

# SATSANG

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Perform Agnihotra • Heal The Atmosphere

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**Homa at Maryland Penitentiary**

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**Cover**

Homa is introduced at Maryland  
Penitentiary, Baltimore, Maryland.

# Homa at Maryland Penitentiary

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*Irvin Gates, Maria Broom, and Jamal Wilson went to the Maryland Penitentiary to entertain inmates with Homa, music and dance.*

Walking toward the entrance to the Maryland Penitentiary, Irvin, Maria and I met Ocei Abdullah. He gave us a description of the kinds of inmates we would visit and the conditions of the institution itself. Most of the incarcerated men were black and between the ages of sixteen to thirty-five. Many of them are serving life terms. This is the only home they will know.

We joined the crowd of people standing at the entrance steps waiting in the cold winter night air. Most of the women were dressed up for evening. There were a few young male visitors. A guard stood on the top step with a rifle slung over his shoulder and his hand on a gun strapped to his hip.

We stood outside on the steps for fifteen minutes as the cold started penetrating our clothes. We waited in silence for the most part, except for Ocei who was trying to give an accurate picture of why and how so many young people got baited into the wrong lifestyle which led them to the Penitentiary. He spoke of the other jails in our state as well. He wants us to join him in bringing some knowledge to inmates in other institutions. The large front doors opened and people pushed to get into the lobby and out of the cold. Large iron bars prevented us from going directly into the building. A narrow bar door was the only means of entrance and it only opened periodically. We were being let in almost one at a time. To gain admittance you had to show your identification to three guards standing within the iron bars, and it had to match with your name which was al-

ready written in a log that had been tabulated earlier.

A man came barging past us saying, "Excuse me, I have a badge." Our friend Ocei Abdullah said, "I have a badge too, but I do not want to barge through the other people." The time was getting late and Irvin asked if Ocei thought that maybe we too should use his badge to gain entrance. Ocei moved through the crowd and the three of us followed him. He was passed through the iron door and began negotiating with the guards inside to let us through as we were part of the program.

The crowd parted to let us through as the guard motioned for us to come forward. Finally, we were allowed through the iron door and were told to wait while other identifications were checked. A lady hollered to me through the bars that she was the singer that was to sing with the inmate band. She asked me to notify the bandleader that her name was not on the book and to come downstairs to correct the situation so she could get in. Suddenly I noticed Ali, a neighbor of mine, and went to greet him. He works in the Penitentiary with the Muslim population.

I whispered to him that I had some very important literature for the prison population that I hoped to have distributed. He told me that he would be over to the building that we were going to later and that he would take care of it for me. I told him that we had a tape of the mantras that are chanted and an explanation of when and how to perform Yajnya that I wanted to be sure would also reach the prison population. He promptly took the cassette tape I handed him from my pants pocket and placed it over among

his personal things on a ledge. All of this transpired in front of five or six guards or maybe even more; they were everywhere.

Irvin and I were asked to step toward a searching section while Maria was sent to another area for the same purpose. We had to open the bags we were carrying. I had a portable tape recorder and a Minolta 35mm flash camera resting in a canvas shoulder bag atop a half foot pile of Fivefold Path materials.

This included medicine flyers, Homa Therapy Farming Bulletins, a 6-page mind training series, proper food combining chart, endocrine system chart, Agnihotra pamphlets, Satsang's "The Holy Prophet Mohammed," "The Son of Man Has Come," "Mother," "Scientists Beware," "Fire is the Need of the Hour," and several recent issues of *Satsang*.

In Irvin's kit we had a mortar bowl, a round piece of copper to sit on top of its opening, three Agnihotra pyramids with a gheed piece of dung in it, a jar of ghee, a jar of rice, a quantity of dried cow dung, a box of matches, a strong copper ladle, a small copper spoon, napkins, humility and devotion. Irvin and I were told to empty our pants pockets into a metal locker with a key in it. We were to lock it ourselves and keep the key with us.

An illustration of the kind of tension and stress there must be given. The tall guard looked over our shoulders, uttered an expletive and stalked out from behind the inspection counter straight past us. He walked to the wall with the lockers on it, and still uttering expletives, turned to us and pointed to this one locker with its door open. Valuables,

including money, were sitting there for anyone to take. Then the guard said, "You see the money don't you?" and slammed the door of the locker shut, locking it. He walked back to his inspection position still shaking his head. What happened was that a male guest, affected by the vibrations in the prison, had lost his reasoning powers and simply forgot to lock his valuables up.

Irvin and I looked at each other in that pre-cautious way. We walked back up to the counter where the guard once again asked us to be searched, this time by walking through an electronic device. But he looked over our shoulders again and asked who has the key. We turned our heads toward our locker and saw that we too had left the door to our locker unlocked. This is not the ideal building for one to spend one's life in. Already our thinking was not efficient. We were both now in a great hurry to do a Yajnya.

We walked through a metal detector and over to another guard who had us turn our backs and then frisked us from head to toe.



We walked to still another station where an inmate had us write our names on plates that were then fastened on our wrists.

Moving to still another station we were scanned with an electronic device and then stamped on our left wrist. Now we were told to proceed down through the visitor's area. Here we could see Maria Broom coming through an adjacent doorway and the female guard releasing her after putting her through the same routine that Irvin and I experienced.

Ocei, Irvin, Maria and I were about to proceed down the metal steps that lead to another checkpoint when I mentioned to Ocei I hoped that my camera would work properly. He looked at me startled and asked me, "What camera? Where is it?" I said it was right here in my bag. He walked off down the steps shaking his head whispering, "Brother you are really blessed to get a camera in here." For a moment I became concerned that maybe I should not take any pictures with it. But I thought of my duty to spread Agnihotra and The Fivefold Path everywhere. I thought of how great it would be for others to see that positive forces are helping to get this message of freedom from attachment everywhere. The brothers locked up in this prison must know something about nonattachment. But they need to witness the automatic calming effect of Homa. And we need scientifically verifiable evidence. Thus, pictures would surely help. I made an immediate resolve to take as many pictures as I could as naturally as I normally do with no internal sense of fear, or persecution. I devotedly chanted my sacred mantra and followed Ocei down the steps. Irvin and Maria were right behind us.

A guard at the bottom of the steps let us through yet another set of iron doors. He had us wait until he spoke over a walkie-talkie with another guard. Finally yet another iron gate was unlocked and we could tell from the cold air that hit us that we were going outside again.

We walked down another flight of iron stairs, past holding areas where several young men vied for our attention. They all seemed to be around the same age, height, weight, etc., and were dressed in uniforms with matching hats. They spoke and smiled as they were glad to see some outsiders.

After turning a sharp corner we walked across the "yard," a small recreational area. Tonight it was occupied by rifle-bearing guards stationed strategically. As we walked up a ramp "the dreams" flashed back into my mind. Several times over the years, I have had dreams of being in prison and going through different situations in different prisons. I would awaken dumbfounded as to the meanings of the dreams. Some of them occurred more than ten years ago before I even started performing Agnihotra and studying the Fivefold Path of happy living from the Vedas.

Most recently in one of those dreams, I definitely remember walking across the prison yard and up this ramp to another of the prison's buildings. Again I have been given silent direction about the course of events in my life long before they transpire. The divine hierarchy is so merciful in bringing grace and guidance into our lives.

Maria, Irvin, Ocei and I walked across the yard under the gaze of the guards and the call of many inmates locked up in cells in

high tiers overhead. They shouted down to us their greetings. Some of them were flashing broken mirrors hoping to reflect some light to our eyes to get a moment of recognition in an unappreciative environment.

As we walked Ocei told me that he had passed through these walls himself. Only for two years but somehow one got the feeling that he felt that he was still locked up and would continue to feel that way as long as others suffered the same fate. This may be the reason why he volunteers so much of his time to the inmates and their causes.

From the ramp we walked up a flight of iron steps and through a double doorway wide open with three male guards standing on either side chatting with each other. We were suddenly inside of a very nice large hall that had the feeling of being some kind of entertainment center. Music pulsed from a speaker system. Tables were placed throughout to accommodate several hundred people. Many of the chairs around the tables were occupied by well-dressed young men. A few young men were wandering through the tables. This could have been any other hall except, as we focused ourselves, we noticed that it was obvious this room was very well guarded.

By now many of the guests were arriving and being warmly and openly embraced by the inmates. There is no privacy to what is going on. Female guards were standing near one of the doors. Toward the rear of the area food was being prepared. Guards were there also. They were dressed in different color clothing.

The opposite wall running the length of

the room was made of large glass windows from behind which the entire area could be viewed. There were constant forms and faces moving back and forth observing everything that was going on. At the front of the hall were amplifiers, loudspeakers and microphones. In the middle of the front section of the dining hall was a video camera set upon a tripod attached to its monitor and ready to go.

This really surprised Irvin and me, although Irvin earlier made the statement since we could not find the battery for our camera maybe they would have a camera already there. A very prophetic remark.

The most startling thing to me at this point was the fact that these young men looked like people you would find in some athletic program in college. They appeared to be in such good health and spirits for the most part. The difference was that almost all of them were sitting quite still in their chairs. This did look unusual.

A tall dark muscular young man walked over and introduced himself to us. Mike Austin was his name. He apologized for the band not being available due to administrative procedures. All the while I was listening to him, I was giving directions to Irvin to open the Agnihotra kit right there in the middle of the front part of the hall and start a Yajnya immediately.

Mike mentioned that he understood that we wanted to do a special procedure at the opening of the evening's activities. I pointed to Irvin and told Mike that we were beginning it immediately. He said fine. Never once did he question what we were about to do or ask any questions about it. He was too busy

trying to get his evening program together.

By now, Irvin had taken the first two Agnihotra pots out of the Agnihotra kit and set one of them in the earthenware altar.

Maria gave instructions to Mike about how to play the music on the tape recorder that she was going to dance to, by Bobby McFadden. Meanwhile, I set my tape recorder on record to tape the sound of everything that was happening. I also placed some literature about Agnihotra and the Fivefold Path on the floor just in front of where we were sitting.

As I released the pause button on the tape recorder, Irvin began the Vyahruti Homa:

*Bhooh Swaha Agnaye Idam Na Mama  
Bhuwah Swaha Wayawe Idam Na Mama  
Swah Swaha Sooryaya Idam Na Mama  
Bhoor-Bhuwah-Swah-Swaha Prajapataye  
Idam Na Mama  
(Note: "a" is pronounced like "a" in father)*

This was just the first of the successive Homas that we performed that evening. As the smoke began to swirl upward toward the ceiling, all eyes went unabatedly upon the three of us at the front of the dining hall. Curious looks were on everyone's faces.

I chanted the opening mantra with Irvin. The background music pounded through the speaker system. Only those people sitting toward the front of the dining hall actually heard the chant. Shortly, Irvin and I began chanting the "Om Tryambakam Mantra." This mantra allows the continuous offering of ghee to the fire. It is:

*Om Tryambakam Yajamahe  
Sugandhim Pushti Vardhanam  
Urvaarukamiva Bandhanaan  
Mrityourmuksheeya Maamritat Swaha*

The following will explain why we rushed to perform the Vyahruti Homa:

"Cleansing of these three spheres through the agency of fire has a terrific impact on the functioning of Prana 'life energy'/The beneficial effects of Prana are automatically transferred to the realm of the mind."

So immediately, we had changed the thought process of everyone assembled to a more positive and beneficial nature.

The following will explain why we then performed the Om Tryambakam Homa:

"We offer oblations to the Cosmic Energy which spreads fragrance and bestows boundless nourishment. May we be relieved from the clutches of death, just as the cucumber gets itself free from the stem. May we never be separated from immortality."

Now, in specific offerings of oblation into the Fire, there is a restructuring of the external environment which in turn creates a physiological response to the psychological change caused by mantra (scientifically uttered vibrations). The psychological change caused by the mantra strikes at the very root of the stress cycle, supplying the seat of emotions situated in the brain (hypothalamus) with positive signals. Happiness thus becomes a baseline experience!



Inmates, guards, and visitors alike looked on with puzzled interest as Irvin and I sat together on the tile floor of the Maryland Penitentiary dining area performing Yajnyas for the pre-Valentine Day entertainment.

I noticed that no one was at the video machine so I beckoned to Mike Austin and asked him to check if the machine was on. He told me that it had been taping all along.

Earlier Mike said he thought we were bringing video equipment. I explained to him that we could not get our video equipment, and that the super 8mm camera was

not operative at the time. He asked me if I wanted to get a copy of the video tape that he was making. I expressed great interest in the idea. He told me that there would be no problem.

Mike asked me to return the original tape to him after I had received my copy. He wrote the address down for me. I really did not know how to thank him for the offer.

After waiting some time for guests to arrive, Mike took the microphone and greeted the audience. Irvin continued with the Om Tryambakam Mantra. Maria came



and sat down and joined in the chanting. I got up with my 35mm Minolta camera and began carefully taking pictures.

The flashlight popping made everyone focus on the object of the pictures. The smoke drifted quietly throughout the entire hall. Already the affair was gaining a calmness even though the program was very late starting.

During several speeches Irvin was performing Yajnya. By now he was moving to the third copper Agnihotra pyramid to perform the third Yajnya. The entire hall was peaceful and quiet. Not one person made any kind of wisecrack about anything that had happened. I was flashing pictures all over the place and no one was interfering with me. In fact the guards were moving out of my way so that I could get the angles I wanted. Oh how wonderful is that Holy Fire – Homa!

After the magician performed his act, Irvin and I chanted the Sapta Shloki (the Seven Verses). Mike Austin then invited us to come sit at a special table full of food. Someone must have told them that we were vegetarians.

All the platters at the table contained vegetables and salad. We sat there in this serene atmosphere of the dining hall in the Maryland Penitentiary and no one would have believed that we were among inmates, except for the numerous guards now stationed around the place.

There was a haze of smoke throughout the hall from floor to ceiling by this time. No one was smoking cigarettes of any kind. This totally Yajnya smoke was throughout the en-

tire building.

I took the stack of *Satsangs* and other Fivefold Path materials out of my bag and placed them on the table after everyone had finished eating. There was a five gallon container of juice on the table next to ours.

This made it necessary for anyone who wanted a cup of juice to come over near us. There was no other literature there. So people looked and wondered just what this literature was. Finally someone asked if he could read the literature. I informed him that all of the literature was for them.

They could not believe that this was true. For a moment they just sat and looked at the pile of material. Then ever so graciously they took copies of *Satsangs* from the pile and started reading.

Mike Austin had already gotten up from the table and, carrying a handful of the literature, excused himself from our table. He said that he was going to distribute the literature among the guests.

The liaison worker advised him to be careful. But Mike said that no one would think anything of it because they were used to seeing him handing out literature in relationship to something else.

We watched him as he moved about from table to table handing out the divine scientific message of Agnihotra and the Fivefold Path.

Ali then came up to me and took a copy of the *Satsang* that was on the very top, read down the page and handed it back.

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He said that he would see to it that all of the material would be put in the jail library. Some of the other inmates heard him say that. They were glad that they would have access to the Agnihotra material.

At 9:30 we were all asked to leave the hall. Mike Austin thanked us for coming and bringing the Yajnya. He said that he would read the special literature about the fire that I had left with him. He said that he would go up to the library to read the other literature.

Mike expressed the wish that we come on a regular basis and share more of this information about the Yajnya fire with them. We told him that we would certainly be back. No one questioned us as we said good night and left.