

# SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

JULY 2000

The physical body of bones and flesh does not constitute the Guru. Guru is that seat of Divinity whose teachings will lead you to perfection. If you take these teachings to heart and incorporate them into your daily conduct, you will be able to comprehend the Guru in Its wholeness. The Guru is the full flowering of your thoughts, It is perfect devotion and It is pure faith.

AUGHAR VANI, Avadhuta's Wisdom



Aghoreshwar  
Baba Bhagwan Ramji

## **Simplicity and Consistency: Key to Happiness**

*Speaking during the Ashram's annual get-together in the Redwoods, Baba Hariji said,*

I bow to that stillness within you. Touching that stillness is the first step. Stillness is the source.

Stillness is the mother from which everything is born. What a wonderful feeling it is when we sit and detach ourselves from all kinds of activities and restlessness. Sitting, we have the feeling that everything is settling down, like sand in a glass of water. Just imagine for a moment how our life is like that... water in a glass that is shaken in so many different ways. When we prepare ourselves to drink it, it looks so murky, so unpalatable. After 5 or 10 minutes of sitting, all the sand settles to the bottom—the water now looks palatable, looks clear and inviting. Thirsty, we pick it up and drink it, without a second thought. We quench our thirst with it. Such is life...moving in so many different directions, pulling in so many different ways. That is why it is so important to find a little time to settle down.

As we experience the settling down, lots of things become clear. We gain access to those questions we are trying to solve. We don't sit down to contemplate on anything; we sit down in anticipation that everything will settle down. That is why I say, "I bow to that stillness inside you, that Mother in you."

Mother is known by many different names in the Indian tradition. She has thousands of names, but the most common names we use are Maha Kali, Maha Lakshmi, and Maha Saraswati. I would like to start today with chanting those names of Divine Mother.

\_With this, Babaji began the call and response chant of Divine Mother, ending with Namó Shanti.

Namó Shanti: I bow to the Divine Mother who resides within me in the form of peace. Peace.

May we always stay in Her lap. As long as we rest in Her lap, imbibe in that richness, value that time together, we are able to stay with Her.

But restlessness comes in. How does the restlessness come in? It is because the energy, that shakti, is constantly bubbling within us. What happens when an abundance of energy is stored in one place? The very nature of energy is to flow. It wants us to flow in activities that dissipate it. You are sitting at home doing the little things that we do, resting, reading a book, whatever, and all of a sudden, this impulse arises to go out and party, or do something.

This impulse is because of that build up of energy. The very nature of the flow is downwards. How do we experience the downward flow? We engage in meaningless activities which make us feel good for awhile, but when the energy is spent, we feel depleted. This is the difference between the yogi and the bhogi. Bhogi means one who indulges in things without moderation. But the yogi knows moderation.

When the yogi becomes aware of this energy, he directs it upwards. If not directed it begins to manifest through holes of anger, frustration, jealousy, hatred, animosity, revenge, etc. These are all different outlets through which pure energy gets misdirected. That is why in yoga it is said, the very first rule is to plug all these holes through which the energy escapes. A yogi very carefully closes each one of those doors. Then the energy begins to rise up. In other terminology, the Kundalini begins to rise upwards.

We all have yogi as well as *bhogi* within us. One cannot exist without the other. Yogi and bhogi both exist right next to each other. We all have both of these, and we all have these holes, of frustration, lust, greed, fright, vanity. It sounds very simple to plug holes yet it is very difficult. How do you do it? By bringing moderation in our lives. Take a step back, don't flow into it, don't get washed away by it. It's very human to experience those emotions, but we do have the capacity to take a step back, take a mindful breath.

Have this image: I am not going to waste my energy on these lower tendencies. I am whole, I am complete, I am pure. I am that vessel in which energy can rise. Remember the virtues that are within you, right in your pocket. You must make the effort to take your hands out from the candy dish and put them into your pocket, to touch these virtues. The tendency to lower nature is easy. Lower nature comes very easy to us, which is why it is called "downward flow".

A seeker, a sadhu, a yogi makes the effort. It's not easy. You have to take some time out in the day, time to be a yogi. There will be a little time to be bhogi too, but the time now is for yogi. Come into that stillness, that remembrance of my true Self. My true Self is detaching from this whole world of maya, from this and that, coming back to that feeling of pure essence, that is present within me this very moment with no attachment .free of praise, guilt, fear or anger, free from any attachment.

Bhava titam triguna rahitam; sad-gurum tvam Namami

One who is beyond any sentimental identification, without any limits, beyond any gunas, to that Guru residing within me, I bow. To that part of the Self, I bow.

All the prayers and chanting that we do, it is not just singing. Some time take time to look at the meanings. It is always a remembrance. You are awakening that part of yourself by chanting and singing. Pay attention to it.

You are a house-holder, after yoga, you can have a little bhoga, in moderation. There comes a time when you've had enough. Then take a step back, take a deep breath and remember the yogi in you. They both have a place. You cannot experience sorrow without happiness, and you cannot experience happiness without sorrow. If it were only one, it would be really boring. They both have a right to exist. Think to yourself, I am there with what is. But if I'm being a yogi and in my mind I'm thinking of being a bhogi, or when I'm being a bhogi thinking of being a yogi, it doesn't work. Be who and where you are when you're there. Have time for everything, for this, and for that.

Our simple practice is to remind us of that part of ourselves. I wanted to say these things just to share the meaning of our chanting. It really doesn't have to be that foreign to us.

There was once a student who wanted to go to the ocean. The teacher told the student to walk in a straight line in the direction of his nose. He assured him that one day he would reach the ocean. With these few instructions, avoiding distractions, and by continuing to walk in a straight line, one day he did reach the ocean. He had never seen the ocean and wanted to know what it tasted like. He put his finger in, brought it to his mouth, and he knew in that one taste the taste of the entire ocean. We don't have to drink the whole ocean. All we need is a taste. Then we know. Such is our practice. In our practice we don't have to be immersed in white light, and see shooting stars. It's not like that. As long as we know what it tastes like, that's all that matters. You never know when it will happen to you. Baba says that when all the wiring is right, electricity runs through the whole house. But the wiring has to be right. If it is short circuiting somewhere there will be no light—there may be a fire instead.

Keep your practice to utmost simplicity, but do it every day. You can say your mantra, say one round, take 5 minutes, but do it every day. Being good to your Self by keeping your practice alive becomes a domino effect. It grows. Really, it is not very difficult. It becomes simple and enriching with consistency.

I'm very grateful to each and every one who took the time from your busy schedule to come here. Your coming makes this event a success. There is a joy in getting together. There is a joy in making things happen together. Baba says, this is puja. The name of our Ashram is Sarveshwari Samooh. Samooh means gathering of people together, any excuse to gather together to work on peace and harmony, any opportunity to work on living together.

In spite of all the differences, finally everyone can calm down and feel honored. That is the real puja. Sarveshwari is the Divine Mother who resides in every heart in every individual. When we acknowledge that, and gather together in that name, this is our true puja: How to live as a group, as a family. This has been a perfect example of that.

Everybody is an individual like different kinds of flowers in a bouquet. Each flower has its identity and quality. Each and every one in this room represents a flower in the bouquet. This bouquet is very beautiful and very fragrant. Once again, I'd like to thank each and every one of you for being here and bow to the Divine Mother residing within you in the form of stillness and peace.



Our second annual gathering in the redwoods was a huge success. Babaji referred to it as coming home to the redwoods rather than as retreating to them.

There were two primary reasons for the success. First was the care and preparation by the Garberville Ashram family who prepared for the food and lodging. The second reason was the joyful attitude that everyone brought.

The three days were a feast for the body, mind, and spirit. Lorrie was the chef preparing all our delicious meals, and Babaji was the chef for nourishing our minds and spirit. His talks covered an extensive range from controlling the mind through discipline to deepening one's sadhana with steady subtle sincerity.

I am grateful for the deepening of some relationships and initiating others, however I am most grateful for taking this time for myself.

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### **IN, OUT, EACH BREATH** by Amy MacKay

In and out, each breath has so much meaning, as did each moment while immersed in so much goodness at the Ashram retreat. Whether it be sharing smiles and laughter with the fellow Ashram family, or breathing and sitting alone by the Mattole River, this weekend in its warm rejoice was extremely memorable.

The retreat was jam packed with yoga, meditation, chanting, music, laughing, singing, conversing, and eating an overwhelming abundance of food from the heart.

Many adults commented during the sharing time how inspiring it was for them to see so many young people participating in the retreat. I have to say that I appreciate seeing so many adults having a good time together.



As I left the campsite, I was literally sick with love. I had spoiled myself with too many of Lorrie's cookies!

appreciate all that was done to create such a special weekend. As much as I didn't want to leave such beautiful surroundings and people, I know that with any breath whether driving in the car or sitting in my room, I can reconnect with my Ashram family.

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### COMING HOME by Lorrie Neuenfeldt

Babaji, thank you for giving me the opportunity to be of service. The place was filled with a wonderful energy. The more people got comfortable the more the energy grew. My heart filled with joy as each of them extended themselves to others and the love emanated from every person.

There was families sharing and I know how gratified I was that my daughter attended. To be able to raise ones children with such a lovely group of people is truly a blessing, children teach us all to open our eyes to the smaller things in life that we tend to overlook.

The river brought me great peace and I found that sitting on that rock I had come home; home with my ashram family that is forever growing and expanding.

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### Meet the faces at the Ashram:

Through this column we salute the special individuals at the Ashram:

#### Howard Morris



Howard 'Howie' Morris is a rock solid cornerstone in the foundation of the Sonoma Yoga Ashram. He has been not only a founding member, serving on the board of directors since the Ashram inception, but has been, and continues to be active on a daily basis.

Howie grew up in Pennsylvania, came to Sonoma 20 years ago with his music production company, Global Pacific, which he shares partnership in with his oldest friend Bo Sapper. His production talents serve the ashram well as he records all of Babaji's

discourses. That service alone is invaluable.

Every day Howie participates at the ashram. He either cooks, washes dishes, pulls weeds, performs puja, oversees the treasury duties, studies yoga, or is there to just BE. Often I look at Howie and the word honor comes to my mind, perhaps for several reasons. His love

and friendship honors me, as it honors all who are touched by his genuine sweetness. Also, Howie keeps his word. He is honest, and has a great commitment to integrity.

I believe love and compassion are benchmarks for a successful spiritual practice. Howie exemplifies that practice and therefore he brings honor to his Self.

-- JM

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## ASHRAM NEWS AND EVENTS:

### **Guru Purnima: Sunday, July 16th**

The celebration of Guru Purnima will be held at the ashram on Sunday, July 16th. All the friends and family of the ashram are invited to this community get together. Whether you have received the printed invitation or not, please plan to attend the festivities. If you are coming from a distance and need overnight accommodations please let the ashram staff know in advance.



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