

Winter Contemplations



During Sunday morning satsang at Sonoma Ashram November 15, 2009, Baba Harihar Ramji (Babaji) said:

Before we begin, I would like to offer my love to those present today, as well as those scattered all over the country. Such sweetness comes in the heart from knowing that many people in so many places are listening to this from their homes, thanks to technology.

Someone just sent me an email saying, "Babaji, I have been listening to your satsangs every Sunday, I wish I could be there." It reminded me of a letter that Sarkar Baba had received, "Baba, I read your teachings, read your words, try to come closer to your teachings. I think about you often, but you are in such a distant land, and sometimes I feel very sad. How can I come closer to you?"

The very moment you think of Guru's presence in your life, Guru is right in your heart.

heart." The moment we contemplate the teachings and identify with them, we are identifying with our own higher self, and Guru is there.

This is a wonderful time of year to come closer to the Guru, who resides right in our heart in the form of our higher self, in the form of that sweetness. It's a wonderful time for hibernation and being still, having more time to be with our Self.

There is enough time in the darkness to rest and also to just sit, contemplate, look. What have I done in the past year? How much have I grown? What kind of progress have I made?



Where do I need to go? It's not that we don't know - it's all there. We *know* where we need to go. Whether we pay attention to it or not, give importance to it or not, is up to each individual.

What are the teachings? Do the teachings we hear go in one ear and out the other, or maybe a little bit comes in and trickles down into our hearts. What do we do with the teachings we hear? Maybe they make us feel good in the moment, inspire us in the moment, but what do we do with them? Does any assimilation happen? Do we make a conscious effort to practice what we hear?

Winter is a time for reflection, a time to bring the crop into the barn, protected from the cold and frost, and take inventory of our life. It is a time to be grateful for everything that has happened throughout the year.

When we are not grateful, we set ourselves up for disappointment. Good things are happening in our life, but we do not take time to appreciate them. Instead of thinking, 'What can I give?' we think, 'What can I get?' In this way, we create disappointment and discontent. All the great Sages, all the great Beings, have always said that if we really want to be happy, ask, "What can I do for you?"

It's such a good feeling, just lying in bed when we can't fall asleep, or in our private moments when we're just sitting around, to think about all the blessings that have happened to us in our life - all the way from childhood to the present. Instead of gravitating toward bad memories, 'pick the pearls' and remember the good. Take a little time every day during these winter nights to sit and entertain these thoughts.

In this way, we train our mind. The movies

This winter, keep working toward making your life a Heaven right now.

start coming, the body chemistry changes, and we really enjoy our wonderful moments.

Undesirable moments will also come in front of our eyes. Negativity will come. Then what do we do? Some practical things will help, like making our own little rituals. For example,

All the great Sages, all the great Beings, have always said that if we really want to be happy, ask, "What can I do for you?"

we can wash our feet with cold water, or wash our hands and face. We can take a little water in our nose and blow it out. We can sit in front of our altar, light

incense or a lamp and invite in other kinds of thoughts. We can soften our eyes, soften the belly and take some deep breaths. We can think of the Guru.

These little rituals help us shift our thoughts and change our state of mind. That's what rituals are all about. We're not shifting our mind just by thinking. We can use other little things.

I would encourage you to make some rituals that remind you or that help you turn the horse around. When we begin to ride that horse of negativity, soon the horse gallops so fast that we forget where we are going. Flowing towards negativity is such a waste of time. The time that's passing is not coming back to us. We can live in Heaven *now*. This winter, keep working toward making your life a Heaven right now.

Thank you all for being here.

OM TAT SAT

News from India



Babaji is currently at Bal Ashram in Varanasi, India. This winter, his primary focus is developing our Amrit Sagar Eco-Center, just across the Ganges River from Bal Ashram.



Amrit Sagar Eco-Center The Eco-Center is all about creating a model for best environmental practices, as well as sustainable farming. Although we've acquired only a fraction of the total land area, we're moving ahead with a small functioning center which can make Bal Ashram self-sufficient through products grown on site.



The process of self-sufficiency begins with cows. Rightly so, as in India, the cow is called Mother. Cows will provide us with milk, and also dung to convert into methane fuel for cooking, lighting and fertilizing high quality organic vegetables. We hope to build the cow's shelter and purchase the cows before Babaji returns to California in March.

Sonoma Ashram Foundation



Fullness
overflowing

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Meditating on the Guru
and walking on the path shown
by the Guru is the simplest way
to obtain peace in the soul.

Aughar Vani, Avadhuta's wisdom

Retreat...



to the Ashram this spring.

Let the peaceful Ashram grounds nourish and replenish you and let a daily routine of meditation, yoga, rest and self-reflection inspire you. Guest rooms are available year-round and can be reserved by calling or emailing the Ashram.

For more information about Sonoma Ashram Foundation and our daily activities, please visit our website: sonomaashram.org.

Thus spoke Aghoreshwar

- It is not possible to cross over the river of life in the company of the lowly. If you ride a light piece of wood to cross a river, you'll fall into the water and perhaps drown.
- There are three ways of obtaining knowledge: through the senses, the mind and the Self. Knowledge gained via the senses is unreal. Knowledge obtained with the mind is closer to reality, but experiential knowledge of the Self is the only perfect and real knowledge.



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