

Getting Out of Survival Mode



During Friday evening satsang at Sonoma Ashram May 14, 2010, Baba Harihar Ramji (Babaji) said:

We all want to be happy and live with purpose. We all want to live a meaningful life and experience that wholeness. How to find that?

This morning we were talking about why to live on bread and butter if we could have a fine cuisine at home. Sometimes we skip our regular meals, snack all day long, and go to bed tired and hungry. Yes, we satisfy the hunger of the moment, but the real nourishment doesn't come.

It is the same thing with a spiritual practice. If the goal of spiritual practice is just to feel a little bit peaceful or withstand the day's challenges, in my opinion this is not enough. I call this "maintaining ourselves," which is like barely surviving, or "eating bread and butter." We miss out on the real gift that a steady spiritual practice can bring to us.

We have to ask ourselves, "Is my practice strong enough to give me real nourishment? Does my practice give me a sense of being, a sense of purpose, a sense of wholeness?" I

see people work very hard. They work continuously from the moment they wake up until the moment they go to sleep. True, they accomplish many things, but is it really nurturing their soul? At the end of the day, can they look into their eyes in the mirror and say, "Yes, I have lived today fully."

The practice that we have doesn't need to be complicated or elaborate. It can be very simple. What makes it real for us is our commitment to it.

How committed am I to my practice? Whatever my practice may be -- even just five minutes of meditation or three deep breaths first thing in the morning -- am I so committed to it that nothing comes between me and my practice? Have I



become as habitual with my practice as I am to brushing my teeth every morning? Has my friendship grown so much with my friend, with my practice, that it comes to be at my side the very moment I'm feeling a little wobbly? Is this friend there to hold my hand when I feel joyful as well as when I'm a little shaky?

People do many things in the name of being spiritual, a little bit of this and a little bit of that. I call such a tendency, "snacking." While it may mask the immediate hunger, it does not bring us a feeling of wholeness or real satisfaction. When we begin to satisfy our hunger with nutritious meals, carefully and meticulously prepared, we receive nourishment, we receive energy, we experience the capacity to go out and manifest in the world.

So whatever form our spiritual practice is, let us strive to be consistent with it. Let us make effort to make it the two bookends of our day. Let us begin the day with it and end the day with it. And also in the middle of the day, let us invite it to be by our side. Maybe it's the prayer that we recite or maybe it's our mantra or simply a mindful breath. The more precious we hold our spiritual practice in our hearts, the more it brings to us.

Ayurveda says, "Everything growing on earth has medicinal properties." We can use a medicinal herb and receive its benefit only if we know its properties -- how to extract it, how to prepare it, and how to take it. Such is the case with our mantra or with any other spiritual practice.

I am not saying anything new that you haven't already heard or that you don't know. But the question is, "What keeps us from eating the fine cuisine? Why do we go for the snack? Why are we gravitated towards bread and butter instead of a nice meal? Why do we shortchange our practice?" This is the question that I leave with you.

OM TAT SAT

The real worth of anything lies in the eyes of the beholder.

Babaji also told the following story:

Once a disciple went to a Guru. The Guru said, "Here is a mantra. This is just for you. Practice this mantra and it will take you to God."

The disciple got very excited! He went out and meditated with this mantra for months. One day he went to Kumbha Mela, a spiritual gathering that happens every fourteen years in India. There he heard many people singing the same mantra that his Guru had given to him. He got very annoyed with his Guru. He went to him and said, "You told me this was just for me. How could so many people be singing my mantra?"

The Guru said, "Hmm. I will answer you, but first take this stone, go out into the marketplace, and find out how much it's worth. But, don't sell it.

First he went to a vegetable vendor. The disciple said, "This is a rock. Do you want to buy it?"

Looking at the rock, the vegetable vendor said, "This would make a nice weight. I could weigh my potatoes with it. Yes, I'll give you five rupees."

The disciple said "No, Babaji said don't sell it. Thank you."

Next he went to a stationery store. "Here, this is a nice rock. Do you want to buy it?"

The stationery man looked at it and said, "Nice paperweight. I'll give you 20 rupees for this."

The disciple said, "No, no, Babaji told me not to sell it. Thank you."

The disciple went to many stores, and finally he ended up in a jeweler's shop. The jeweler looked at it and recognized it was a precious stone. He said, "Where did you find this? I'll give you 10,000 rupees for this."

He said, "Oh, really?" But remembering his Guru's words, he said "No thank you. Babaji told me not to sell it."

The disciple returned to his Guru and related what had happened.

The Guru said "Now you have your answer. The real worth of anything lies in the eyes of the beholder. Whatever your practice is, if you take it seriously, if you consider it a precious thing in your life and give it due credit, respect and honor, it becomes real for you. It begins to give you the nourishment you seek."

A Visit to Sonoma



If you have ever thought about carving out some time to bring balance into your life, we encourage you to create that time this summer. Come spend a week at the Ashram and take advantage of its many unique offerings. Learning practical tools in the Ashram's intimate setting, and practicing them daily, results in personal growth that lasts.



- ☞ Have one-on-one time with Babaji.
- ☞ Receive personal instruction in meditation to start a practice or deepen one you have.
- ☞ Take private yoga classes designed to your ability and need.
- ☞ Solidify your practice with a regular routine of yoga, meditation, healthy meals and seva (selfless service).
- ☞ Learn sacred mantras and devotional chanting with proper pronunciation. Tiwariji, our guest teacher from India, will be in residence June-August.
- ☞ Experience picking vegetables and fruit with your own hands, and learn how to bring sacredness into cooking and eating.
- ☞ Get a taste of accomplishing tasks in silence as well as with meaningful conversation.

Give yourself a week living a balanced life, and then take it home with you. Call or email to reserve your space.

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You can find what you
are looking for only after
you find yourself...

Aughar Vani, Avadhuta's wisdom

Thus spoke Aghoreshwar

If we are devoted to ourselves, we can
have devotion for everybody else.
That is because devotion is a
sentiment. Devotion does not
denote your subservience. It also
denotes the state where the master
becomes the slave, because day and
night, in sleep and while awake, every
moment of his life he is concerned
about the one devoted to him.



Expressions of inner fullness overflowing into the world ...



Varanasi, India: Project Shakti's vocational training program has already surpassed our expectations! Sixty underprivileged women of all ages are learning stitching and tailoring, small food item preparation, and the art of home decoration. Visit our website to read more.

You can listen to Babaji's weekly satsangs on our website with a member ID and password. Send an email for details: info@sonomaashram.org.

Upcoming
in Sonoma
July 10
Membership meeting
July 25
Guru Purnima
October 7-15
Navaratri

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