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Aghoreshwar Baba Bhagwan Ramji

NAVARATRI ISSUE

Solitude & Silence, source of joy

During the festival of Navaratri (a special festival of nine days dedicated to the worship of the Divine Mother), Baba said to a gathering of seekers in his Ashram, Sri Sarveshwari Samooh Sansthan Deosthanam in Varanasi, India: Respected mothers and brothers, **I feel like bowing to those of you who are engaged in faithful contemplation with devotion during this festival of nine days.** We have heard various stories from the holy texts, have discussed all kinds of philosophies and have practiced different paths to find God. Still we do not know when the wall of our sorrow will dismantle. We bathed in all the holy rivers, visited all the temples and read all the books that we could lay our hands on and yet we are unable to grasp anything of substance.

When everyone becomes humble and bows in front of faith, it begins bearing sweet fruit.

The fruit of faith may be tasted by others later on, but first of all, the sweetness that it gives the bearer is immeasurable and indescribable. Living a life like this is the real life.

In spite of knowing this, we wander about as if we do not know anything. **Shackled with the strong chain of wishes and desires, we are worse than slaves.** A laborer engaged in his hard work is much superior to us. The labor that he is engaged in is his austerity; at least he believes in a system. Contrary to this, by neglecting or criticizing others, we engage ourselves in weighing and judging them all the time. Although, we do not have a proper measure to weigh and judge others, nonetheless we keep doing it.

An indescribable joy permeates within me when I see you sitting quietly with your eyes closed or open trying to cleanse your polluted heart-mind (chitta). **There are millions of people in the world, who do not have time to practice your practices in order to obtain peace. They are being scorched by their own fire of restlessness. They are terrified by fear. Terrified by their own fear, some have built very safe places and tried to hide inside. But on this very road, even those people were seen being carried away on others shoulders, to the funeral places.**

Dear brothers, this is what the mother Goddess or that great "Unknown" teaches us through this festival of nine days, of austerity and ceremonies, that **whatever is happening within us, we should become familiar with. Even though, we know well of the happenings within us, we pretend to be totally unaware of it.** Mode of perception is faith, mode of perception is a virtuous text and it is a person's humaneness as well. And this humaneness contains the virtue of seeing the Self in all.

A person who perceives the Self in all is a great being. This kind of person cannot be measured even by the scale of the divine. The conduct and behavior of such a being is very helpful to all. This kind of person dwells in a separate world altogether, away from all kinds of sorrows, quarrel, envy, hatred and enmity. This person uproots sorrow from its root.

Everyone knows that the very "name" (of Almighty) contains everything. Nonetheless, being confused by our dependence we roam about aimlessly. **We have anger, hesitation and all kinds of lowly thoughts within us that do not allow us to be near ourselves.** Even though we want to be with ourselves, our own dependence does not permit us to be so. For this very reason, repeatedly, we call the name of that great "unknown" and ask for protection. Our silence of contemplation takes us to that place (shelter of Almighty) with the medium of wind and light or even without any namable medium.

Brothers, we know that a lion does not live in a flock. A lion roams in the forest all alone. Sheep live in a flock. Whatever one sheep does or as the shepherd directs, the rest follow. I find human beings exactly in the same situation. Tied with the ropes of lust and desire, man dances around like a dancing monkey, who dances differently at different rhythm of its master's drum.

Brothers, you are an ascetic of the bank of the river Ganges. For you, the silence of aloneness is of reverence. It is the giver of the divine bliss. You are not of a place, where quarrels, envy, enmity and hatred are all omnipresent. Your sadhana (practice) of solitude and silence is sought after by the great yogis (ascetics). Together with it you are icons of faith. By enriching you with a little hope and enthusiasm, immense faith develops within you, which enables you to reach at various good places. It enables you to meet with good souls and sages who are like ornaments of this earth. These holy beings, living on this earth, are givers of happiness, peace and prosperity to many. Being the fountain of virtues, they relieve human beings from the heat of their physical, divine and material sufferings. They are very different from the people who pollute this earth and contaminate this earth by their actions.

Our life is progressing towards old age with a great speed. We are terrified with fear. In spite of seeing, knowing and understanding the worthlessness of this life, we are like the owl, for whom the light of the sun in the day time is of no use. Although, the owl has eyes, and the light is there, it cannot see. We are not without eyes either; we have consciousness. Nonetheless, we are unable to properly use the light obtained by our silence, contemplation, meditation and prayers.

Peace is not merely a word. Hollering "Peace! peace!" is also not peace. Peace is not found in such behavior. Living in seclusion, when you are alone and centered, you experience peace. You feel good. You are void of all kinds of thoughts that confuse your mind and take you towards wickedness. This is called austerity, this is called meditation or paying attention.

Sitting peacefully in good posture, you keep paying attention to whatever is automatically happening within you. The day you grasp this, you will come to understand the mystery of saptchandi (a text dedicated to the divine Mother), that the divine Mother is buddhi rupini (in the form of intellect) as well.

If you contaminate your intellect with poisonous thoughts, it becomes corrupted and you keep moving forward towards a life of wickedness. Being forced to live a life of wickedness, you keep reaping momentary praise among your contemporaries, who will be leaving this world a little sooner or later than yourself. They will not remain here to tell your story. But if your life is a virtuous life, it will be composed in the folk lores of days to come and people will sing and get inspired by them. Like the lives of the great beings of the past, whom, we have not seen, by telling and listening to their stories we convince our stray mind to remain under control.

In this way, the purpose of this festival of nine days, as I understand, is not to gather at one place and gossip. We do not engage our mind by talking about all kinds of propaganda. And if we do talk, we talk about good things. We speak good words. Sitting among gentle people, we contemplate on teachings and lives of great beings. We pay attention to the activities and services of the faithful devotees of this place, that they perform with alertness of not losing their faith, seclusion and silence. May they remain constantly focused towards their pious

goal. This is called meditation.

Sitting silently, conferring with your friend (Mantra), takes you to the place in life wherever you want to reach. And this friend takes you to the place where it is your own, there is no one else.

We are the descendants of sages and holy beings. It is a matter of shame that we want to weigh ourselves by the measures of lowly people. Thus, we are priced like cheap vegetables at a market place. Will this kind of weighing and pricing of our lives continue? Alas! We should strive to be such a person that no one can measure us, no one can price us. We should be like that Paras stone (a mythical stone that turns iron into gold upon touch), that does not distinguish the iron blade of a butchery from the iron blade of a place of worship (it turns both into gold upon touch). Be like the holy river Ganges, which does not distinguish between the pure water of the Himalayas from the water of the drains and rivulets, it consists of them both. People use this water for worship, we do not wash our hands, stained with the blood of the innocent, with this water. We do not measure ourselves with the measures of those with demonic behavior. We stay very far from their scales and measures.

Knowing and practicing this, is the way of sadhus (holy beings). **One, who understands this simple little thing and practices it, lives the life of an ascetic. The trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva) is obliged to fulfill the wishes of such an ascetic.** You must have heard and read this in your holy texts. It happens and it will keep happening.

Once you start dwelling in that state of silence, **away from quarrel and envy: away from criticizing others or even listening to it, you will become like that ascetic.** I pay my respect to such an ascetic, not only by my words but with my heart. And I hope, whatever you are engaged in, you will give your full attention to it. In front of you the Sun of your faith has risen. You are not like that owl, who is unable to use the sunlight. What else can we call it except the misfortune of that poor bird? I bow to that "Unknown" residing within you in the form of faith and take leave from you.

Ashram News:

Navaratri Observance: April 7th to April 15th. This is the time for the participants to enhance their practice by bringing austerity, devotion and mindfulness in their daily life. Remaining alert with mind, voice and action and abstaining from sensuous over indulgence and mindless activities is the theme for this time of observance.

Some useful hints of observation:

- (1) **Sheel** (modesty, abstaining from sensual indulgence)
- (2) **Mauna** (contentment)
- (3) **Tapa** (avoiding lethargy and excessive eating. Taking one regular meal in 24 hours)
- (4) **Jaap** (Repetition of mantra with determination)
- (5) **Paath** (Reading of scriptures)
- (6) **Dhyaan** (meditation)
- (7) Using hard surface to sleep on (avoiding excessive sleep and sharing of bed and meditation seat)
- (8) Avoiding harshness for the self and practicing utmost politeness with others.
- (9) Bow to the Guru or Divine Mother with all limbs at least once in 24 hrs.

Daily Schedule at the Ashram during Navaratri:

6:30 AM to 7:30 AM Morning puja
7:30 AM to 8:30 AM Breakfast
6:30 PM to 7:30 PM Evening puja
7:30 PM to 8:30 PM Havan*
8:30 PM - (Prasad) Dinner*
* for regular observers only.

Introduction to Ayurveda at the Ashram:

Dr. Helen Thomas is giving a talk on introduction to Ayurveda at the Ashram on Wednesday April 16th at 7:30 PM. All are welcome. A benefit for Samooh Relief Fund. **On every Friday** (except during Navaratri) Dr. Thomas is also available at the Ashram for initial consultation for balancing of the doshas (ills) of different body types, pulse diagnosis (11:00 AM to 2:00 PM). All donations go to Samooh Relief Fund.

Yoga and Meditation classes: April 7th to 14th

All the Yoga and Meditation meetings at Vintage House as well as at the Ashram will be canceled during this time. Classes will resume on April 16th.



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