

SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

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A heart without longing is the immovable rock
of inner strength of the soul and the source of supreme
joy

AUGHAR VANI, Avadhuta's Wisdom



Aghoreshwar
Baba Bhagwan Ramji

The following thoughts are drawn from a selection of passages compiled from Baba Hariji's talks.

The Power of Practice

A man wanted to be able to pick up a bull. He went to a holy man, who told him, "You have to start with a calf; pick it up every day." He picked up the calf every day till it became a fully-grown bull.

This is the power of a steady practice. Consistency in our practice is like picking up that calf. It's just doing a little bit every day. This is what works. In this way we attain that seems unattainable, in a short period of time.

The Race of Becoming

If we take more than we need, it is practicing violence. There is an old Hindi saying: "Wealth can be counted by the number of cows and horses you have. All the wealth—All the cows, all the horses, all the elephants, all the gems—can be mine, but when the wealth of contentment comes to me, all other wealth is just like dust." Contentment means, "I have enough." If that feeling really sits in me, there is such a sense of relief! The race ends right there. Then I have all the time to be what I am or what I want to be. The race of becoming ends. Santosha, contentment is one of the very important aspects of this journey.

A Hindi poet says, "Oh God, give me just enough to feed my family and just little bit more left over for the guest who comes to my door unexpectedly. May no one go hungry from my door. That is enough for me."

Otherwise there is no end to this having more. Practice contentment. Just try saying this once a day to yourself: "I have enough; may I spend my time pursuing my ideals."

A Journey Homeward

Yoga for me is not just an exercise. It has never been just an exercise. The word yoga means union, union with ourselves, with the deep Self—the part of the me which has always been here even before I took this body, the part of me which is here now, and which will be here even after I shed this body. Practicing yoga is coming in touch with That. It is a journey homeward.

It has been a question from time immemorial, how do you get in touch with That? Yogis looked for it sitting in the caves in the mountains. The easiest vehicle that yogis found was through their breath. The very moment we take a mindful breath we begin to practice yoga. The practice begins by being in the present moment. If we are living in our mind, we are living either in the past or the future.

Mind is never in the present moment. Either you are thinking of what happened to you, or what somebody else did to you, or what may happen in the future. The practice of yoga is being in the present moment, and the present moment can be experienced by being in touch with your breath. It is very simple and yet very difficult, because it requires discipline, effort and awareness.

Asanas

We live yoga. We do not do yoga. The concept of yoga that you may have, standing on your head and twisting your body into pretzels, is not my concept. In yoga there are 84 lacks asanas, depending on the number of wombs that a soul has to go through. Yoga postures were designed after various creatures.

No matter how you sit, stand, lay down, squat, or walk, you are always in one pose or another. If you think assuming a posture is yoga, you are always in some pose.

The way to bring this into a practice of living yoga is by being aware of our breath, by being aware of the posture of our body. How do we hold our body? Depending on how we hold ourselves, energy flows through us. If you sit bent over, the flow of energy breaks like a sagging hose you are watering the garden with. That is why there is a practice of sitting with your spine straight. Let the energy flow.

Being aware of my posture, being aware of my breath, I am living yoga; I am living in union with my self.

Mindfulness

While being in the present, we try to live in the past and future. This turns out to be a very unpleasant experience. You cannot ride in two boats at the same time. You have to be in one. We say and do things that we don't need to because we are not living in the present moment, we are not mindful.

Attuned with the Road

How do we bring yoga into our daily life? In the same way we bring driving a car into our daily life. When you are learning to drive, one foot is on the brake, one hand is on the steering wheel, and your attention is 10 feet ahead of the windshield.

In the beginning we have to live like that: Am I practicing contentment, truth, non-violence?

You are driving a valuable car, but with practice, you can at the same time be snacking, drinking sodas, talking, and looking around. It doesn't mean you are careless. A part of you is constantly attuned with the road and if a squirrel runs in front of you, immediately all the machinery comes into action: steering-wheel, brakes, you are all there! But it comes with practice. This is how we bring yoga into our daily life.

In the beginning, be like the new driver; be attentive to every aspect of your daily life. With practice, driving on this road of life with ease and confidence, we get to our destination.

Orphanage update

By Tom Pickford

Like most things in India, construction projects are aweinspiring. I have had the pleasure of watching two visions transform two plots of ground into brick and mortar buildings that were erected for the benefit of under privileged children in India. That is our Bal Ashram (children's ashram) in Varanasi, India. Both of these projects were taken on by a group of dedicated individuals, with help from the larger community, all in the name of seva.



First there was Little Stars School, which 5 years ago consisted of Asha Pandey and 19 street kids on the roof of Asha's house. Today Little Stars School owns a three-story building, which is still being expanded. The school is bulging at the seams with 300 eager children and employs 12 dedicated teachers.

Since many of the Little Stars children don't really have a home, an orphanage seemed to be a natural next step. Two years ago Baba Hariji showed me a bare plot of land on the banks of the Ganges, not far from the school and wondered (out loud) about building an orphanage at this place. I must admit I had my doubts.

Today there is an ashram-style orphanage on this site. The project is approximately sixty five percent complete. There is a very impressive dormitory that includes a meeting hall and rooms that can accommodate twenty children. There are ten kids in residence with an additional 10 kids soon to arrive. Four rooms that were



also constructed this year will function as temporary guest rooms till original guest rooms are constructed as planned in the master plan. A clinic and office are also near completion. There is also a temple structure on the grounds for daily puja. During the next building season, the third story and wing will be completed making a total capacity for 40 children

and their caretakers. In addition, there will be a permanent dining hall and kitchen, funds for which still need to be addressed to. Please keep this project in mind for any further act of generosity.

One of the most interesting facets of this construction project is that every bit of it is handwork. Every door and every window are hand carved. Every brick and every pound of cement are hand carried. The foundations (30 feet deep) were hand dug and the dirt moved from place to place by hand. This is the way things are done in India and I must say it is both impressive and humbling to watch.



Meet the faces at the Ashram:

Through this column we salute the special individuals at the Ashram:

Ken

Ken Heinrich first met Babaji in July 1993 while participating in the Nine Gates Mystery School being held at Westerbeke Ranch. "After several days of intensive spiritual training, I felt very open-hearted," Ken recalls. "Babaji was teaching yoga there, and his energy was so sweet I just fell in love. For the next three years I hung around the Ashram all the time, helping to remodel the house while we were still using it, building decking, and working on the construction of the yurt and the dhuni."



In the spring of 1994, he participated in his first Navaratri, and for the next four years continued to do so regularly, mostly in silence. "What I learned from Babaji above all else is that one needs to have a daily spiritual practice that anchors you. I do jap every day, regardless of whether I feel like it or not. I once asked Babaji why I needed to do it. He said, 'It's your mind asking. Don't ask, just do it.' At one point I gave it up for several months, and I really felt the difference. Doing jap works for me-it keeps me grounded."

Ken, who is known professionally as Dr. Mac, contributes a great deal to maintaining the Ashram's online presence. He has purchased a number of computers for the Ashram, acts as Webmaster, and has put in dozens of hours of work designing and building the new website, which has been widely praised for the simplicity and beauty of its layout. His next seva project is to build a separate website for the Little Stars School. He has already

secured the domain name, and plans to go ahead in the near future.

Ken lives with his wife Sybil in Petaluma, and has two sons, and two grandchildren.

Ashram News: Babaji returned back from India on February 17th. All the Yoga classes have resumed as usual. Morning meditations are held at 7:30 am till the daylight saving changes.

The evening Arati starts at 6:30 PM, except on Mondays and Wednesdays (7:00 PM).

Navaratri begins on Saturday, April 13th.

Retreat in the redwoods: May 9th through May 12th Please contact the ashram for registration and more info.



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