

SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

APRIL 1999

Have trust in everyone, especially in yourself

Appreciate many but love only One

The truth is little, ignorance is wide spread

AUGHAR VANI, Avadhuta's Wisdom



Aghoreshwar
Baba Bhagwan Ramji

Real union happens with a pure heart

Mind creates separation

During the observance of Navaratri in the Sonoma Ashram Baba Harihar Ramji addressed to the gathering with the following words:

On this first eve of Navaratri, this observance of nine days, I'd like to welcome you. As you already know, we observe Navaratri twice a year when the two seasons are merging, uniting. This is the time of union, a time to gather together and practice together. It is a perfect time to deepen one's sadhana, one's practice. Anything new that we want to bring in our life, this is the time to start it. Our sadhana, the practice that we have, the mantra we have, is charged, shined, polished and awakened during Navaratri.

Each individual is constantly working towards empowering oneself with the energy that exists in various forms - whether it is material shakti, physical shakti or spiritual shakti. Navaratri is the time that is taken out during the year to engage in accomplishing this goal. There was a time in India that princes launched attack on their enemies right after Navaratri. During Navaratri one amasses shakti, power or strength. So, if you have a mantra and you have not been practicing, not been paying much attention to it, during Navaratri we re-establish our relationship with it.

Although the Absolute is beyond any name, form and gender, during Navaratri we give that Nameless, Formless, a name, a form in order to focus our attention. When we are giving a name and a form, the name and form of mother seems most suitable because it is the mother who we first come in contact with, who gives birth to us and nurtures us with her milk when we are born in this unfamiliar world. A seeker, a shakti-sadhak, is like a child who is calling on to Her with that utmost love, with that utmost trust. It is the time to cling on to the mother like an infant clings on to his or her mother. We have to dive deep within in our heart, not in our mind during Navaratri, and find that need, that trust, that love, that pure sentiment and call on to the Divine Mother. Reach to Her just as a baby reaches out for the

mother in total trust, in total love. This is bhakti, devotion, the easiest path.

In our path of devotion there are many enemies: doubts, confusion, lack of trust, fear, etc. These are all enemies on the path of sadhana, on the path of union. So, for that, during first three days of Navaratri we evoke Maha Kali, the fierce form of the Divine Mother. She is very compassionate, but very fierce for our weaknesses, for our limitations, for the darkness that shrouds us. In those moments of stillness and quietness, we try to have a conversation with Her without words. Can we have a conversation without words? Yes, through the vibrations of our heart.

There comes a time when we say, "Oh Mother, I don't know how to offer my love to You, how to offer my respect to You, my puja to You, I don't know anything at all. All I know is that I need Your love and your help!". With this kind of sentiment in our heart, when we become very silent and still, our heart begins to send those vibrations, those messages reach the Mother instantaneously; before even words and sentences are formed it gets there. Mother knows the need of the child, in due time it all comes but the process is faster when the child turns towards her.

Navaratri is the celebration of heart. We have to go into our heart, open our heart wide to that Divine essence, that light, Mother.

The practice of recitation of mantra that we have, that mantra is another aspect of the Divine Mother. Aligning our inner being on that wave length, let that mantra resonate within you. As you go deeper into your practice of jap, your mantra, you hear it, your tongue doesn't move. As you go deeper into your practice of jap, you just hear the sound. Who is voicing that sound? It exist in this cosmos, in this emptiness. That sound is constantly echoing. We just have to attune ourselves to it and let it resonate our whole being. Our mantra that we have received from our Guru is very powerful. It can give us anything we need, provided that we have been able to establish that friendship, that trust, that love, that oneness with our Guru and our mantra.

So, tonight is the first night, the first step of Navaratri when Maha Kali, who destroys the darkness from our lives, is evoked. Every Navaratri gives us this chance to start over again. We pray to Her to remove our limitations and darkness, to cleanse and fill us with virtues, vigor and sweetness. These all are her attributes.

I feel this Navaratri is very introverted, very silent, very sweet. It is a more inward journey. No matter where we are during the day, we keep our mind and heart in tune with our mantra, and towards that love of the Divine Mother. Please, think of what Maha Kali means to you. Where does She reside within you? In what form? What are Her attributes? Do you see Her in your daily life? Do you see Her attributes coming out to deal with your weaknesses? Those moments are very auspicious moments. Those are the moments of Her emergence. Pay attention to those moments. Look backward, see when that has happened, and if it hasn't, call on to Her to get Her darshan more often.

Please do not try to understand Her. She is beyond the intellect, beyond words, beyond mind. Mind cannot get in touch with Her. Open your heart and feel her sitting right there, in your heart.

Navaratri is the time of union. Seek that union. Union only happens with the heart. When the mind is involved, it separates us. These nine nights are the nights of the heart. Keep opening, keep opening your heart, keep calling Her in your heart, keep inviting that blue

light in your heart. Sit with your eyes closed or open, no sound, and just observe sometime what kind of waves are emerging from your heart, what kind of images are appearing in your heart. Cleanse it, fill it with light, let the Mother come with all of Her beauty and fragrance. She is very close to you. Just find a little time for Her, minimize your social obligations outside, find a little time for yourself, find a little time for Her in the middle of the time you have found for yourself. With these words I bow to the Divine Mother residing in your heart. May her grace keep showering on us.

OM Har Har Mahadev.

We have printed some of the reflections from the participants of the Navaratri to give our readers a chance to connect with the spirit of Navaratri at the Ashram. We hope these reflections shed light on the atmosphere of the Ashram during this auspicious time:

From Luis Kong

Navaratri: a pool of serenity in a river of change

It is easy to forget how much serenity matters. Seeing the world with different eyes can change us. The Divine Mother is the creative energy in our daily lives. Twice a year Navaratri is an opportunity to tune our spiritual practice by anchoring our intention with the celebration of the Divine Mother.

I never know what the outcome will be of this observance. What door for change will open. Going into the seven days of puja and nine days of observation, all that was in my mind was to sit and do japa, to listen to satsang, to read scripture, to feel close to the community of participants and make the best effort I can to fulfill my spiritual and personal goals during this time.

Navaratri was swift this year. Swift like a river. The observance of the Divine Mother as Maha Kali, Maha Laksmi and Maha Saraswati was a smooth flowing river in a lush canyon of mantra, flowers, chanting, puja and the constant companionship of frogs nearby, geese honking overhead, raindrops tapping on the yurt's roof as well as the warmth of people moving about in preparation for puja or prasad or arriving and departing. The world never stands still.

I felt as if traveling in a boat, sitting perfectly still in the center of it as it moved down the river. My senses connected to all that was around me and the profundity underneath me. Each rapid passing me by dressed in turbulent white caps and augmenting the shakti of the observance. Towards the end of the observance, the river of prayer opened up into a valley, into a higher level of lushness. Such resplendent reward for so little effort. The quietness of the aftermath was charged and the stillness was the sound of a raindrop hanging briefly on a leaf of a tree.

Participating in the last night Chakra Pujan was unifying. All I had to give I gave to that creative energy. The fire burned my offerings and the smoke carried my prayers into the night sky. I was very charged from the puja. I sat down and held the Shakti as if holding a candle's flame. That small flame wipes out the darkness and warms-up my heart.

Baba Hariji held the rudder of Navaratri as everyone of us completed our observance. His kind presence was refreshingly welcoming from day one to the solemn send-off on the

eighth day. On the last day, I felt completely cleansed. My heart was beaming. It felt like a crisp morning had arisen.

I sat on the lap of the Mother. My greatest effort lies in my daily sadhana. In the way I conduct myself, in the way I hold that candle flame in my heart, in the effort of living fully in the present.

From Wendy Walsh

Babaji, I wanted to take the time to let you know how much I enjoyed Navaratri. I had amazing electrical feelings in my body - the three pujas I attended during this celebration. I noticed when I looked around at all the people I loved who surrounded me- the electric feeling became greater. I was moved to tears Wed night. I feel it was the Divine Mother. I feel her strongly when I am in touch with gratitude.

You are a great friend to me. I hope you can feel my love! I am not sure if I show you my love and respect in the proper manner. I don't know when to bow, if I am to touch your feet. I don't know the way, sometimes. I am filled because of what you have shown me and empty when I forget. I love you with all that I am and all I am in connection with. Thank you.

From John MacKay

Shortly before our observance of Navaratri began, several of us were sitting with Babaji. The subject was Shiva and Shakti, and Babaji offered several analogies to help understand the idea, like the body is a corpse without life force, its shakti, fire and heat; the earth and the nurturing aspects, its shakti. This last one was the seed to germinate for me during this Navaratri.

As it turned out, I was very busy with a trade show and a funeral, while others were sitting quietly in introverted silent worship and contemplation. Yet, this time for me was very sacred. No matter what was happening, I saw it as a manifestation of shakti, the Divine Mother in all Her splendor and forms. I saw buildings, food, clothes, tables, cars, glass, paper, skin, blood, ice...not as things, but role they played as a form of Mother love and a form of nurturing.

I often remembered Baba's teaching of "Be a human being," and I reflected on how I exhibited nurturing behavior in my words, thoughts, and deeds, and how I could become more human. More human came to mean to be in the present, not lost in my mind, lost in the past-future loop. Being human is to be aware and awake to the Divine Mother within and without. To be human is to be the Divine.

From Robin Brett

Mother's grace has blessed this fertile soil that we now walk upon with the fresh sown seeds of her shakti. Being right beside her absorbing her light these nine days & nights has enriched us all. The true simplicity of our practice allowed all the Ashram family to share the bliss of becoming one with the Mother, and one with each other. The vibrating shakti in all the singing and chanting helped to liberate us from the darkness of illusion to the

precious wisdom of austerity of our thoughts and senses.

From Howard Morris

The fullness of Navaratri grows stronger with each day like the waxing moon. My heart gently opens and cries out for Mother's blessings. She hears (me) and responds by showering her grace in every flower, every song, every participant, every piece of prasad and permeates the grounds of the Ashram. Aghoreshwar Baba's blessings permeate the Ashram's grounds. His beauty and grace are felt in every mala jap and each and every thought. After a clear, clean, smooth nine days of devotion, jap and prayers the results are being full, feeling complete and achieving victory.

From Howard Sapper

Navaratri Send Off

Devotees chant into the morning sunlight...
Emanating bliss from the rich rainy night before;
A culmination of days of sacred prayers
Sharing the departure of a loved friend
Charged with millions of Japas
Gentle flute wafting through the late morning air
Petals afloat the stream of life
Sweet nectar like prasad touches lips & hearts.

From Melissa Goode

Inspiration is a divine gift. When you receive it,
act on it, and realize it, it is a gift.
Without inspiration, you feel very poor.

Thank you: All the participants were moved by the love and dedication of Lorrie Neuenfeldt who made this time of observation so smooth for everyone by preparing prasad and whatever needed to be done with so much love in her heart. Needless to say what Melissa Goode puts into maintaining the beauty and functioning of the Ashram not only during Navaratri but through out the year. Under the direction of Laura Bonazzoli chanting has become a delight to participate in. We also thank Robin Brett and Susan Bundschu for all the beautiful flowers through out the Navaratri and each and every participant who helped through out the observance.



SRI SARVESHWARI SAMOOR, 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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