality. The surest way to know God is that which was discovered and practiced by the great masters and yogis. By mere prayers we cannot and will not discover spiritual truth. Like the scientists, we have to concentrate and systematize our activities and experiments. The difference is that, while scientists apply themselves to the laws of nature, we must go within and apply ourselves to the laws of spirit. Kriya Yoga is the scientific method that guides true seekers of God to their goal.

Religion belongs to the deepest consciousness of humanity. Psychological and

physical training are necessary, as spiritual realization is the unfolding of the spirit encased in the human form. The finite gradually unfolds the Infinite. But as the Infinite has assumed a finite form, the unfoldment of the former is linked to the growth and development of the body. All round development of the physical, mental, intellectual, moral, and intuitional aspects of a person is essential spiritual realization. The body is the

instrument for the expression of the life force. The disciplining of the body and mind is essential for the person who seeks realization. Moreover, it is a priceless asset that helps one in all situations of life. Therefore, religion must educate and develop the whole person: the head, heart, and hands. Then only can there be perfection. There should be simultaneous development of body, mind, and the soul.



Celebration of Holi in Balashram on March 9

PRAJNANAVANI - THE VOICE OF WISDOM

FREEDOM FROM SORROW



React

Sorrow and sadness are nothing but reactions to a situation. Every reaction is born with our approval and with our signature. When we do not accept a fact or an incident, our thinking is mechanical, reactive. We should consciously perceive reality and be peaceful and active.

We are not machines; we are not mechanical; we are not totally programmed. We have choice in our thinking and acting. Let us take an example. Dogs and cats are carnivorous

Lord. But we can choose: Do we want to be carnivorous or omnivorous or herbivorous? Animals behave in a programmed way, but we have a free will.

Unfortunately, we allow history to repeat itself because we do not learn easily. Shri Gurudev said, "A human being is a conscious devil and an educated fool." We repeat the same mistakes; we do not perform actions consciously. When we act with consciousness, we are alert and we can rectify errors.

Unfortunately, we keep our knowledge and wisdom in a corner at bay. Thus our reactions are totally mechanical.

Mechanical, reactive thinking leads to sorrow and sadness, while alert, conscious thinking frees us from sorrow, and leads to joy. Let us be blessed with the ability to discriminate (*viveka*), the art of deciding and choosing what should be done and what shouldn't be done. If we follow our discriminating minds, the sadness evaporates.

We are rational, discriminative beings, not machines. Once we realize that our minds think mechanically and we start thinking with discrimination, our poor judgement and reactions will stop. A reaction is born out of refusal to accept a certain fact. Once we accept reality, it is as though we are using a full stop (a period); the sorrow and misery ends. When we are reactive, however, it is like we are using a comma, semi-colon, colon, or hyphen to add another clause to our misery; we should learn to accept truth and live in truth. Jesus said that we should know truth, and the truth will set us free (John 8:32).

Often we believe that something or someone is against us. It is not true; our own actions cause our problems. In creation nothing is accidental; everything is caused. All "accidents" are really incidents, and when every incident is caused, there are no accidents. An intelligent person does not accept that something has occurred by accident or chance; rather, he or she has learned to accept responsibility.

Law of Karma

Understanding the law of *karma* resolves many unsettled quandaries. It converts accidents into incidents. For example, when an auto accident occurs, if the traffic police conduct a thorough investigation and uncover all the facts, they may realize the cause and declare that the accident was in reality an incident. Everything that happens in our lives is nothing but our own *karma* (actions). We can change a lot in our lives by realizing this and treating our lives as an opportunity for change and transformation.

In life *karma* is a shock absorber because it provides a cause that explains our suffering or success. There is a

performer of every action (a *karta*). When we are the *karta* (actor), we must accept the result, because *karma* is created by our every action. In life we should try to live with the attitude that we cannot escape the past, our past actions, so we must be prepared to face every situation. When we encounter a sorrowful situation, we must realize that it is nothing but our *karma*. We must face this *karma* with strength and even a smile.

Indian astrology helps us understand what we might have done in the past. We are what we are because of what we have done before. We have to take responsibility for what we are now, and we should act properly to become what we want to be. We should work for what we want, and when the result comes, we must accept it gracefully. Every fruit is the result of a seed we have planted. As we sow, so shall we reap. We should smile and move forward rather than shedding a tear and living with fear.

It is a common experience that in spite of our efforts, the results of our actions are sometimes equal to our expectations, sometimes

more than our expectations, sometimes less than our expectations, and sometimes the opposite of what we expected. This is nothing but the effect of *karma*. We should move forward gracefully with love, not with sorrow and sadness. Life is a series of actions and learning experiences.

Maturity Is the Attitude of Renunciation

Do we really want to be wiser and more mature? If so, we should learn to think, analyze, accept, and act. We are social beings; we have to live in the world. No one is born unrelated to the world. We are born connected and related to the world; related to the world we will grow and live; and finally in this relationship with creation we will leave this world. Life is a relationship. The entire universe is one living entity, and we are all a part of it. We cannot live without others, and our attitude should limit all harm or injury to others. As humans we have many choices in food, clothes, and lifestyle. We cannot live in peace and love if we harm and injure others in our thinking, speaking, and acting.

When we consider the present pattern of development, we see that we are exploiting nature to the maximum extent, and we do not hesitate to kill many for food, drink, and habitat. Any path based on hurting others cannot lead us to health and happiness. We should learn from the wisdom of the ancient sages and seers. They taught us to pray, *sarve bhavantu sukhinah*: “Let all live happily and harmoniously.”

Is this happening now? No. We must change our attitudes individually and collectively. We cannot be happy while hurting others, whether in our thoughts, words, or actions. We should minimize our need and greed and be happy and content.

We have to live with consciousness of our relationship with creation. There are two ways to succeed: We can expand our relationship gradually to embrace the entire creation, the entire universe, such as “I belong to all and all belong to me” ; or we can minimize our relationship, by cutting down little by little, such as “I belong to none but God, and God is mine,” and then remember Him always. This is

the attitude of renunciation. When we completely cut down our relationship with creation by accepting *sannyasa* (monasticism or renunciation), our relationship in the world is limited. For a monk, there are only two relationships: the relationship with guru, and ultimately the relationship with God.

Both methods lead to freedom from sorrow and suffering. When we expand our relationship to the entire creation, our minds and thinking become broader and pacified. We will live lives of constant prayer for the wellbeing of all. We see birth and death, pleasure and pain as the drama in God’s creation. If we lead a life of complete detachment, we have nothing to worry about and nothing to mourn.

Relationship: The Cause of All Sorrow

When a person is sad, it is often due to a relationship; the relationship can be with the material world or worldly possessions, our body, our beauty and health, or our relationship with living beings including family, friends, plants, or animals such as a pet dog or cat. We say things like “My son

is not doing well,” or “My parents do not understand me,” and so on.

We cannot escape from sorrow and suffering without properly understanding our relationship with creation and without accurately perceiving the facts of life. In every relationship we lose our hearts; thus, relationships ordinarily lead to attachment. Is it not so? Because of this attachment, we suffer a lot.

How can we have a healthy relationship with the world and live without the so-called misery of loss and suffering? The problem is that we do not properly relate with the world, because we lack right understanding. Do we realize that this world is a stage, and we are all actors? Do we realize that all the roles we play are temporary and constantly changing? Do we realize that we and those around us will have to leave this creation today or tomorrow?

No, we don't truly realize these things. As a result, we promote our likes (*ragi*) and dislikes (*dveshi*). We live with emotional attachment: “I like” and “I dislike,” or “I am liked” and “I am disliked.” “I” does

not have any particular characteristics; “I” changes as the objects of its likes and dislikes change. “I” is just a status as a subject; whatever is liked or disliked is the object.

During the drama of life, we consciously and willingly accept roles, as a beggar or a king, as a romantic lover or a mother mourning the death of her child. The script, the dialogue, and the actions change with the roles. A good actor remains detached while playing a role. One knows that the beggar is an actor, but the actor is not a beggar.

Where is our understanding or knowledge? We can think intelligently, but we live like fools. The world is an open theater or a playground, but we make it a prison. Four walls do not make a prison. Wrong understanding, false imagination, and unrealistic expectations imprison us. The masters say that we cannot be imprisoned if we have nothing to do in the outside world. We are born in this free world to freely play and leave with the joy of freedom.

We must be free from confusion. It is a common experience that when her child

is born, a woman may be challenged by the simultaneous demands of her roles as mother and wife. Her life changes and she has to accept dual roles with dual dialogues. Ideally, she must live a life of love. But how? How can she cultivate love for the husband and the child? She must do one thing at a time and do it with love. She can be free from confusion and live with knowledge and love. The same strategy - do one thing at a time and do it with love, should also be adopted by the husband who now has dual roles as well, that of husband and father. In this way, he will develop love for the wife and child; he will be free from confusion, and he can live with knowledge and love.

Self-Knowledge: The Door to All Freedom

Knowledge is the door to freedom, so we should keep this door open in our hearts. We know this, but we cannot live with knowledge because we do not practice it. We have to cultivate *viveka* (a discriminative inquiry), *vichara* (inquiry or analysis), prayer, and meditation. To accomplish this, yoga must become an arsenal of attitudes and values where

these four practices are integrated. When we live with prayer, meditation, and discrimination, and we deliberate with the correct attitude, a load is released from our hearts, and we can live in real freedom.

Ordinary people live with wrong ideas, imagination, ego, and expectation. They live under a veil. When someone manufactures a persona, or a mask, they are affected by the world. A person without a persona is never affected.

Our discriminative outlook begins with the physical body. We identify with the body and accept ourselves as a man, woman, or child, and young, old, sick, or healthy. But if we look deeply, we see that the body is only the house in which we live. It is born; it gradually grows old; it is prone to disease and ultimately death. We need to affirm, "I am the soul, not the body. I am free from all modifications of disease, decay, and death."

When we say, "I am restless," we are aware that our mind is restless. When we say, "I am ignorant," we believe we lack knowledge. We think, "I am ignorant when I do not

know,” and “I am knowledgeable when I know,” but this is the play of the mind and intellect. We are not that. We are the soul that is pure and perfect. Mind and emotion are what lead to all imperfections and all suffering.

We have to play different roles during every stage of life. The dialogues and the plots change, but we always play with a plot. With a change in roles, the challenges also change. As one role rolls into another, an imprint of problems are left behind. Accumulated problems become the fire that creates disaster. We carry childhood memories of sorrow and sadness to our old age. Unhappy memories of our youth can lead to problems in the later stages of life. One role impinges upon another. Ultimately, our imperfect actions and dialogues mean that we neither perform our roles nicely nor do we give joy to others or find joy within.

We want to love and live in love. Unfortunately, we do not realize that in the name of love we are too attached. We do not hesitate to attempt to control everything about those we love. When love becomes control, love disappears. Falsely

we think that if there is no control, there is no love. We want to control the child because we fear the child will not grow in the right manner. We have to free the child with the touch of our love.

We chant the Vedic prayer *purnam adah*, the prayer of completeness, which says that everything is complete, the full comes out of the full. For example, fire is complete. From one flame another flame emerges; both are complete in themselves. We have to live with the inner knowledge of feeling completeness, with a sense of inner and lasting fulfillment.

Sorrow perishes when we understand life in a different way and achieve mastery over the mind. Raising a child is God’s gift. When we are with a child, we regard everything with a fresh mind. When our minds are fresh, free from past wrong impressions and expectations, we perceive with more love and contentment. Accepting and acting upon a situation means we face a fact or situation without an emotional reaction. This frees us from misery and sorrow.

To keep our minds free from sorrow, we should also

follow the teachings of the Lord in the Bhagavad Gita in relation to the food we consume. *Rajasic* food, including those that are pungent, sour, salty, excessively hot, sharp, harsh, dry, and burning, causes sorrow, pain, grief, and disease (17:9). The Lord also advises that one who lives a moderate, regulated life, avoiding too much or too little food, work, sleep, and the use of the senses, and who abides their attention in the soul at all times will be free from sorrow and suffering (6:17).

Think Positive

Mechanical, emotional, reactive behavior does not pay and never leads to success. Instead, it damages our lives with broken relationships and sadness. Reactive behavior is a sign of weakness and fear. It steals our joy and happiness without our permission. Reactive behavior does not consult our wisdom.

When we see a tree, a flower, a butterfly, or a bird, they are the objects of our thoughts. When we have despair or sorrow, what is the object? No object called "sorrow" exists. A subject who is called "sad" exists when he or she expresses "I am sad."

Without the presence of "I," sadness is nonexistent; there is no frustration. The all encompassing "I" is the subject free from all limitations, but in our ignorance we identify with the egocentric "I" instead of the divine "I."

Sometimes we say, "I want happiness," but we do not understand the three words we used. Our so-called "I" is nothing but our ego, and "want" is just a desire or expectation. If we eliminate the ego and expectation, the thing remaining is happiness.

In most individuals, sadness or sorrow, depression or dejection, are the result of negative thinking patterns. We always focus on what we do not have and not on what we have. We have eyes to see this beautiful world, but many people cannot see it. Why can't we see good and goodness in our daily lives?

Depression is often the result of not accepting reality. In truth, no object called "depression" or "sorrow" exists in the same way that an apple or an orange exists; depression and sorrow are products of our

imagination and expectation. Depression is a ramification of sadness. Depression is sadness in different shades, colors, and forms.

To live peacefully, we have to transform our thinking from negative to positive. Then, ultimately, we require pure discriminative thinking, neither positive nor negative. When we become established in truth, we will rise above positive and negative and be saturated in love and peace.

In this state we will feel, “I am a conscious being and everything else is an object of my consciousness. I am conscious of everything including my body, my mind, my senses, my ignorance, my knowledge, my emotion, and my world.” When we are aware of our own true nature, we become independent of everything while living with all and playing with all.

Cause and Effect

This world, this body, and this life are all the result of cause and effect. Without cause, there is no effect. For example, this body is the effect of past good *karma*. It is a gift of God that allows us to do

good through it. The body, the mind, and the intellect can be the cause of helping others with a loving heart.

Whoever we have with us in life and whatever happens to us is the result of our past actions, and we must accept this. We must live intelligently and grow toward a state of inner maturity. Let us remember that anything happening to us was caused by us. We must not cause pain or trouble, misery or misfortune for anyone. The right attitude is to live a life of constant prayer and thanksgiving. We have to live, and as a result we will need material things and association with other living beings, but we must always be disciplined.

Let us reflect: Has there been a single day when you were totally free from wants? Wants are twofold, either we like something, or we don't. We want to avoid what we dislike. Many of our likes and dislikes were unfulfilled as children, as a young person, and even in old age. Was there ever a day when we were free from likes and dislikes?

If we truly want to mature, we should develop an attitude of indifference toward all. Often we say, “I want happiness. I do not want to be unhappy.” We do not realize that the “wanting me” and the “happy me” are merely two versions of “myself.”

As human beings, we commit mistakes. When we are a little bit aware of them, we develop a sense of guilt. Guilt will always manifest when we fail to do something we should have done and when we do something we should not have done. We should rectify this mistake and be free from guilty

consciousness. We should grow into complete beings and realize that happiness is our true nature. A state of completeness is the experience of the Self within. In this stage, real freedom is tasted. In the Chandogya Upanishad (7:1:3), the *rishi* taught, *tarati sokamatmavit*: “A knower of the Self crosses all sorrow.

Sadness does not strike like lightning; it appears thought by thought. Sadness builds up. Similarly, Self-realization does not manifest instantly; it emerges step-by-step with practice.

DATES TO REMEMBER

April – June, 2020

April 2	:	Sri Rama Navami
April 12	:	Easter Sunday
May 17	:	Jagatpur Ashram Foundation Day
May 27	:	Shri Gurudev’s Birthday
June 5	:	Snana Purnima
June 21	:	International Yoga Day
June 23-July 1	:	Ratha Yatra

A GLOBAL MESSAGE

Love and Prayers, Courage and Optimism

Loving and Divine Soul,

I am sending my love and prayers to all of you. I am praying for all of you as well as for all living beings at the time of this human crisis that has created a lot of panic all over the world. The spread of Covid-19, which started from China, has gone to many countries and taken the lives of many people. It is no doubt a health disaster. We should take the necessary precaution as has been suggested, but we should not live with constant fear, anxiety, and apprehension.

My loving ones, we are human beings, and as Shri Gurudev said, we are God in human beings. We should live with courage, strength, and optimism. Fear spreads when the mind is weak. Fear as a psychological weakness can make people mentally and physically weak. On the planet Earth many epidemics have come and gone. With scientific knowledge, medical innovations,

and preventions many epidemics have been eliminated. Every year people leave the planet for some reason or other. Having too much fear, as with this Covid-19 virus, is a result of extreme media whipping and propaganda. We should be careful and more hygienic. As I have been informed, this virus mostly has serious effects on people who are older, sick, and have less body immunity.

We can naturally help increase body immunity and the prevention of many ailments by adding basil or holy basil, black pepper, ginger, and turmeric to our food or drink. Unless one feels weak or sick there is nothing to fear about this present crisis. If we are not old or sick, we should not fear group or community activities. The cause of all human suffering is deviation from the natural way of living. We must eat healthful food, exercise regularly, walk in free and fresh air, and at the same time preserve the natural surroundings and nature. Let us

learn from this crisis to change our personal and social lifestyle.

During this time, meditate for yourself and the entire creation. Pray for yourself and all who are suffering in the world.

I have been traveling in India, and next month I will travel abroad to many places.

It is my personal view to live with faith, to live with strength, and to intensify prayer and meditation, individually and collectively.

I will be happy to see you soon.

With Love,
Prajnanananda



Hariharananda Matru Ashram Foundation Day celebrations
on January 31, 2020



Prachi Walk

PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANDA

A LIFE OF LOVE AND LIBERATION

His Early Gurus

In his childhood, he learned some techniques of Kriya from his father, who was his first guru of Kriya and developed his interest in meditation. As a high school boy, Mukunda was not so devoted to his studies, so he usually had to resort to private tutors. Among them was the great Sanskrit scholar

Ashutosh Mukhopadhyaya, also known as Shastri Mahasaya and later on Hamsa Swami Kevalananda. He was chosen by Mukunda's elder brother, Ananta, to teach him Sanskrit. Ananta did not know that this saintly man was really an elevated spiritual Master, a disciple of Shri Lahiri Mahasaya. Locked up in a room, while family thought that they might be discussing school subjects or Sanskrit, Mukunda was learning about spiritual truth, meditation, and intricacies that lie behind the different scriptures. Thus, Mukunda got the revered spiritual teacher he had desired and prayed for, who taught him not Sanskrit but also Kriya meditation and Bhagavad Gita.

Meeting with Shriyukteshwar

Swami Shriyukteshwar was at this time a full-fledged spiritual Master, well established in the Karar ashram in Puri, Odisha. He used to spend four months in Puri, four months in Serampore, his birthplace and four months in Benares, the place of his Guru Shri Lahiri Mahasaya. In a divinely ordained situation, Mukunda came into contact with Swami Shriyukteshwar in Benares in 1920 and this meeting ended his search for a spiritual Master who could guide and shape his life. The foundation for his Kriya practice, which had been laid by the teachings of his own father-guru and Kevalananda, became reinforced by Shriyukteshwar's strict disciplined instructions. Mukunda managed to spend most of his time in the company of his Divine Guru and from 1920 to 1915, under the pretext of receiving higher education, he lived most of the time in

Serampore. Although he did not care for a University degree since his heart was set in becoming a monk, Shriyukteshwar motivated him to complete his education, with Philosophy as his major subject. In June 1915, Mukunda obtained his final degree from the University and in the following month he was ordained by his beloved Guru into the monastic life of the Giri order. Henceforth, Mukunda Ghosh became known as Swami Yogananda Giri.

A Life of Meditation and Right Action

Yogananda and his friends started their own spiritual group in Calcutta, with the dream of eventually opening a *brahmacharya vidyalaya*, a school for strictly celibate students. They founded an ashram in Dihika, in the state of Bengal, and later on moved to Ranchi, in the state of Bihar. Yogananda's dream-like-vision and Satyananda's hard work made it possible to build and maintain this ashram and school. They were blessed with a generous donation from Yogananda's father and even from the King Mahendra Chandra Nandi of Kasimbazar, Bengal. Their main activity was

caring for the sick and poor and helping children from extremely poor localities obtain their only chance for education, enriched with meditation and spiritual values. When the great spiritual leader of India, Mahatma Gandhi visited the beautiful ashram and school, he bestowed on it his admiration and highest esteem.

Messenger to the West

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

In America, he travelled far and wide, delivering lectures and creating a receptive environment for spiritual life. At that time, people in the West

were not familiar with meditation and the yogic lifestyle. Yogananda was one of the first pioneers from India who helped to open westerners mind to a new concept of spirituality. He was the first to introduce Kriya Yoga and to explain the yogic way of life in such an accessible and beautiful way that he reached many of his American disciples' hearts. His strong will power, dynamic personality, divine love and high state of spiritual experience, enabled him to be a spiritual dynamo that encouraged and inspired millions of people. His work was progressing at such a galloping pace that it was difficult for him to work alone, so he tried to invite Swami Satyananda to come and join him in his divine mission, but Swami Satyananda declined, saying that his place was in India.

Later on Swami Dhirananda, formerly Basukumar Bagchi, left India to go to assist Yogananda who, once more, had to resort to Satyananda's help asking Him to train new brahmacharis and disciples so that they could be ready to help him in his work in the United States. In 1928, Brahmachari Jatin, who was

later ordained as Swami Premananda, went to America. Eventually Yogananda found the Church of Self Realization in Washington D.C. and became the author of many interesting spiritual books.

Yogananda's beloved Guru, Swami Shriyukteshwar, was always proud of the success his dearest disciple was having in the West, but he would often request Yogananda to return to India. In 1935, after a decade and half of tireless work, Yogananda made the trip back to India, stopping in Europe on the way.

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

In the many places he visited all over India, Yogananda

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

From Swami to Paramahansa

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

Mahasamadhi of Shriyukteshwar

When Yogananda was at the *Kumbha Mela* and later on in Calcutta, for the festival of Holi, the festival of colour celebrating Lord Krishna, he received several calls from

Shriyukteshwar asking him to return to Puri, but as Yogananda was planning to combine his visit to Puri with the foundation-day celebration of the Karar ashram, on the day of the vernal equinox, the 22nd of March, he delayed his visit. On the 9th of March 1936, Shriyukteshwar sent an urgent message to Paramahansa Yogananda to come back to Puri immediately and on the same day, in the evening, he consciously left his physical body.

The next morning Yogananda reached Puri with the intuitive knowledge of Shriyukteshwar's *mahasamadhi*. It is difficult to describe the sorrow of the realized yogi, who had lost the physical company and guidance of his beloved guru. According to tradition, a monk's body is not burned, it is buried. Yogananda performed the burial ceremony on the ashram premises and, as per the tradition, organised a *bhandara*, inviting several monks of Puri and many well-known spiritual leaders to pay tribute to this great guru.

After a couple of months he decided to leave India to fulfill his divine mission in the

West, but before leaving India on the 19th of June, while he was staying in a room at the Regent Hotel in Bombay, Yogananda had the rare opportunity of experiencing the actual materialization of Shriyukteshwar, who appeared to him in bodily form. This was a mesmerizing and inspiring encounter with his loving guru.

Divine Prediction

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

Dickinson, a young man of seventeen, was miraculously drawn to this august gathering without any prior knowledge of it. Looking at the smiling and loving Swami Vivekananda, he intuitively knew that here was someone that would save his life on many occasions. He approached Swamiji wishing to become his disciple, but Swami

Vivekananda lovingly patted the young man and said, 'My chid! I am not your guru. Your guru will come from India later on'. The young man asked, 'How will I recognize him? Then Vivekananda replied, 'He will fill your life and heart with love and divinity and he will give you as a present a silver cup''. Dickinson did not disclose these words to anybody but treasured them in his heart. As the year passed, he waited and prayed every day to meet his spiritual teacher as prophesied by the great saint. In 1925, his prayers were answered. He met Paramahansa Yogananda who was at the time teaching in Los Angeles. Dickinson started to practice Kriya yoga under Yogananda's guidance and grew in love and inner spiritual experience, but where was the silver cup? He consoled himself with the thought that it might have been only a metaphor.

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

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

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

Eventful Life

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

Yogananda worked ceaselessly, day and night. At midnight and even later, he was still surrounded by several secretaries taking dictation, writing and answering seekers' letters from all over the world.

In one of his letters to his disciple Rabinarayan (later known as Paramahansa Hariharananda, our beloved Gurudev), he wrote on the 6th October 1951 "My life is a whirlwind of activity and struggle with work".

His Last Smile

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

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

They were his last words paying tribute to his motherland, which had given him his training and inspiration. Although a monk is for all humanity, Yogananda's love for India, his

Guru and his parents remained always unique.

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

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

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

TEACHERS WANTED

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Teachings of the Masters

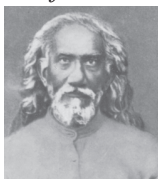


"The door of Kriya Yoga is open only to earnest seekers and sadhakas."

Mahavatara Babaji

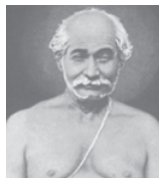
"Forget your past suffering and troubles. If you set your mind on selfrealization and work towards your spiritual upliftment, you will receive immense benefits."

Lahiri Mahasaya



"Every day do regular swadhyaya coupled with meditation and study of spiritual books and scriptures."

Swami Shriyukteshwar



"One who is blessed with the eye of wisdom is free from all doubts, confusion and duality."

Sanyal Mahasaya

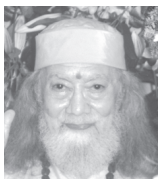
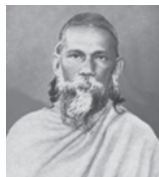


"By drawing and observing the graph of your mind, you can see whether everyday you are making any progress in your life or not."

Paramahansa Yogananda

"Make an effort to study the scriptures related to self-knowledge and to discuss the teachings of the Masters."

Swami Satyananda



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

Paramahansa Hariharananda

"One must constantly endeavour to be perfect in every thought, word and action."

Paramahansa Prajnanananda



MYTHS AND METAPHORS

MAHABHARATA

THE FIRE CEREMONY OF THE PANDAVAS



Duryodhana's Discontent

Duryodana prepared for the play of dice. However, he knew he should get his father to agree to this game. Shakuni, the maternal uncle and advisor, and Duryodhana, the crown prince, went to Dhritarashtra, the blind king. Shakuni told Dhritarashtra, "Have you ever thought of your own son? He is now so sick, so weak, so tired. Have you ever asked him why?" Dhritarashtra called Duryodhana and asked what was wrong. Duryodhana expressed his misery as he saw the Pandava's prosperity with his own eyes. In the Mahabharata, there is description of Duryodhana

narrating whatever he had seen to his father, including the types of gifts-jewels, treasure, elephants, chariots, horses, and so on- that the Pandavas received. Dhritarashtra consoled him and told him to be happy with their prosperity because they were his brothers and to be content with whatever he had. In the Mahabharata (Udyoga Parva 33-33), it is said Duryodhana replied:

santoso vai sriyam hanti

"Contentment brings decrease of one's prosperity."

Although it is said in the Bhagavad Gita (12:14):

samtustah statam yogi

"Be always content,"

Duryodhana was saying,
 “If you are content, you cannot prosper. If you want prosperity, be discontented. Discontentment is the cause of prosperity.” There is a verse from Chanakya Niti (8:18):

*asamtusta dvija nastah
 santustah ca mahibhrtah
 salajja ganika nastah
 nirlajjasca kulanganah*

“A discontented brahmin is destroyed, a contented king is destroyed, a shy prostitute is destroyed, and an immodest daughter-in-law is destroyed.”

A holy person who wants to follow the path of spirituality should be content with everything, except his or her own practice of meditation. Never be content with your own practice. Never think an hour of meditation is enough. This should be the promise to yourself,” I need to practice more; I have to change myself; I have to be better.” One can try to improve. You may like to sleep, but be content with fewer hours of sleep. If you feel content with your sleep, then you will not feel sleepy. If you are discontent even with a few hours of good sleep, you feel sleepy and will want to sleep a little longer.

Duryodhana concluded:
*aprapya pandavaisvarye
 samo mama na vidyate*

“When I cannot get all the prosperity, all the treasure, of the Pandavas, I cannot be in peace.”

*Mahabharata, Sabha
 Parva 49:36*

Duryodhana's declaration of his own condition and the cause of his misery show his psychological state of jealousy, envy, and intolerance. With such a mindset he could never be in peace. If we look at our own inner state, we can find the cause of our discontentment. Worldly things cannot give inner contentment. Contemplate whether material prosperity can really give you peace. Even if you take the treasure of others, can it make you happy and content? Contentment is a virtue and should be cultivated with understanding and love. Duryodhana became very jealous, forgetting his decision that he would be content if the Kauravas and Pandavas lived in separate cities and kingdoms. Although this happened, he could not be at peace seeing the prosperity and progress of his own cousins. He wanted

to take away the Pandavas' city and kingdom, and he pondered how to do this although there was no lawful method. His bad advisors also encouraged and supported him. They reminded him of the failure of the plot to kill Bhima and to burn the Pandavas in a fire. They said that if Duryodhana began a battle against the Pandavas, he might not win and would end up having a bad name. Duryodhana's maternal uncle Shakuni, the evil advisor, then gave the bad suggestion of gambling.

Gambling, a Great Weakness

In modern times, almost everyone gambles. Contemplate on where and in what way you gamble. Sophisticated gambling is now at casinos. You put forth money and either you lose or gain. We all are gambling. The gamblers want to invest a little and get more overnight. If we expect to achieve success through our hard work, we are gambling. God has given us little time on the earth. If we do not use that time to achieve our goal, success, and peace in life, then we are surely gambling with our time.

Everything can be lost in gambling. The poor people in India work the entire day for a little money and in the evening some of them gamble and lose everything.

During the days of the Kauravas and Pandavas, royal families played dice gambling. It was a royal game to play dice. If someone was invited to play dice, it was considered an invitation to battle. They had to accept it.

We have many good qualities and some weaknesses. Yudhishtira, the eldest Pandava brother, who was the ruler of the new kingdom Indraprastha, had a weakness for playing dice. When anyone called him to play dice, he immediately postponed everything else to play.

Think of yourself. What weakness really troubles you? What weakness deviates you from your path? Is it food, friendship, or some habits? You should be strict with yourself. You should know your weaknesses and try to eliminate them. As long as weakness is within you, you cannot be truly successful.

VALUABLE VOLUMES



THE LAW OF KARMA

BY PARAMAHAMSA PRAJNANANANDA

Evolution or Devolution?

The Vedic scriptures beautifully describe heaven: everyone is beautiful, everyone is young, no one grows old. As long as we remain there, we will be young. Also, whatever we wish for, we have. Consequently, no one has any worries. It is like some rich people on earth who can acquire anything they desire. While vacationing at a nice resort a rich person can call room service and ask for a certain food, and within a short time it will be delivered. Heaven is a place of enjoyment, not a place where actions cause accumulated karma. Unfortunately, heaven has a problem. You might ask: "How could there be a problem in paradise?" The problem is that

those with more good karma enjoy better lives. So just as in this world, an element of jealousy arises: "Ah, look at that car he is driving! Their house is better than ours! She has more money than I!" Unfortunately, that tendency follows some to heaven.

Heaven Is Not the Goal

Holy people do not want to go to heaven because it is not permanent; they know there is no chance for evolution. Why go somewhere that is not a permanent place of peace, bliss, and joy? In heaven, after all your meritorious karma is exhausted, you must return to the earthly plane, the plane of suffering. Hence, just like after a wonderful holiday, when you return to your job, you are not so happy. Instead you are

thinking, “Ugh...here I am back at this stressful job.” For this reason, going to heaven is not the paradise that many imagine.

If attaining heaven is not the goal of life on earth, what is? Only one goal is worth attaining – realizing God. Nothing else matters – not going to heaven, not even returning to earth. Sincere spiritual seekers try to find God and merge in God; they do not aspire to reach heaven then come back to earth. The wise ones say, “Why not work hard to achieve salvation and liberation and merge in God, with no duality, only oneness?”

Karma *Yoni*, the Life of Action

On earth, we, the humans born of karma *yonis* have the opportunity to work and lead purposeful lives with freedom. Karma *yonis* are those born with minds that can work and choose a course of action. Hence, human beings are karma *yonis*, with lives of action.

Vedic literature mentions other classifications in creations called *urdhvasrotah*, *tiryaksrotah*, and *adhahsrotah*. *Srotah* means a

stream. *Urdhvasrotah* means upstream. That is, the life energy and food is rising from the bottom to the top in certain living being with an upward stream. The plant kingdom falls in this category where food and life energy flow upward; they collect nutrition from the ground and send the energy upward. *Tiryak* means horizontal. Thus, the food and life energy moves horizontally. The category of *tiryaksrotah* includes animals, birds, and insects, because their life current flows horizontally. *Adhyah* means downward. Human beings fall in the category of *adhahsrotah* because the life energy flows from the top to the bottom. The command comes from the brain above, from the top down. When a mosquito approaches the feet, the brain sends a message and consciousness moves to the feet. Because they are in the *adhahsrotah* category, human being are endowed with the qualities of evolution, growth, intent, purpose, and cherished desires.

Compared to human beings, other species are more independent in infancy. If a puppy or a calf is put in water, it will swim. A calf does not

need special training; there is no swimming school for calves. They know what to do from birth. Birds fly when they are young. Calves stand in a few minutes after birth and suckle milk from the mother cow. Human beings must be trained and guided in almost all ways, even in later years. Hence, we learn all our lives.

Swami Rama Tirtha, a young monk from India who went to Japan in the beginning of the last century, saw an old Japanese man in his late eighties learning the German language. Swami Rama Tirtha became curious and asked, “Why do you learn this language at your age?”

The man replied, “I want to learn the German language because I have heard that many beautiful books on science and technology are written in this language. If I know this language, I can translate these books into Japanese so people of my country, young men of my country, can benefit from these books.”

“You hope that you can learn a language and translate it so it will be useful for the young people of your country. How can you be so hopeful at

your age?” the young swami asked.

The elderly man said, “Look, do not call me old. Old is someone who has no desire to learn or to change.”

One who is willing to learn and change is never old. Old only exists for those with no desire to learn. We have the capacity to learn and evolve – I am not old; I am ready to learn. As human beings, we have that potential, that capability, that possibility, to learn, to grow, to evolve.

Human Life Is Special

The scriptures tell us that a human life is precious. Indeed, human life is more precious than animal or plant life; it is even more precious than life in heaven, because on earth we have choice, we have free will; we can choose how to live. Those who are intelligent always make the best use of their choices and opportunities while they are here. That is precisely why Gurudev used to impress upon us, “Opportunity must not be neglected, for it may never return.”

What happens to human beings who make very bad choices and create a great deal

of chaos and suffering for others? From a human life we can return to animal life; it works on the same principle as a job. Someone doing good work will receive a quick promotion; on the other hand, someone who is performing poorly may be demoted. It is not that they lose their job; they just go to a lower level. As human beings we are blessed to have a choice to become whatever we want. Furthermore, our current human life is not the only one we have had. We were human beings previously, and we are human again. That is why we have developed a higher level of thinking and understanding. And that is why we have chosen the spiritual path.

Diversity and Differences in Humans

Diversity is a part of life, and it is the beauty of creation. Diversity in nature is the play of the Divine, but differences in human nature such as variation in happiness, misery, riches, intelligence, success, and failure are the result of karma and nothing else. These are due to the cause and effect relationship, our karma, and our state of character.

There is a beautiful verse in Sanskrit:

समं कर्षन्ति पृथिविम् समं सास्त्राण्यधीयते
उन्मज्जन्ति निमज्जन्ती दैवस्यैवदस्य लीलया ।

“Farmers may cultivate the same land, but have different production. Students study the same text from the same teacher, but have different results. Success and failure depend on the play of karma or *daiva* (destiny).”

All diversity and differences have a natural cause. If we could stand back and look at all human beings in one place, we could see that some are animalistic and some are more loving and divine. Why? Some have passed through many lifetimes and developed many good qualities; however, some might be in a human body for the first time. We all look like human beings, but the real test is our nature, our behaviour, our thinking, and our deeds. That is what defines what kind of person we are. Gurudev used to say, “Do you know that as a human being you have passed through many lives, even lives as animals, and you have inherited all those qualities. In addition, the whole universe is within you, all the

animals are within you, as well as the Divine.”

Are We Really Human?

A friend of mine, a high-ranking income tax officer in India, once told me an interesting story. One day a man who looked like a monk came to visit him in his office. The man was a tribal man. When he approached my friend, he said, “Sir, I can tell you many things, and I am not asking for any money or anything of value in return. I only need a recommendation from you.”

Skeptical, my friend said, “What kind of things can you tell me?”

“I will tell you many things about your life.”

My friend became curious. The man showed him many letters of recommendation from Governors, the Chief Ministers, even the Prime Minister, all stating that this man has told them many details about their lives. After looking at these letters, my friend reluctantly said, “Okay, tell me.”

The man calmly looked into his eyes and smiled; he immediately began telling my friend many things about his life,

private and personal stories, things he had never even told his wife, or anyone else for that matter. After listening to the man for a short time, my friend began feeling quite uncomfortable and agitated. He was surprised that this stranger could know so much. He said it was like the man was reading the book of his entire life. The man even recited incidents from my friend’s childhood that my friend had forgotten. My friend was thinking to himself, “Yes, yes, what he is saying did happen.” Finally, my friend had heard enough and firmly told the man, “Stop it! I do not want to hear any more. I will write you the letter of appreciation.” Then he added, “Just tell me one more thing. How is that you know all these things?”

“Sir, many things are involved in what I do. However, I will tell you one aspect of my study. When I look at human beings, I see the strong animal personality in them. While looking at that animal personality, I describe the character of that particular animal. What I describe, the same holds true for that person. When I look at you, I see a leopard.”

To some this story may seem like a fantasy, but it actually happened. The incident took place many years ago, in the late 1980s. The day that it happened, my friend came over in the evening and narrated the entire episode to me. He told me how the stranger had described intimate details of his life, and that it frightened him. He was concerned that the man might tell others.

Animals in Human Form

A similar incident happened to a gentleman who is an advocate of the Odisha High Court, a very renowned man. Like the previous incident, it shows that even though people look like human beings, they might be something very different. And like the other story, it was narrated to me by a person who directly experienced it. This event took place during this gentleman's vacation, when he was going to Shri Jagannath Temple every day. Shri Jagannath Temple has four main entrances, and the front entrance is always more crowded than the back. For that reason, this man always entered through the back. One day as he was about to enter the temple, he found a monk

sitting near the entrance with a begging bowl. All the people entering the temple were putting coins in his bowl. However, as soon as they did, the monk would immediately call out, "Hello Sir! Take back your money." The advocate became curious – why this monk is behaving like this? Was he waiting for something more valuable than coins? Suddenly someone put some rupees in the bowl, not coins. But the rupees elicited the same response. They were returned. The advocate became even more curious. He thought, "A person is sitting with a begging bowl but not accepting money. What could he possibly want?" Just as the advocate was pondering, an elderly woman with a bent body and a walking stick, put a quarter rupee coin in the monk's bowl. Immediately the monk grabbed the coin, stood up, and began walking through the crowd. The advocate followed him. The monk soon made his way to a banana shop. With the money he purchased two tiny bananas and then disappeared. No doubt the entire episode was curious and thought provoking. The advocate found the monk very intriguing. Why

did he accept twenty-five *paise* (a quarter of a rupee), but reject a rupee? The advocate contemplated the paradox the entire night. The next morning at the temple he found the same monk. He decided to discover the reason behind the monk's unusual behaviour. After greeting the monk, he sat next to him and said, "I hope you do not mind, but I have a question to ask you."

"What is the question?"

"I saw you yesterday."

"What did you see?" the monk said very forcefully.

"Yesterday you returned everyone's money, but you took twenty-five *paise* from an old woman."

Seemingly annoyed, the monk said, "Why were you watching me? What I do is none of your business!"

"Yes, you are right. However, I was hoping you would indulge my curiosity and answer my questions, as I found your behaviour most unique and interesting."

"Today I will grant your request, but after that you must promise to leave me alone. Come closer, sit near me." The monk touched the advocate's body, his back, and his chest. Then he pointed to a man who was walking by, and said, "Look at that man. He is a snake."

Spellbound and motionless, the advocate could scarcely believe what he was seeing, because the man he was looking at actually had the head of a snake. Next the monk said, "Look at that man over there; he is a tiger." The advocate turned his head, and this time he saw a tiger's head attached on a man walking into the temple. The monk told him, "Now you understand the reason for my actions yesterday. I wanted some money from a human being, not from an animal." No doubt, the advocate gained much insight from the experience. Although we may look like human beings, we may not be human beings. However, even when we inherit animal qualities, we can still change our lives.

MONK INITIATIONS BY SHRI GURUJI ON THE DAY OF MAHASHIVA RATRI

Following the tradition set up by Adi Shankara, Shri Guruji has been initiating his disciples into sanyasa and brahmacharya since 2004. On the day of Mahashiva Ratri on February 21, 2020 Shri Guruji initiated 37 people into sanyasa, brahmacharya, and vanaprastha. The brahmacharya and vanaprastha initiations involved shaving one's head except for a tuft of hair and the performance of homa, accepting and donning yellow robes, and receiving the sacred thread from Shri Guruji. For the sanyasis, along with complete shaving of the head, it also included conducting their own funeral rites, *viraja homa* and later receiving sanyasa diksha from Shri Guruji. The following are the people who got initiated into sanyasa, brahmacharya, and vanaprastha.

1	Br. Durgananda	Swami Durgatmananda Giri
2	Br. Omananda	Swami Omkarananda Giri
3	Amit Singh	Swami Vimalananda Giri
4	Br. Dhyanananda	Swami Brahmadhyanananda Giri
5	Pradeep Dash	Swami Nirmalananda Giri
6	Br. Prabhananda	Swami Prabhavananda Giri
7	Neelamani Hota	Swami Raghunathananda Giri
8	Br. Tapananda	Swami Tapsyananda Giri
9	Br. Hamsananda	Swami Gurunishtananda Giri
10	Br. Gitananda	Swami Sugitananda Giri
11	Sujit Mishra	Swami Deshikananda Giri
12	Sanjeet	Swami Satswarupananda Giri
13	Dr. Radha Govind Patra	Swami Pranavananda Giri
14	Purna Chandra Dash	Swami Gurupadananda Giri
15	Yogacharya Uschi ma	Swami Karunananda Giri
16	Kamana Rani Patra	Swami Janakananda Giri
17	Sevamayee ma	Swami Shuddhatmananda Giri
18	Anschi	Swami Amalananda Giri

19	Janani Hota	Swami Padmajananda Giri
20	Hemabai Gupta	Swami Sharanananda Giri
21	Manju Joshi	Swami Atmasthanananda Giri
22	Praveen	Brahmachari Truptananda
23	Malayananda	Brahmachari Bodhananda
24	Rabindra Jalli	Brahmachari Tattvananda
25	Dyuti Ranjan	Brahmachari Stutyananda
26	Jan Teegardin	Shraddhamayee
27	Tanuj Panda	Brahmachari Divyananda
28	Smaranika Jena	Brahmacharini Medhamayee
29	Smt. Niharika Sahu	Sadhana Vanaprasthi
30	Shri P.K.Sahu	Aditya Vanaprasthi
31	Shri Krishan Rao Daund	Krishnananda Vanaprasthi
32	Smt. Hemalata Daund	Hemalata Vanaprasthi
33	Shri Kantha Rao	Kantha Rao Vanaprasthi
34	Smt. Kalyani	Kalyani Vanaprasthi
35	Shri Bijay Mohanty	Bijaya Bhaskara Vanaprasthi
36	Smt. Pushpanjali	Pushpanjali Vanaprasthi
37	Shri Madhab Biswal	Madhab Vanaprasthi



Newly Initiated Ones Receiving Alms

AROUND THE WORLD

Activities of Prajnana Mission

The 8th Residential Brahmachari Training Course which started on December 1, 2019 came to a conclusion on February 29, 2020. The inaugural global celebrations of 100 years of Paramahansa Yoganandaji's going to the West were celebrated in Bhubaneswar on January 5, 2020. On Mahashiva Ratri day Shri Guruji gave sanyasi, naishtika brahmachari, and vanaprastha initiations.

Kriya Programs: Due to COVID-19 crisis Kriya yoga initiation programs were organized only at Kolkata, Chennai, and Marturu during Jan-March 2020. The rest of the programs are suspended until further notice.

Gita Jnana Pariksha: Prajnana Mission has conducted

Gita written exams (Gita Jnana Pariksha) across Odisha in February 2020 as part of its efforts to spread the awareness of studying Gita. This followed the State Level Gita chanting competitions that were held in December 2019 in Hariharananda Gurukulam.

H a r i h a r a n a d a Matruashram: Matruashram celebrated its 12th Foundation day celebration on January 31, 2020.

Balashram: Balashram organized Pre-Board Exam of Standard X and XII in January 2020 and Annual Examinations for Nursery to Standard XI in March 2020.

Ashrams abroad: Birthday celebrations of Paramahansa Yoganandaji were celebrated around the globe in all ashrams with a special worship and meditation.

Visit our web site:

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

For current information.

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