



March 2012, Update

Reflections from Jordan Stanton, Sonoma Ashram's newest resident ...

“Drum sounds rise on the air, and with them, my heart.
A voice inside the beat says, I know you are tired, but come.
This is the way.”

- Rumi

Dear Friends,

Babaji just returned from 6 weeks at Bal Ashram in Varanasi, India. Words could not capture the joy in everyone's hearts to be in his physical presence again. Here I share with you some reflections about my first month of residency at Sonoma Ashram.

During the last nine months almost every aspect of my life has changed. I left my job of ten years, moved away from the people and places that were familiar to me and sold or gave away most of my belongings. I know that my story is not uncommon in these changing times. I hear of more and more people who are taking leaps of faith and leaving behind all that is comfortable and familiar in search of something greater. After visiting the Sonoma Ashram during the end of January I decided to take Babaji's teaching to heart and dig one well deep by returning to live at the Ashram for an extended period of time.

The days here are a blend of peace and rigor. We work in the gardens which have been nourished by the generous rains of the recent weeks, prepare delicious meals, and have been gracefully and diligently working to revitalize Babaji's new temporary residence (more details coming soon about this exciting project). In my short time here I am already learning that devotion comes through in these daily activities not just on the meditation cushion or during a ritual.

(Babaji's new temporary residence)

It is not every day that the winds of change blow so strongly into our lives. Over the past several months I have discovered that it takes more than just leaving a job, moving from a place or ending a relationship to reconnect a person with their heart. It takes dedication, devotion and a ruthless yet compassionate willingness to really see who we are and how we are living our lives.

The practices, structure and seva opportunities available at the Ashram cultivate a deep stillness and connection with the Self. I am finding that many of the reasons that I thought I was coming here are falling away and the real reasons are slowly rising to the surface.

(The bountiful Ashram garden)

Standing in the kitchen last week I heard a voice inside of me that I had not heard so clearly in a long

time. It was the voice of my own heart. Somehow in all the events and activities in recent years I had lost my connection with it. There while washing dishes I heard its drum beat calling me back. I already know that my time at the Ashram will prove to be one of the most meaningful experiences of my life.

Namaste,

Jordan

An Invitation to Participate

Yoga Classes: www.sonomaashram.org/yoga

Daily Schedule: www.sonomaashram.org/dailyschedule

Personal Retreats: www.sonomaashram.org/personalretreats

Spring Navaratri (March 23-31): [Click here for an overview](#)

From the Ashram Kitchen: Adam, Ashram resident and professional chef, shares with us a simple and tasty spring recipe.

Indian Garden Chard Prepared at Sonoma Ashram

Serves 6-8

Greens are a daily staple at the ashram accompanying soups, salads, dal and steaming pots of rice. While quantities are the same, by experimenting with different greens, spices and fats, and any vegetable you have on hand... this too could become a healthy staple (of unlimited variety) in your home. Kale and collard stems are fibrous and woody and can go straight to compost. Spinach stems tend to turn stringy. Thick chard stems also make great fries.

2 Tbsp Sea Salt

2 Bunches Fresh Chard, leaves stripped from stem, cut into 1" strips, stems chopped

2 Tbsp Olive Oil, Coconut Oil or Ghee

2-4 Fresh Green Chiles or 1-2 Dried Chiles de Arboles (depending on spiciness desired)

1 tsp Cumin

1 tsp Fenugreek

1 Tbsp Garlic, minced

1 Lg Onion, sliced thin

1 cup Sliced Vegetable: i.e. carrots, daikon, peppers, eggplant

1 tsp Sea Salt or Tamari or Braggs, to taste

Heat 2 gallons of water to boiling. Add 2 Tbsp salt. Add chard to boiling water cooking 3-5 minutes after water has resumed boiling after adding chard. Drain in a colander.

Heat oil or ghee to just about smoking point, add chiles (chopped or whole depending on level of spiciness desired), sauté 1 min, add cumin and fenugreek until aromatic and fenugreek starts to turn dark, add garlic, onion and chard stems. Mix well and adjust heat to med high stirring occasionally to caramelize onion. Add water to a dry pan by the tablespoon to release sugars on the pan. Make a well in the center, add vegetable, ¼ c water; cover and steam until vegetable is fork tender or texture desired.

Add chopped chard greens, mix well, adjust seasonings to taste.

Note: Another preparation is to process the chard greens using a food processor “pulsing” the greens (filling up to ½ the processor bowl per batch) to avoid over processing; then add to onion-vegetable mix.

Recipe by Adam Lovelace



