

SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

NAVARATRI ISSUE 2000

WITH DETERMINATION AND PRACTICE,
WE GET TO KNOW THE UNKNOWN

AUGHAR VANI, Avadhuta's Wisdom



Aghoreshwar
Baba Bhagwan Ramji

Shut the mind, and open your heart

There is no trying to understand the Mother!

Navaratri is the time to engage ourselves in the upasana of Shakti. Upasana literally means to obtain a seat next to, to get close to, enrich oneself with, worship etc. Shakti is the all pervading energy that is the source of the existence of the world. All the living creatures become lifeless for lack of Shakti. It manifests itself in numerous ways. Seers of the ancient time have tried to describe Shakti in various ways. Shakti is the power, strength or capability of "God".

In order to speak about Shakti, seers have called the Shakti "Mother". Shakti manifests itself as creation; it is the mother who gives birth to and nurtures the newborn. Although Shakti is beyond the boundaries of gender, form or color, we call It Mother because of its qualities as a mother. Out of this idea different names and forms came into existence. It is the formless that takes form depending on the intensity of the seekers' longing and devotion. Navaratri is the time to acknowledge and revere that formless by giving it a form.

During the observance of Navaratri Baba Hariji gave the following discourse to the participants:

On this auspicious occasion of Navaratri we engage ourselves one-pointedly in contemplation of that "Great Unknown", who is beyond any name and form. Although we know that the great unknown is beyond any name and form, but when its time to express our devotion, we have to have a name a form, and an image. The only image that is the embodiment of unconditional love, forgiveness, kindness, acceptance that we know is the image of the mother, who gives birth to us, and nurtures us with her milk. This observance is really an observance of that simplicity. It's an observance of trust. It's an observance of devotion. Celebration of that love, that trust, that devotion, that resides within you. In the

chant that we just sang, "Ya devi sarva bhutesuÄ" The Divine Mother resides within each individual in so many different forms. As Baba used to say, "You are never alone. You are always in the lap of the Mother. If it's not one aspect, it's another aspect of her." Never feel alone. As you already know, during Navaratri, the first three days, we evoke Maha Kali. The next three days, Maha Laksmi, the last three days, Maha Saraswati.

Maha Kali is very sweet and kind. As sweet as the darkness of the night in whose presence a weary person falls asleep. No matter how tired we are of this world, the presence of Maha Kali in our life enables us to experience that rest. Forgetting it all, we fall asleep, to replenish ourselves.

It's the celebration of that simplicity. Utmost simplicity, and utmost trust. Just the way a baby trusts the Mother fully. There is no doubt or hesitation, when the baby leaps for the Mother's lap, baby doesn't think twice, doesn't doubtÄ just goes for it. The same thing with Navaratri, we just go for it. We Shut the mind, and open our heart. There is no trying to understand the Mother. She is beyond the realm of the mind. Mind can't analyze Her. If any understanding about her comes, it only comes with her grace. Without her grace, you can not even comprehend even an iota of Her. In those personal, private moments, when I'm sitting, contemplating, calling upon the Mother there is a sense of identity, yet there is also a sense of oneness, like the water in the pitcher, which is placed in the middle of the ocean. Whatever expression, whatever is outside, is also the presence of the Mother. Whatever is inside, is also her presence, it's all one. It's that sense of I-ness that keeps me separate from her. It is the ego.

You may have seen pictures of Ma Kali, although she is not like that, but some artists have depicted her wearing the necklace of skulls as a garland in her neck. One understanding of that necklace is that is the skull of kam, krodh, madh, lobh: greed, jealousy, anger, pride, all of those. But she cuts those from our lives and carries them on herself. That's one meaning of her garland that she wears around her neck. Mother is very compassionate. If the call is made from the purity of heart, nothing can stop us from receiving her grace. Particularly during kaliyug: Kalo Kali, Kali is the presiding deity who comes to our side instantaneously. She proclaims, "Have no fear!"

If I don't do anything wrong to anyone, why should I be afraid of them? Maha Kali has one hand always up in abhaya mudra, granting her children fearlessness. There is no fear. There is no guilt. If you say, "Mother, I do not know anything. All I know is I just love you and need your help." Where is the guilt coming from? If you totally surrender, there is no guilt. There is utmost freedom in her lap.

Many times as I have mentioned it to you: the best way to approach Navaratri is to become that innocent child, and reach towards the Mother with total love and trust in your heart. Any prayers, jap, that are done during Navaratri never go to waste. During this Navaratri, just open your heart to her. Don't try to understand who Maha Kali is, how does she look, just call her. "Oh Mother, I do not know anything. Give me a glimpse of thy Divine self. Give me a taste of your proximity." And it can happen any moment. She could appear to you. You could perceive her presence the way breeze touches you, the way the warmth of the sunshine touches you or even the way a bird takes off in your sight. Anything in the nature can convey her presence to us, depending on our intensity and mental attitude. Mother presents herself in many ways. To Ramakrishna she came in the form of that image of Kali that you see because of his devotion on that particular image, Mother appeared that way. The way Baba has taught us to meditate on Maha Kali is very sweet, she does not hold any weapons in her hand. All

she does is grants us fearlessness and boons. When you are afraid, call upon the Mother. Invite her into your heart lotus. Ask her to sit on that lotus in your heart, clad in red. Red color fills the enemies with fear. Whatever is your enemy is, is scared of that Mother in red in your heart. Meditating on that color dispels the fear. Fear of any kind.

We are worshipping Maha Kali in the form of Maha Chandi too. No matter how Durga tried to kill the stubborn asura, every single drop of his blood that fell on the ground, created one like him. Then Durga evoked another form of herself, Chandi. Chandi, who holds a bowl. She gathered every single drop of blood that came from his body, and drank it. That's how sometimes we have to do it. We hear something that we know is going to cause another undesired situation, we have to just drink it, not let it spread or spill over. That's what Chandi teaches us. We hear negativity, we hear something that may not be very good that somebody did, just gather every single drop of it and do not let it spread or spill out. This is the acknowledgement of the Shakti that resides within us in her various forms.

Maha Kali is very compassionate, but she is very fierce also. To our enemies, like lust, greed, anger, jealousy. When we truly feel trapped into fears and are at the end of our wits, we call out to the Mother, as the prayer "Aranye Sharanye gatis tvam, gatis tvam, twameka bhavani." "Oh Maa! I am trapped in this wilderness, I do not know anything. I do not know how to do puja, I don't know the pranayam, this, that, all I know is I come under your protection. You are the only perfect Mother that I know of, that I can turn to." This prayer is the height of devotion.

If you read from an analytical mind, with a mind laced with ego, it may sound like a very strange prayer. That's why we say, "I don't know anything." If I said, "I know how to pray to you", ego is there. If the devotee says, "I know the pranayama, and I know the niyas, and I know the slokas, and the mantras, I am calling you, so why don't you come?" "No," say, "I do not know anything. All I know is I need your help."

Navaratri is the celebration of the Divine in the form of the Mother, the perfect Mother who is not outside from us. This is the beauty of such a remembrance: Mother is not somebody else. Worship of Shakti embodies all those qualities of the perfect Mother that reside within us. The more we give a chance to those qualities, the closer we are to the Mother. Whatever we expect from a perfect Mother, let it flow from you, then you'll find that it was right in your hand. Put it out, and see! It comes back to you manifold. Whatever we want from the other, all we have to do is put it out a little bit. This is what Navaratri teaches us; this is what Navaratri reminds us. It's nothing from outside. It's not outside at all. It's all within. Whatever you feel you are lacking, just put it out. Nobody is completely void of anything; it's all within. We are the ocean. Whatever you expect from the other, pay attention to yourself. Make an effort to let it flow through you a little bit. When you are with others, you can be the perfect Mother.

How Navaratri is observed, how it could be observed, is very simple, very straightforward. Mind will come up with all sorts of reasons, justifications why you are doing Navaratri, but if you are able, take this time simply to sit in the company of the Guru, the Divine Mother, in a clean house. Wherever you are, here or in the world, keep the focus straight. Minimize your engagements. You can postpone things until after Navaratri. Even if I die today, it will go on. Nothing is that important. Navaratri is to remind us of what is really important in our lives. When we are not mindful, every trifling little thing becomes so important, and in the end, what was the purpose ? What did I accomplish ?

Eat less, speak less, hear less. This is the first preparation for Navaratri. Minimize the intake through your sensory organs. You have less things to process, so the inside can remain peaceful, spacious, less irritation. When the space is there, it will be filled. The less we bring in, the less we have to deal with, and the more space we'll have for those virtues to expand. Minimizing our contact with the outside things. Keep cleaning that space inside. Keep cleaning that space inside.

Tonight when you are sitting, invite the divine Mother to sit in the lotus of your heart. Be as simple as that baby. Just say, "I do not know anything, I'd just like to taste the nectar of your presence. I bow to that Mother in your heart and take leave from you.

Meet the faces at the Ashram

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

Steve & Robin Brett



Steve & Robin Brett and their two teenage children, Michael and Sarah are one of the families within the Ashram family. Their wonderful attributes are many. Generosity and devotion are two of these. Although Robin may say her body is frail, her devotion is as strong as an ox.

Every morning, after taking care of her motherly duties at home, she comes to the Ashram with a basket of flowers for the Guru and the Divine Mother. And of course she has kind words and a sweet smile for everyone. Often if you arrive at the Ashram, and hear a beautiful voice singing at the alter, it is most likely Robin. She is always encouraging others to join together for chanting.

Robin has taken her devotion out into the community, as she visits nursing homes weekly,

bringing her basketful of flowers, at least one for everyone. Those visits mean more to them than words can describe.

The signs, flags, alter cloths, and that special painting of the Aghoreshwar sitting in a lotus have all been done by Robin. As soon as she hears that something is needed, she volunteers to help, whether it be more flagstones, or trips to the printer

Steven is the model husband, working to provide for the needs of the family, and for the Ashram. His generosity has touched thousands of lives around the world. The attributes of the parents reflect in their children. Sarah has a rare love for animals, especially birds, and Michael is always willing to help in Ashram projects, the more mechanical the better. We at the Ashram are so grateful that they are part of our Ashram family.

ASHRAM NEWS AND EVENTS

Navaratri: begins on Thursday 28th Sept

Mahanisha pujan: Friday Oct 6th.

Send off: Saturday Oct 7th.

Children's day: Saturday: October 7th



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