

SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

WINTER 2004

Delicious food does
not provide as much taste as hunger

AUGHAR VANI, Avadhuta's Wisdom



Aghoreshwar
Baba Bhagwan Ramji

New Year's Aspirations from Sonoma Ashram

As clear, sacred streams flow from snow-clad mountain peaks, so may the good deeds and good thoughts flow from me into the luminous ocean of virtue.

WITHOUT practices, even good knowledge turns to poison. On the other hand, even a moment of practice in the course of twenty-four hours gives you the capability to work for a very long time.

WE HAVE wandered in the jungles of the mind so long. We do not even know for how many lives we have been wandering.

OUR ATTACHMENT to various things, ideas, thoughts and behavior patterns are the cause of sorrow in our lives.

FREE yourself from doubts and misunderstandings created by illusions produced by hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, touching and speaking.



visible. It then becomes conscious, healthy and strong.

KNOWLEDGE alone does not lead to salvation. Flying like a bird in the sky of salvation, we need two wings: the wing of knowledge and the wing of action. By practice, even that which is hidden becomes

I WANT to be blessed with everyone's blessings. Whether they be young or old, rich or destitute, I have respect for everyone. This is the greatest worship.

Dear Friends,

Blessings!

As we enter into the New Year, I would like to reach out and touch you with my appreciation for being a friend of the Ashram. Many of you have made it possible for the Ashram to have a home.

With all that has gone on here during this time of regrouping and settling down, it has been truly inspiring to see how many friends responded to the call to get involved with whatever projects were going on. The combined effort of all has made a difference and it shows as you enter the Ashram's new home.

It has been such a joy to witness people coming together from far and wide for a higher cause of creating something meaningful not only for themselves but for others as well. All these moments of dedicated activity in a community environment have been powerful teachers for everyone involved. Sometimes the best teachings are imparted and received in a practical environment and we are very grateful to have one.

The Ashram is an environment that we create for coming close to our higher Self. This environment begins to work for us when we make it sacred by assigning it that importance in our lives. The word sacred comes from the root meaning, "That which has been carved out." Having carved out your precious time and money to create this place, you have already taken the steps in this direction.

It is because of you that this Ashram is here and it is because of the Ashram being here that we are able to make a difference in the lives of more than 400 children everyday in India through our Little Stars School and Bal Ashram Orphanage projects. While we continue to support these projects, right now our focus is here, in this country.

We are actively engaged in teaching the local youth about the meaningfulness and purpose of their time at hand through introducing them to meditation and some clean constructive fun. We look forward to reconstructing the yoga hall so regular classes can resume on the premises.

The Ashram now has modest amount of space to stay for personal retreats; many have already taken advantage of it. We see the great potential of expanding this space so that many more could come and benefit from what the Ashram really has to offer, an environment of peace and stillness for deepening one's practice.

It is my aspiration in days ahead to maintain the richness of our sacred connection and continue enriching these grounds with a nurturing environment of seva (selfless service) and sadhana (personal practice). The doors of the Ashram and my heart are always open for you.

May this New Year be filled with blessings, gratitude and good health.

PRACTICE

During one of the satsangs at the Ashram, someone asked Baba Hariji, What should be my [daily practice](#)? In response to this question Babaji said, I will tell you a part of my own daily practice that can be shared and perhaps that can help guide you. The excerpts of that talk are given below.

AS I WAKE up in the morning and take the first conscious breath, I become aware of the most precious gift that I have already been given, the gift of life.

AS I BRING my palms in front of me and look at them I become aware of the second precious gift that I have been given, the gift of strength.

BEFORE leaving the bed, I reach over and touch the earth with my hands. I become aware of the unconditional love of Mother earth and ask for forgiveness for touching Her with my feet.

STANDING in front of the mirror while washing my face, I look into my eyes and try to see the one who is looking from behind those eyes, no ideas, no concepts, just I am. This I am is no different from God,

who is looking through all the eyes on the earth.

SILENTLY I give my word to this I am. I will honor You and respect You. I will not subject You to the company of the lowly: tendencies, thoughts or people.

AS I SIT to meditate, first I offer my respect to my Guru, who has revealed and reminded me of the Divine within me. Remembrance of the Guru strengthens faith and trust. Then I pay my respects to my mantra.

IN MY MIND, my mantra is just another expression (name) of I am. In order to pay my respects, I give It a form seated in the lotus of my heart: a sweet blue light or a form of the Mother, a symbol of unconditional love and protection.

KEEPING the company of my Guru by holding the white light or image of Him in my third eye, I repeat my mantra with utmost love and trust, like an infant reaching out to the mother.

WALKING away from my meditation seat, I carry peace, contentment and love. I carry this sentiment of utmost devotion and gratitude with me into the world of activity.

THROUGHOUT the day I keep coming back to I am by taking a few mindful breaths and remembering the echo of my mantra resonating within. At times when I find myself far off in the worldly ocean, I remember the presence of my Guru escorting me back to the shore.

IN THE EVENING I find time to express my love and devotion by being in the company of others who are doing the same.

THIS I am remains as clean as the movie screen after many pictures have been projected on it.

THIS is a part of my practice that I can share with you. Although it sounds lengthy, in reality it is very short and practical. I would not be able to describe the richness of this practice through words just as I could never give you taste of a mango through words. You would have to taste it on your own to truly know it. And once you have tasted it, you would seek it out on your own.

[Ashram daily Schedule](#)

ASHRAM NEWS

YOGA CLASSES UPDATE: We miss them too! We are hopeful that by early summer the yurt will be up on the new property, and gentle, meditative yoga classes will resume.

INDIA PLANS: Every year, Babaji dedicates a couple months to [Bal Ashram](#) in Varanasi, India. This year, he will be there from January 23 to April 2. Currently, six children are living at the Ashram and also attending [Little Stars School](#). The Ashram offers a morning school and day care program for very small children from poor families. If you are thinking of traveling to India, you are always invited to spend some time at Bal Ashram. A few guest rooms are ready for visitors and there are plenty of volunteer opportunities both at the Ashram and Little Stars School. This opportunity to stay at Bal Ashram offers people a first-hand experience of Indian life and culture in an environment permeated with the sacredness and beauty India is known for.

GARBERVILLE So Hum Seva Ashram: Our friends in Garberville, CA, have been working very hard on a new meditation hall and dhuni on the banks of the Eel River. It should be completed and ready for use very soon.

[PERSONAL RETREAT SPACE](#): The Ashram now has a few guest rooms available for friends and supporters to come and spend some time in retreat. We hope you will take advantage of this gift that is being created with your help. Call or email the Ashram for more info.

RESIDENCY OPPORTUNITY: In addition to retreat space, a few apartments will be opening up for residency in the near future. We wish to rent them by the week, month or even long term to meet our monthly mortgage payments. Both short and long term residents have access to all programs and classes, and at the same time have the flexibility to maintain their own private life. It is the perfect opportunity for those seeking a change or those wanting to experience living in an Ashram environment.



AN INVITATION TO BE AN OASIS ANGEL FOR SONOMA ASHRAM: The Ashram's daily operating costs are covered by Oasis Angels, people across the country who contribute \$1 a day to the Ashram. Your participation helps the Ashram maintain its presence here and continue its various offerings locally and across the globe. [Please send email](#) for more information.



SHRI SARVESHVARI SAMOOH, 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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