

# SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

SEPTEMBER 2002

Only after the intellect is tired,  
it becomes easier to find God

AUGHAR VANI, Avadhuta's Wisdom



Aghoreshwar  
Baba Bhagwan Ramji

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## What is Navaratri?

*On the eve of Navaratri observance in the Fall of 2001, Baba Hariji gave a talk on the subject. In anticipation of the upcoming Navaratri observance (Oct. 7th through Oct. 14th), we thought it would be an appropriate talk to publish. Our hope is that it will mentally prepare all the practitioners to get the most out of these sacred times.*

### Ritual

On this auspicious eve of Navaratri, I would like to welcome you. It is such a sacred time. As you already know, this opportunity comes twice a year, when all the planets, all the elements, everything, is favorable to us. This is our opportunity to engage in one-pointed practice with that great Unknown who is known by so many different names in different cultures, who is beyond any name, form, gender, color, who permeates every single atom of this space between the earth and the sky. Yet when we try to come closer to it, it is beyond our comprehension. That is why, in order to focus our attention, we try to give the formless a form, try to give it a name that we can relate to. If I have to give a name to that great Unknown, I call it Mother, Ma. Mother is our first friend when we come onto this earth. Even before we are on this earth, she carries us in her womb, nurturing us with her body, and then she gives birth to us and nurtures us with her milk. Her attention is constantly focused on the needs of her baby. Ever-attentive she is. She is constantly thinking about what could be her baby's next need. Mother is thus our first friend, our first teacher, our first Guru, so if I have to give a name to that great Unknown, I call it Mother, Ma.

On the altar, as you know, we create a form for the Divine Mother out of flowers. Flower in Sanskrit is suman. The literal translation is su, good, and man, heart. Good heart. Every single flower on the altar represents the purity of our hearts and each is imbued with, charged with, our sacred mantras. You can imagine those flowers representing the cells of

the body of the Divine Mother. Every single cell is nothing but the purity of our hearts. There is no mind there-it is all heart. Navaratri is a time to open your heart, a time to expand your heart, to express that devotion that we have within. From day to day, our devotion manifests in many different ways, but this is a very special way to express it because it's all heart.

### **Living the Practice**

And that heart is not only inside this temple. As participants, we maintain that openness, that purity of heart throughout this whole period, no matter where we are, no matter who we are with. We bring the utmost politeness and respect towards every person, every individual we interact with, because ultimately each individual is a representation of the Divine Mother. The Mother resides within each individual, each creature, everything that moves.

The Divine Mother resides within us in the form of our virtues. As you read, Ya devi sarva bhuteshu... The mother resides within each individual in the form of our virtues. So, on one level Navaratri is the celebration, the observance of heightening our virtues, practicing virtues. There is no tomorrow, there is no later on, there is no only if... During these nine days, we get the chance to really set aside all the differences and all the ifs and buts, and let our virtues shine.

### **Personal Enrichment**

On another level, Navaratri is also a time for the worship of Shakti, energy, power. A sadhak, a practitioner, a seeker, enriches himself or herself during Navaratri with Shakti. In ancient days in India, if one kingdom wanted to conquer another, they would attack right after Navaratri. Enriched with this Shakti from the observance of Navaratri, they felt prepared to conquer. That's another extreme. But we are trying to conquer our weaknesses; we are trying to come closer to the Divine that resides with us. When we are closer to the Divine within, we are enriched and empowered by our own Shakti, the capability that resides with us that usually gets hidden under many layers.

### **Three Fold Growth**

***Maha Kali (Dispeller of Darkness).*** The first three days of Navaratri are dedicated to Maha Kali. This is one aspect of the Divine Mother. Maha Kali, the remover of death. Kal means time as well as death. She is the mother of time. Kali is very compassionate, very gentle, very loving towards her children, towards you, but she is very fierce towards your enemies (anger, lust, greed and vanity). She is the remover of darkness, impurities, sloth, laziness and trickery. Some day, if you get a chance, read the book Chandi, a beautiful story of how the asuras kept coming in different disguises, and how she overcame them, how she drove them away. The story has a parallel in our lives. The asuras are nothing but our own lowly tendencies that keep us away from our Divine Self, from our virtues. Navaratri teaches us that the only way to come closer to our virtues is through our heart. The entrance to the kingdom of virtues is through our heart.

***Maha Lakshmi (Bestower of Wealth).*** As you already know, the first three days we evoke Maha Kali to remove all our limitations, all of our darkness. The next three days we evoke Maha Lakshmi, giver of wealth, not only material wealth, but the wealth of wisdom, of virtues. Maha Lakshmi enriches us with true wealth, the wealth of contentment and self-confidence.

**Maha Saraswati (Giver of Wisdom).** And then, when the darkness has been removed and we are enriched with virtues, we evoke Maha Saraswati who is depicted as holding a stringed instrument in her hands, wearing white, very peaceful, loving. We evoke Maha Saraswati to bless us, to give us a voice and speech that is very soothing, very healing, very nurturing and very enlightening. And also, she is the giver of wisdom. Aham brahmasmi, I am Divine.

### **Importance of Bhava (Attitude)**

So this is a little synopsis of what Navaratri is all about. It can be as real to you as you make it. There have been many saints in different traditions, and that great Unknown, God, has manifested in various different ways to each one. To some, God came as Maha Kali, to some as Krishna, to some as Christ ... whatever. Depending on the mental image of the seeker, the Divine presents itself in that form. Depending on the intensity, the longing, the great Unknown appears. Someone asked a great saint of India, "How can I find God?" He answered, "The day your longing for God becomes as intense as the longing of a drowning man for the next breath, you will find God standing right before you." So if you need a assessment of your longing, this is something to check against. You are working on intensifying that longing, opening your heart and inviting the Divine Mother to come and take a seat in your heart. If she doesn't come right away, that doesn't mean that you should get upset. Sit there with that anticipation and keep the window open. Keep the door open with that waiting. Waiting is very sweet. It is said, "The longing, the waiting is life." When the meeting happens, then it all ends. Life is in that longing, in that waiting, with that anticipation.

### **Prayer**

I want to encourage you to use this time very wisely. It is a very sacred time. We are very grateful; we are very blessed to have this opportunity to be sitting in such company, in such an environment, compared to many parts of the world. We are very fortunate. This is our responsibility. I would also like to suggest to you that you put this feeling in your mind: "Oh, Mother, any blessings, any virtues, any merit that you are going to grant me for this Navaratri, may it be utilized for those who are suffering right now, who are experiencing sorrow, pain, and loss. I do not want anything more for myself than what I already have. May this deed be dedicated, devoted to your service. May those who really need healing utilize all the blessings that you were going to bestow upon me." So this act of ours, our act of devotion, prayers, meditation, is not only for us; it is for a greater good.

When we live in service, this life becomes so meaningful. The very moment we focus on me, me, me, the seeds of suffering are sown. Let your life be a life of service. Let your actions be actions of service. In my opinion, that is the best prayer, the best way to worship the Mother.

### **Fulfillment**

In your silent prayers, in your silent moments, open your hearts, welcome the Divine Mother and just talk to her. You may ask, how do I know that she has come? You will know. You will know. She may appear riding on a thought, she may appear riding on a breath, she may appear like a little spark of light. Whatever your heart and mind agree upon, that is her form, that is her presence. Softening your eyes, calming your face, relaxing your face, shoulders and spine, get grounded and sit with that anticipation. When

you are happy, she is sitting in your heart. When you are content, she is sitting in your heart. When you are not afraid, she is sitting in your heart. You may not be aware of this, but that is the result of her presence in your body, in your heart. Whenever virtues are coming forth from you, she is present in your heart. So please, for the next eight days, stay mindful.

Navaratri will be as rich and meaningful to you as you make it. Enter into your heart, call out to the Mother with your mantra which is her representative, her ears, and let the mantra rise with that sweetness in your heart. Be like the little child who leaps for the mother's lap without ever thinking about whether he is going to fall on the ground or into her lap. Just make the leap. Leave the rest to the Mother. She is always there. We just have to be like an infant and leap with total trust, total love.

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### **Sonoma Ashram is looking for a New Home**

After 12 years at the South end of Carriger Road in Sonoma, the property has been sold and we are looking for a new home. We envision staying within a half hour drive of our current community of Sonoma on at least a five-acre parcel where we can actualize our vision of peaceful and nurturing Ashram grounds. Thus far, four work groups have been established to manifest our new home. They are a property search group, transition group, communications group and fundraising group. Frequent meetings that are open to all are being held at the Ashram. Baba Hariji reminds us "this is not only about finding a new home, a place to put the yurt, a place for the new Ashram ... this is much more. It is about community building ... an opportunity to be closer."

Please take this opportunity to bring yourself closer to the community by joining one of the work groups, meditating with the acquisition our new home in mind, or any other way your heart guides you. There is opportunity to give and receive much from participating in this crossroads. Be part of it! To continue to stay updated and for ways to get involved, check out the website "Crossroads" icon, or call the Ashram at 707-996-8915.



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