

Satsang

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Twice Monthly

AGNIHOTRA in Jamaica

...By Brad (Columbia)

It was unlikely (and consequently the thought did not occur) that two average vacationers travelling to the tropical island of Jamaica could bring something new (to modern meditators) and different to a much-travelled-to place such as this third-largest island of the Antilles.

Before embarking on this long-awaited trip, and after all of the routine questions had been asked and disposed of, the practicability of continuing the twice-daily meditations of AGNIHOTRA arose. A visit to the Baltimore Fire Temple a few days before my wife Joan and I departed led to a discussion with Fred, the mentor-in-residence, that AGNIHOTRA was indeed a portable ritual, the necessary equipment notwithstanding.

A conversation involving the technicalities of the Caribbean sunrises and sunsets ensued and it was generally agreed (though mistakenly) that since the island and Baltimore were in the same time zones, the times for our meditations would be the same. Although eager to carry on our newly adopted daily AGNIHOTRA custom during the stay in Jamaica, all sorts of apprehensions began to race through my mind. Would the fire set off a sprinkling system? And, what if an employee at the inn smelled the smoke? But, eventually the spiritual necessity overcame mundane practicalities and we sallied forth into the land of sun, sea and sand at least prepared to continue our way of life.

After a swift and beautiful flight from the Baltimore Airport we unpacked and settled down in a spacious commodious room with terrace facing the ocean. And, a little while later when we approached the beach, it began to rain, so we went back to the room and then dressed for dinner. Before leaving for the dining room area we dutifully checked the time of sunset on our Baltimore-Washington Area schedule. Well, lo and behold, before we could finish eating, the sun began dropping swiftly and not in accord with our

timetable. Perplexed, we gulped down our dessert (and everyone knows what a shame it is to rush through freshly-baked pastries) and rushed back to our room to perform AGNIHOTRA.

Again, the next morning we miscalculated. However, we easily resolved the immediate problem by consulting the daily Jamaican newspapers. But, I continued to mull over just precisely what had gone wrong. Then, a few days later, eureka! I had been thinking like the landlubber I now am and had forgotten my previous training as a seagoing navigator in the Merchant Marine. Of course, I realized and told Joan, being closer to the equator makes the difference. (And if the reader doubts that natural phenomena is different near the equator, just try staying out in the noon day sun for a while.)

There are nautical publications that seamen can refer to for local celestial passages. These, I gradually came to remember using. But, even though I had hit upon the reason for the differences in the times of the sunrises and sunsets, I was not fully satisfied as to why, until I got back home and read:

"The earth rotates on its axis once every 23 hours, 56 minutes, 4.1 seconds (based on the solar year). A point on the equator therefore moves at a rate of a little over 1,000 m.p.h. because of rotation, and a point on the earth at the latitude of Portland, Oregon (45°N.) at about 667 m.p.h."

But, so much for physical science. Can I get the reader to visualize the sky at sunset in the tropics? I know you have all seen, at one time or another, a lovely sunset. But one after AGNIHOTRA! We had heard about those in the mid-west plains, and those further west among the mountains, but a shimmering, orange ball of fire setting into a watery horizon accompanied by indescribable puffs of clouds colored with nature's divine paintbrush was fuel for our rediscovered faith. And, after dinner, as though revealing a thread of continuity, our view of the stars was the same (but from a different angle of course. Don't forget that things are different at the equator) as we saw back home. Suffice it to say at this point, that your collective imagination can easily picture the sunrises.

To return to the point of this story, we came back on another beautiful flight. Years ago I first saw Miami at night from out at sea.

This time was also from out at sea, but 30,000 feet up with a view of Freeport on the starboard side (my recalled nautical rhetoric lingers) as an added attraction. Shortly after our return, Karen came by for our weekly community AGNIHOTRA observance. Before she got around to asking how the trip went, she wanted to know if we had done AGNIHOTRA while there in Jamaica. "Certainly!" we replied. "Well, then," she remarked, "this must be the first time AGNIHOTRA has been done in Jamaica."

At this, Joan and I looked at each other surprised that we had been discovered to have achieved a "first" somewhere. While in Jamaica we had taken a tour that included a stop at Discovery Bay, the place Columbus first landed on his initial trip. We hadn't realized that possibly we had also brought something new to the island. And, when we reminded Karen that there were a lot of people from India there, she agreed but reminded us that after all, the revival of AGNIHOTRA was quite recent and had not reached Jamaica yet. This was certainly worth a thought or two. Vasant brought AGNIHOTRA to America and stated that from here it will spread all around the globe.

Well, at this point, you might have suspected my story contains a moral or a message. It does. DON'T TRAVEL WITHOUT YOUR AGNIHOTRA EQUIPMENT OR YOU MIGHT MISS YOUR CHANCE TO BECOME FAMOUS, IN A QUIET SORT OF WAY.

Vasant Paranjpe has rejoined us after a stay in India and will be starting a mind training program based on the Sermon on the Mount. The first session will begin on Sunday, September 14 after the 10 a.m. service. The aim of the program is to be happy here and now. We welcome you back, Vasant, with great joy! (From BREAD, a publication of St. Stephen and the Incarnation Church, 3421 Center Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20010)

Dear sisters and brothers,

As a working mother and housewife in American society, I want to share with you a recent discovery.

Often I will glance at a Woman's magazine or talk with sisters that express concern over the multifaceted lives they find themselves leading. Someone will tell me she doesn't really know who she is for she does the job of a nurse, a maid, a babysitter, a chauffeur, a gardener, etc., and she has no answers to her schizophrenic existence. Or, someone will tell me that he or she just has to do and say certain things and they are not "really me", but the worldly boss asks them of me and if I don't I'll lose my job and then where will I be? I am certain most of us have gone through those lines in our heads at least once or twice.

Here and now I declare an end to schizophrenia through the BOSS I am working for!

My BOSS, first of all, pays abundantly. His rules and regulations are extremely clear and fair. His first command that insures material prosperity is AGNIHOTRA, performed regularly at sunrise and sunset. Join in this cycle of nature, for if you stand alone and apart from this beautiful universe, you are truly alone and apart. The returns for performing AGNIHOTRA are there for you to benefit from - happiness, release from stress, strain and anxiety, clarity from illusions and delusions - just to mention a few. A good friend of mine, upon starting AGNIHOTRA, expressed in wonder, "The worries are gone, now all there is to do is act".

My BOSS gives further guidance, called DAAN. Share of your wealth, both material and otherwise. Seek persons that are worthy and the returns are staggering. Give of yourself in whatever you do and with humility and joy. The BOSS smiles and you are doubly blessed. It is really such a simple habit to adopt, but often in frailty, we hold on to old habits long after they have served their usefulness. So, give thought to this matter.

Apply discipline, TAPA. No effort, however insignificant it may appear at the time, will go unrewarded. The BOSS is outstandingly gracious. When you get stopped by a policeman for going too fast, remember the BOSS! The perspective of working for Shree carries us through all the seemingly absurd situations that we sometimes find ourselves in. No need for schizophrenia. All through the days and nights the BOSS sends us messages, and our police officer is one who reminds us, if we are driving too fast or being insensitive to other persons. My BOSS does insist on discipline and order, just as nature has order and harmony and we are rightful heirs to the same.

Working for Shree is a full time job and I must take care of myself in all ways, through thought, word and deed so that I am

always able to do my very best. Otherwise, I cheat myself and Him by not getting maximum returns..

Perform always good actions, good KARMA. He insists on this. With discipline, good actions become so easy and natural. No matter what, we just keep doing the positive things, steadily. And, we feel His love and grace. Good actions apply towards all persons and things. He wants it that way. Be good equally towards your children as towards persons in authority and power. Remember who it is you are really working for. "Whatsoever you do unto one of the least amongst them, you do unto me."

Lastly, the BOSS commands SWADHYAYA (Self-study). Observe, meditate, and meditate again. AGNIHOTRA is already revealing the direction of the eternal, eternal cycles of nature, cosmic vibrations. Do not neglect, please, knowledge about our proper place in this awesome universe. The perspective of Shree truly surpasseth all understanding.

Now we come to the question of how to become an employee (and remember, it is full time) of this cooperation, "corporation"? First you must ask, "Are there vacancies?" Yes, and you qualify by sincerely asking, learning and applying what you learn through attending classes. Let me recommend my BOSS. He is the way!

Karen

Mobile AGNIHOTRA

...By K.J.

A car is a truly valuable gift. Many of us that have to work and travel long distances to and from work have come to realise how a car helps the practice of Fivefold Path.

First of all, we get in the habit of carrying ingredients for AGNIHOTRA around with us so that we are never "caught" shorthanded. I make one portion of ghee for home and one for mobile home, chop one stack of firewood for home and one for mobile home. All the AGNIHOTRA ingredients are kept in a box alongside SATSANGS and GRACE ALONE, since those of us that travel are always meeting people along the way. Often, someone joins me in AGNIHOTRA in the car. Often rides are given to people who end up with several SATSANGS before leaving this mobile meditation home. Many, many songs and chants happen in it, many prayers. Were it not for the fact that in fire temples silence needs to be maintained, I would ask the Editor if one could inaugurate a car as a mobile fire temple?

DAYBREAK

Remember this

Love is the very key to open all doors.
Doors that are bolted shut
and those which are hard to budge
all doors.
Even before the key comes to meet the lock
the door swings open with ease.

All of love is abounding
with His Grace.

Trees sweep wind from cloud to cloud.
Rivers dance in joy.

It is awesome.

It is unfolding.

We have turned our heads, our minds
from politics and dogma.

We are delving into the realm
untouched for so many years
by most people.

We are uncovering a gold mine.
Our picks and shovels are made of gold
and air from the wind.

Our fears are being uprooted
our hatreds and misunderstandings vanish.

There is no child like the one
we hold in our hearts.

This pure innocence is unbounding Love.
Patience. His glorious countenance.

There are no mysteries to this.

It is like the break of day,
clear, the gift unmistakable.

Come all my children to the waters of your soul
and bathe in the Divine river of
resounding Love.

Begin there.

Then share of your abundance
So all can carry in their hearts
the same song.

His GRACE alone
and in His Light
it is given.

Frann

Be a Friend to All

...By Sally

What constitutes being a good friend? Jesus said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This is the ultimate goal of all mankind - to see ourselves in one another, to see other's needs as our needs, to love others as we love ourselves. For in reality, we are our brothers and sisters, and it is only an illusion which makes us see ourselves as separate entities. The greatest kindness we can do for another is to perceive him as he is in the present moment, free from the scars of past actions, free from personal expectations. To totally accept one another is our duty. This leads to the realization that we are all ONE.

"You may sit at your window watching the passerby, and watching you may see a nun walking toward your right hand and a prostitute toward your left hand. And, you may say in your innocence, 'how noble is the one and how ignoble is the other'. But, should you close your eyes and listen awhile, you would hear a voice whispering in the ether, 'One seeks me in prayer and the other in pain. And in the Spirit of each, there is a bower for my Spirit'."

How it hinders us when we judge others! What a weight we carry, and how silly it is when we have such a bare understanding of why others act the way they do. What do we know of the total realm of experiences that constitutes another's being? It should always be remembered that that which displeases us in others is only a reflection of our own faults and inadequacies.

To love without reserve is the true way of friendship. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." Are we not perfect? Then, we must radiate His love to others. For we are the means through which He gives His love to His children.

It is so easy to love our friends, but what about our enemies? It is in loving our enemies that we truly learn to love. We must see past the darkness of ignorance which sometimes compels others to behave in what we term selfish or evil ways, to the Light of the soul which is ever struggling to realize itself. Every person is moving toward this Light, no matter how seemingly base are his efforts. All are seeking a reality beyond this mundane life whether it is in drugs, soap operas or meditation.

If it is hard to feel this love for another then the least we can do is to keep still about it and continue to try to feel loving. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." St. Francis was asked, "How shall I love my neighbor?" The reply was, "Love thy neighbor". Love conquers all. There is no such thing as a person we cannot love. Be a sponge for the pain and unhappiness of others. There is no limit to what we can absorb. And, surprisingly, the more we absorb the more we have to give. Love is a boundless power.

The Avatar is simply the perfect Friend. He exists only to give, for that is God's law. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." To meditate on the virtues of the Avatar is to imbibe those virtues in ourselves. We then become greater vessels through which His love may be poured out to our fellow man.

Excerpts from SATSANG Correspondence

Dear Mr.....,

Your heartfelt devotion to Shree is a great act of purification of the mind and when this is done GRACE manifests from within. Divine love is yours for the asking. "Knock and it will open. Ask and it shall be given." The only question one may ask is, "Are you ready to receive?" Wherever there is a nose, there is atmosphere. Similarly, wherever there is a true seeker, GRACE manifests. The message of Shree is, "Fill all the Spheres with Love". Love is a purifying energy that blesseth him that giveth and him that receiveth.

When we learn to transform each work into worship, no special meditation is necessary. We are then attuned to the Divine all the

time. It is the plan of Almighty Father that His messengers come in human form to lead the people to the Divine goal. When things go too bad, special messengers come to do the allotted task. This task is to be fulfilled within the allotted time. His Will be done. At no time in known history things were as bad as they are today. Hence, the Divine Messenger has appeared and His message is Love. The message is as old as creation. The messengers use the language suited to the times and conditions in which they manifest. The same message is again presented as the Fivefold Path.

1. AGNIHOTRA (Ancient process in the Science of Bioenergy for unburdening the mind) Purification of the atmosphere is a material aid to purification of PRANA, the energy which connects us with the cosmos. This leads to unburdening the mind. The mind is in the grip of desires and AGNIHOTRA gives a "push" to the mind (which is subtle matter) to act in the right direction.
2. DAAN (Sharing assets in a spirit of humility) DAAN is a material aid to reduce attachment to worldly possessions.
3. TAPA (Self-discipline) TAPA is a process of purification which relieves us from the grip of six crocodiles, viz, lust, greed, anger, envy, temptation and pride.
4. KARMA (The law of "Reap as you sow" of the Bible) KARMA without attachment is a process to get rid of the bondage of the chain of reaping and sowing.
5. SWADHYAYA (Self-study) Who am I? I am not the body. I am not the mind because I say, "my body, my mind". Which is that entity which says "my body, my mind". This search can never begin until we reduce the trouble from the six crocodiles mentioned above.

The above Fivefold Path is the basis of all religions, all Prophets, all true spiritual disciplines known to man. Our intellect then is transformed into higher intellect which perceives the at-one-ment with reality. Then, we go from "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" (Matthew) into the state of "No one has seen God any time" (John). Here the seer does not remain as such. This is the meaning of "I am that I am" and "I and my Father are one".

The five words denoting the Fivefold Path are in Sanskrit language. Sanskrit was nobody's mother tongue at any time on earth. Sanskrit is the mother language from which all languages derive. All languages contain words which come from Sanskrit. There is not a single word in Sanskrit which has come from any other language. Sanskrit script is the original script of mankind.

By practicing the Fivefold Path in daily life, GRACE manifests. We soon realise that it is "Grace Alone". Practice of AGNIHOTRA can usher us into the frame of mind, "Not my will but Thy Will be done". Our way of looking at events in life changes and hence, the world changes.

Yours,
In His Service,
Vasant

Practice AGNIHOTRA for purification of the atmosphere.
Practice DAAN (Sharing of assets in a spirit of humility) for generating non-attachment.
Perform TAPA (Self-discipline, austerities, purification) for fruition of thy affirmations.
Perform KARMA (Meritorious deeds) for self-purification.
Perform SWADHYAYA (Self-study) for liberation.

This is the Fivefold Path. Start the spiritual discipline today. The span of life will not be extended. What is given unto you is to utilize wisely every moment of your existence. Let us engage ourselves in meritorious deeds without expectation of reward in the form of name or fame. We live only in the present moment. The past is no more. The future is yet to be. Do not waste the precious moments in trivia.

A link will be given to you by Divine Will when you start practicing the above. You will be a more righteous Christian, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, whatever be your formal religious label.

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