

SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

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May we all aspire to be nothing
but a good human being!

AUGHAR VANI, Avadhuta's Wisdom



Aghoreshwar
Baba Bhagwan Ramji

Leave Your Comfort Zone, Live a Meaningful Life

Baba Hariji addressed a group gathered at the Ashram in Sonoma with the following words,

I would like to welcome you all this morning. One of Baba's sayings is that as human beings, we are not the slaves of situations and circumstances. A person who pushes ahead with his or her mission or goal with conviction and determination will be victorious, so that situations and circumstances then become the slaves of that person.

If I have firm resolve, if I am committed to being a good human being, there is no excuse not to practice and live a virtuous life. There is no excuse. The mind will say, "Oh, because of this and this, I can't." When we look for faults in others, that's a weakness. That is not showing our conviction or our commitment to living virtuously. It is not being committed to those practices we are trying to bring into our life.

Situations and circumstances will appear. Some may be favorable and others unfavorable, so how do I remain firm in my practice? If I am committed to staying in my comfort zone, bringing those practices into my life is not possible. Everybody has their own comfort zone, whether it is the comfort of identifying with a certain aspect of your personality, the comfort of utilizing your time, or the comfort of thinking of yourself in a certain way.

Any practice, any virtue, requires us to come out of our comfort zone. In order to bring our practice home, *purusarth* is required. *Purusarth* could be translated as self-effort. In the beginning, when we are going out of our way, self-effort may seem like a sacrifice. Perhaps the word *sacrifice* helps to convince our mind to get out of our comfort zone. Regardless, we must do *purusarth*, self-effort.

When Ram had to cross the ocean, he sat down and prayed, “Please show us the way”. It was Lakshman who got a little impatient and said, “*Deva deva aalasi pukara*”, It is the lazy ones who call out to God. If you have the power, if you have the strength, now pick up your bow and arrow. Show your *purusarth*.

I wish I had a better translation than *self-effort*. It’s more than effort; it is using the *Shakti* that you have in the right way. We become lazy. Someone asked Baba, “What is a yogi’s greatest enemy?” He said laziness

We become lazy, we become so stuck in our own comfort zone. We don’t want to push through. That keeps us in the same place.

Baba used to say, “A good Guru makes a Guru, not a disciple.” This is my aspiration. This is my inspiration for everyone who comes to the Ashram, who spends time at the Ashram, who calls himself or herself a practitioner. If I really see someone getting stuck, I feel like grabbing them and shaking them. Wake up! There are many Ashrams, feel-good Ashrams where you go and sing and dance and be happy and return back to your cave. This is not the place for that. This is a school. I want to see *purusarth* — people making an effort to come out of their comfort zone.

Work hard towards being a good human being. This is the old school, based on a one-on-one relationship. You can have all my time that you need, but not if I see that you are wasting my time, that you have no intention of coming out of your comfort zone. Baba used to say that a disciple who is not committed to growing by adhering to the teachings of the Guru is like a fly in the milk. A teacher sometimes has to be very firm. It is not as though there is no love, no compassion in the Guru’s heart. Sometimes being firm is the greatest compassion you can give to someone.

When we try to bring some kind of discipline into our life, the weakness that we identify with throws a tantrum. “Oh my God, what am I going to do without cigarettes, I can’t quit smoking!” It happens. I have experienced that. Because we identify so much with it, any addiction that we have — whether it is an emotional addiction or an addiction to drugs or cigarettes — the very moment that we think of it, that act itself becomes the chain, the shackle on our feet. I am sure we have all experienced this. And we feel as if we have become a slave to this situation. No! *Purusarth* is what makes us a practitioner, a *sadhak*, a yogi, when we are able to push through instead of remaining stuck.

We have been working on our Ashram brochure and the question just keeps coming back, what are we aspiring towards? We are aspiring to be good human beings. A really good human being does not need validation from someone else. I do not need validation or a pat on the back from Babaji. I know who I am. I am a good human being; when others see me they light up. I am going out of my comfort zone to make others feel good.

Be sincere with your practice; be sincere with your determination to be a good human being without deluding yourself. Come out of your comfort zone. When we all strive to be good human beings, then we can truly have a community — a community of people who are not needy. We want to be a community of those who are able to give to the world. There could be only five or ten of us, but those five or ten are willing and able to give. Aghor is very simple, yet very difficult.

It is a blessing to be in a community of seekers — seekers and practitioners. You can go

and join a big crowd anywhere. There are all kinds of crowds. And if singing and dancing and feeling good are what spirituality is about, then there are many concerts happening every day. Spirituality has nothing to do with feeling *Good*. Feeling *God* is spiritual. Feeling God is living those virtues, and that requires effort, commitment, and coming out of our comfort zones.

Crossroads Update ... The Ashram's New Home

We joyfully announce the acquisition of our new Ashram. The escrow recently closed and Sonoma Yoga Ashram now has a permanent home in Sonoma. The property is on Craig Avenue (1/8 mile west of Arnold Drive).

This new location has multiple buildings, a large area to create new gardens and shrines, and a stunningly beautiful view of the surrounding hills. The opportunities to grow and to serve the community from this new home are truly exciting.

There are eight living spaces on the property: three duplexes and two houses. We will begin moving in and remodeling our new sanctuary as soon as one of the houses becomes available. Currently all buildings are occupied by tenants and they will need some time to relocate. We anticipate moving in February. Our mailing address (P.O. Box 950, Sonoma, CA) and phone number will remain the same.

We should take a moment to be thankful that we have been given this wonderful opportunity. The new home site holds so much potential! It will allow us to achieve the vision that we have held for many years. It will also allow us to have outreach programs and create a destination that will meet the needs of students, devotees and visitors from around the world. It will be a place of peace where each of us finds opportunities to rejuvenate, serve, and deepen our practice.

We want to thank everyone who has helped with the effort to manifest this new property and to move out of our old beloved home on Carriger Road. We also want to thank all of you who have made generous donations to make this first step possible.

We can all be inspired by the generosity, love, and commitment that has been displayed by our community during this transition. Much work still lies ahead! The acquisition of the property on Craig Avenue is only the first step. As we all know, by closing the escrow we have committed ourselves to a much larger financial obligation than before, and it is based on trust that our community at large will continue to support us in meeting this obligation to make our vision a reality. Right now we are reaching out to our friends and well-wishers who could pledge a comfortable amount per month to further this project. Any amount committed per month is valuable ... every drop fills the bucket.

Many have already participated in creating this sanctuary of peace and meditation which will be here for everyone, now and in times to come. If you have not lent your support yet, we invite you to come forward now when you are most needed and be a part of manifesting this precious gift. Your participation will continue to shower your blessings on many, including yourselves.

There are many ways you can help and be a part of creating this beautiful

sanctuary

- Make a comfortable (or not so comfortable!) monthly pledge.
- Sign up for eScrip. Register your credit cards, gas cards and/or grocery cards, and a percentage of what you spend is passed on to Sonoma Yoga Ashram at no cost to you. Visit www.escrip.com to sign up (please use the “Group ID” option and enter **1183060**), or call the Ashram and we’ll do it for you.
- You may even ask your friends and family to make a gift to the Ashram honoring you on your Birthday or Anniversary.
- Make a gift or inspire your family and friends to make a gift to the Ashram in memory of a loved one.
- Call the Ashram to enlist yourself on our resource list for various kinds of projects, including construction, landscaping, and maintenance (electricity, plumbing, general repair, etc.).

Namaste

Getting to Know Each Other

CarrieLynn Scheinman



What to say? How to express the joy in my heart for being here and how thankful I am for this place, this community, and most of all, for Baba Hariji and the immense, deeply mysterious, Love-filled Universe from which the Teachings come.

I spent over ten years in the corporate world in various consulting roles, from computer programmer to business analyst to project manager. Money was great and so were the opportunities to move up the ladder. But my heart was never in it and the deep longing for something meaningful would never be satisfied there.

I met Baba Hariji in September 2001 in Joshua Tree during Nine Gates Mystery School and then spent some more time with him when I returned to Nine Gates as a Staff member last May. Babaji needed help with the Orphanage PowerPoint presentation. I offered my assistance and it gave me some private time with him.

Something happened to me while I was in his presence, something I had never experienced before. My heart was so wide open and there was a joy that still cannot be put into words even today. What happened? I received my first taste of *seva*. I received my first taste of the sweetness that comes with living a life of service and devotion.

Shortly afterwards, I came to visit the Ashram from Boston, MA. The Ashram was a safe

place to stay for a little while until I figured out what was next. But right after arriving and throwing myself wholeheartedly into living a life of *seva*, all that I had known and learned was put to the test and practiced, and I'm still here.

For many years I had been wishing and longing for the One I would call My Teacher, My Guru, the One I could love and serve with total trust. I wonder, could there possibly be a greater blessing than this? So now, after having surrendered and committed to this most beautiful and precious Bhakti path, instead of continuing to dig many potholes, the digging of the One well has begun.



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