

SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

APRIL 2001

*Give a rest to your eyes
Give a rest to your ears
Give a rest to your speech
This is known as yoga as well as samadhi*

AUGHAR VANI, Avadhuta's Wisdom



Aghoreshwar
Baba Bhagwan Ramji

Navaratri

The week long festival of Navaratri is observed twice a year in the Ashram, when two seasons are merging. This time at the Ashram is a kind of intensive. During this time, participants engage themselves fully in their sadhana (practice). Austerity, mindfulness and devotion are important themes.

That "Great Unknown" which is known and revered by various names and forms in different cultures and places is revered as "Mother" during this time. In order to express our devotion, if we have to give a name and a form to that "Great Unknown," we call it Ma. Because it is the Mother who gives birth to us, nurtures us with her milk and is the first friend when we are born on this earth.

Ma is called Shakti also. In her various forms and manifestations in our lives, she enables us to live our lives. Although the Shakti is one, her different qualities have been given different names, just as a person may respond to one name at home, another at work, and yet another in the play ground. Explaining the various aspects of the Navaratri observation at the Ashram, Baba Hariji said:

Shakti Puja: The whole purpose of austerity is to cultivate in our lives the various forms of Shakti. There are three main kinds of Shakti: Kriya Shakti, Iccha Shakti, and Gyana Shakti.

When we evoke Maha Kali and receive her blessings, we awaken Kriya Shakti within us. Kriya Shakti is another name of Maha Kali. Having a healthy body, being able to perform our daily tasks as well as withstand the negativity that comes our way, this belongs to the realm of Maha Kali. With heightened Kriya Shakti we have clarity of mind, finish the tasks at hand swiftly with precision and engage ourselves fully in our practice. In so doing, we open ourselves to all the virtues that reside within us.

Being in touch with our virtues is to acknowledge Maha Lakshmi. With Maha Lakshmi's grace, we awaken Iccha Shakti within us. Iccha Shakti is nothing other than our ability to

manifest things or situations around us by having a clear vision in our minds. Just as we receive the grace of Maha Lakshmi in the form of material wealth, with a developed Iccha Shakti, we are able to attain happiness and peace in our lives, homes, and communities.

Living such a life of happiness and peace prepares us to come closer to the absolute truth, the ultimate knowledge. To remain established in the ultimate knowledge requires the grace of Maha Saraswati, who enriches us with Gyana Shakti. With Gyana Shakti awakened, we remain established in wisdom and we spread the light of knowledge as a lamp spreads light in the darkness.

Although these three aspects appear to be different, they are expressions of the same One, who is beyond any name and form. When we give a name and form to that nameless, formless Absolute who is beyond any boundaries, we call her Mother, Maha Shakti, who exists all around us. This whole world is nothing but an expression of the Divine Mother. It is Shakti, the Mother Herself, that permeates every particle of this universe, giving it a life. She exists. She exists through you as you and through me as me.

There was a great scholar of Advaita who went to Kashmir to have a discussion with a great Shakta-saint. This scholar did not believe in Shakta-theory, but when he arrived in Kashmir, he got sick to such a point that he could not even move. A little girl came to him and whispered in his ear, "Oh great one, what are you doing here? Why have you come?" He said, "I have come here to speak against seeing the world as the Divine Mother, to speak against Shakti, but right now I am so sick, I have no strength. I have no Shakti even to move." "If you have no Shakti," the little girl offered, "and you cannot move, are you not yet convinced that without Shakti you cannot even speak against Her? You can speak against Her only with Her blessing, not on your own! She exists in every single particle, and I am Her!" Although he was a great scholar, immediately he realized the hollowness of all the theory in his head, and recognizing the true form of Shakti, he bowed to Her.

Here is another story about the grace of Shakti. There was a person who received a mantra of Krishna. But deep inside he had the insight that there is the primeval Shakti Maha Kali. He felt drawn to Kali, so he used to worship Kali in the middle of the night. He had a statue of Kali and he would go and do puja to her. Someone confronted his Guru, "How is it possible that, being your disciple, he is worshipping Kali? This is a sacrilege! If you don't believe it, come with me at two in the morning to his house." On this advice the Guru went to the house of his disciple in the middle of the night. The disciple sensed his Guru was on the doorstep and feared great humiliation both for himself and for his Guru, for he was doing exactly opposite of what his Guru had taught him! He pleaded before the statue, "Oh Mother, I have given you all my attention. Please save me at this moment from being humiliated in front of my Guru. Please turn into Krishna!" That statue of Kali turned into Krishna. A temple was built where this occurred. That temple stands even today.

When we live with discipline and determination, when we do what we commit to do, then we are honoring Shakti. Having a schedule of intentions, we keep that schedule, maintaining discipline. Doing so cleanses our mind. For cleansing the body, we fast. If you eat less food, you spend less energy digesting it. The energy that the body is constantly bubbling up is very pure, but it is overpowered by the energy of the fire required to digest food. Once our body does not have to put out the digestive fire, the energy that arises next is a very subtle energy, very pure. Meditate; letting that energy rise as you repeat your mantra, and see what height it can take you to! It is very, very subtle. Just as a subtle fragrance can be completely overpowered by a strong odor and the senses dulled, so too can the experience of our subtle

energy, our Shakti, be dulled by the fires required to digest large amounts of food.

This is true for our other senses, too. To conserve our Shakti, we speak little, hear little, and sleep little. Our body, thereby, does not have to process these things inside, and the energy that arises is very, very, pure. This is the whole purpose behind austerities: to keep constant the purity of energy that is rising within. Sustenance of the body requires very little; the rest is just gratification of our different senses. Simplify your life, simplify, simplify. Minimize your needs, your intakes.

If you do, you will feel that essence, that pure energy, that Shakti, Maha Maya, arising within you. You will feel it so subtly, like smoke infiltrating your whole being. But you must be really still to feel it. If you are very silent, very still, you will hear Her sounds, a sound almost like the crickets, a sound of silence. She is all around us. We just have to call Her, and be ready to listen.

Orphanage/Ashram update

The construction of Aghor Guru Seva Peeth Orphanage Ashram on the Ganges in Varanasi, India continues in a steady pace. Every week we get reports of the progress. Right now the priority is to have a structure, which is high enough to store things if the river rises during the monsoon season.

We hope to have at least a hall on the second floor of this foundation before July/August when the river tends to rise. It all depends on the availability of funds from here. Please keep this project in your mind for any further act of generosity.

Meet the faces at the Ashram

Through this column we salute the special individuals at the Ashram

*When asked, here is what **Susan Bundschu** wrote about herself.*

Susan first encountered Babaji in '94 at the Senior Citizens' Center where Babaji was teaching yoga classes. In his presence she experienced a peace and presence that she was drawn to, which she is still drawn to. She considers herself very slow at study. Mostly she shows up. Attempting to be a good human being is the stated form of her practice. To her, all the rituals, all the readings, doing yoga, seva, all of it is about stilling, becoming quiet, quieting down. The Ashram to her is like a space station.

From this center she extracts her center and then returns into the world to do what she does in a more inspired and selfless way. She is the household variety of aspirant. Susan finds it difficult to get past her own personality. She knows that the Divine Mother is manifest in her and in others and every thing, yet her personality is busy laughing, crying, and blowing smoke. She can hardly believe that even the gods want to have this human form! She has the idea that if she can overcome her fears and judging mind, she might hear more clearly her heart. Susan is grateful to the Ashram community, to Baba.

Yoga classes:

Monday & Wednesday: 5:30 pm-7 pm

Tues, Thurs & Sat: 9:30 am-11 am

Daily morning meditation: 6:30 am-7: 30

Daily evening prayers: 7:30 pm-8: 30 pm

All are welcome



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