

SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

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The emergence of divine
virtues requires diligence

AUGHAR VANI, Avadhuta's Wisdom



Aghoreshwar
Baba Bhagwan Ramji

The Mantra is a friend

Once, speaking to a group in his Ashram in Varanasi, Aghoreshwar Baba Bhagwan Ramji said,

Dear friends, the mantra that you receive from your Guru is the outward sign of a friendship that permanently unites you with your Guru. Mantra is not just a cheap thing that any Babaji gives in passing. When a Guru initiates you, he takes responsibility for your being. An accomplished Guru, when he gives you a mantra, is giving you a friend that will remain with you always, coming to your aid during the hard times in your life. Without such a mantra, you might become terrified, scattered, and your life unbearable.

A good friend should be like the earth, which keeps going around the sun looking for light. Because of that light the creatures on earth are nurtured and are able to accomplish many things. The darkness is removed from their lives. There is great need for a nurturing friend in our lives, as the sun is to the earth.

But many so-called "friends" come just to cause us pain. In the name of friendship they encourage us in various lowly acts: perhaps in gambling, drinking, or using drugs. While luring us into various practices which cause poor health and weak minds, they still call themselves our friends. We should be aware of what kind of "friends" these really are.

In every situation of life we need a friend. We can find God, Guru, and children, but we don't seem to know where to look for a good friend. Actually, the friend we are seeking is God, and the Guru mantra has the same meaning as "friend." When we meet a good friend, we experience boundless joy, and upon parting immeasurable sorrow. The situation is quite the contrary when we meet with a wicked person. We must understand this difference and practice discrimination in our lives accordingly.

A Guru instructs his disciples to behave in a noble manner. The disciple who crosses the boundary between noble and ignoble action is never considered a true disciple; a true disciple will not behave in an offensive manner, spreading disharmony. There are standards of nobility for all the spiritual practices as well, as in meditation and contemplation. Instead of meditating by closing our eyes, paying attention to everything in life is the greatest worship of all. Remaining alert towards our behavior is propitious to the self as well as to others, and this is the greatest friendship with ourselves. If the company of certain people rattles our minds and drains us of our *shakti* we should definitely terminate our association with them, no matter how dear they are to us. If we practice this kind of discrimination in our lives, we obtain great happiness and peace.

Where ethics and discipline have to be maintained, passive politeness has no place. You will have to practice *hriday priti*, *muh vachan kathora* (maintaining love in the heart but speaking firm words). There must be love in the heart but the words should be strong enough that by listening to them, the misguided person may come back to his or her senses. In such a situation, passive politeness would be dangerous and could cause great harm, and you would be responsible for the sufferings that result. Just talking about this will not work; you will have to practice it in your actions, you will have to remain very alert towards your own behavior, and thus obtain peace and happiness. As others observe this behavior, you will be an example for them and they also will obtain peace and happiness.

The *sadhus* (monks) of this ashram are constantly tested and tried like an iron blade in the furnace. Living in the midst of society, they constantly have to pass through fire. They are surrounded by all kinds of people, but they are always alert, because they know that by deviating even a bit from their path they will be thrown out like a fly from milk. But you, as a householder, cannot test and try your children like this if you have not made friends with them. If you test and try them like this, you may face a big rebel.

Dear friends, these two words, friend and friendship, have a wide definition. A true friend always encourages you towards good deeds; instead of becoming involved in losing propositions you are always propelled towards winning propositions. The day our youngsters come to understand this, they will set out to find true friends. The question of violence towards anyone will never appear. Even violent animals will be tamed in their presence.

The friend that the Guru imparts to you in the form of a mantra is more than a mere sound or word. The one who receives and practices it becomes virtuous, steadfast and stable. The floods and storms of life never deter such a person; he or she remains immovable and stable, like the Himalayas. There is no rise and fall of the tides in his or her nature; there is only the calmness of the deep ocean. The proverb, *chhudra nadi jal bhar utarai, jas thore dhan khal baorai* (a shallow river floods with a little water as a wicked person is intoxicated with a little wealth), does not apply to a stable person. A person like this is never arrogant, talkative, or impertinent.

When you have received that friend, the mantra, you will find how stable you can be. Though exotic, seductive situations may appear, they do not affect you. Over excitement does not arise. Once your *mun* (heart-mind) experiences this state of stability, you should know that you have found that "friend"; you have found the company of God; you have reaped the benefit of your mantra. Upon realizing this, instead of being vain about it, you should practice humility, and there should be stability in all of your actions. It is only then you can remain a rightful possessor of this secret. As long as you do not gain control over

yourself, it is all worthless.

In the company of Aughar, *Awadhoota* or *Aghoreshwara*, a person's behavior is given more importance than his religion, race, or color. Aughar monks give importance to renunciation and abstinence rather than caste and religion. They are well versed in making friends with themselves as well as with others; thus they share this knowledge with the people with whom they come into contact, so that they may live in peace and let others live in peace.

We should be very careful in choosing our friends. There are all kinds of wicked characters posing as noble beings. There is not much difference in their outer appearance. At times no one will appear more sympathetic than these characters. Paying attention and being alert to this is also a type of puja (worship). We should avoid food and gifts offered by these people because they pollute our intellect and health. Simple food offered by saintly beings is much more pleasing than delicious food offered by the wicked. If your health and intellect are being polluted, you should try to dive into the heart of the matter, and find out the truth.

Being compassionate to yourselves, I hope you will try to learn about friendship and seek suitable friends. The day this happens in your life, you are no less than the divine itself. Whatever the divine does, you yourself will do. Whatever you wish will happen. Your determination will be firm. You will be endowed with noble character. This is the way of saints. Everyone is looking for peace, prosperity, and happiness, which are possible only by this friendship. If we do not obtain peace along with material wealth, we remain very poor. I hope you will definitely strive to be your own friend, and with these words I bow to the "unknown" residing within you and take leave from you.

Meet the faces at the Ashram

Through this column we salute the special individuals at the Ashram

Lakshmi Ruff

Hello, I'm Lakshmi and I am here for Arati. In a short time she was celebrating Arati in the closet (We used to celebrate Arati in a tiny room in what is now Josh's (our landlord's) home.

To Lakshmi finding the ashram was *a dream come true*, a community of people where she belonged and a place where she could practice her spirituality. It was only three minutes from home! What a change from the previous 15 years where to be with her spiritual community was always a journey of many miles.

Lakshmi considers herself one of the luckiest people on earth. The ashram nourishes her spiritual life and is a source of inspiration. When in the yurt she feels the unconditional love of others, which is sometimes hard to find elsewhere. She knows that god will always take care of her.



As a mother she is particularly pleased that her sons' have found friendship, inspiration, and

guidance at the ashram. This is a place where they are surrounded by good company. In her daily life she practices many of the Aghor precepts. She looks for the good in everyone, examines her actions each day, and lives in her heart. To all of us at the Ashram, Lakshmi is a graceful, earthly, manifestation of the divine mother. Lakshmi's enthusiasm is contagious.



SRI SARVESHWARI SAMDOKH, USA

Sonoma Yoga Ashram

P.O. Box 950 1087 Craig Avenue Sonoma, CA 95476 USA

PH 707-996-8915 FAX 707-996-0388

Send email: info@sonomaashram.org

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