

HOMA FARMING

Vasant

When Homa is done in a garden or under a tree the effect of the smoke first goes to the leaves. The smoke acts as a catalyst for the generation of chlorophyll in terms of a chemical reaction which can easily be shown to someone by a botanist who may choose to study the subject.

Pear trees will bear sweeter fruit in Yajnya atmosphere.

The amount of force that is thrust from the copper pyramid at Agnihotra time cannot be harnessed. There is enough energy though from one Agnihotra pot to give light energy to an entire city.

ASHRAM LIFE—A FAMILY WAY OF LIFE

David

During my travels in India and U.S.A. I had the good fortune of staying at two places which were set up along Ashramic lines. One place is Agnihotra Press in America; the second is Mahatma Gandhi Ashram in India. The impression I have of both places is very strong and also it is not what most people would think an Ashram would be like.

One might imagine an Ashram to be inhabited by monks or nuns who solemnly go about their rigorous duties in silence. What little sleep they get is between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. and they usually sleep on hard beds. They eat cold mush and bread three times a day and of course they have all left their unfortunate families.

On the contrary the experience I had at both places was very uplifting. I noticed a change in the atmosphere and the environment itself as compared with other places. There was a great sense of peace and harmony pervading the atmosphere. These two qualities also affected my own thoughts to a great extent. I felt a very genuine interaction among the people of both places. There is an openness in people's relationships with each other. There is also a real sense of caring amongst the people in a selfless sort of way. It is not a false sense of needing to be nice to others. I experienced this sense of caring in my self and noticed that it came automatically in such an environment and did not need to be forced.

The people at both places are happy and smiling. Some of them are married and carry on normal family relationships. In fact I saw very plainly at both places that they were no doubt Ashrams yet they had leapt the bounds of old Ashramic restrictions and normal standards of living went hand in hand with Ashramic way of life. There seemed to be a real sense of family bonds in this environment. The family unit especially in the West has deteriorated so much and consequently there are broken homes. Most of the time it is not anyone's fault. It's human nature that we want to care for and love our family but there just seems to be more and more problems and conflicts with no remedy in sight.

I also felt a sense of importance in daily activities while working or eating with others. Perhaps it is the little things which began to take on more meaning. I found myself thinking about the other person more and not only thought about what I had to do for myself. The purpose of caring for others was a main goal of both the places. I feel this is a natural urge in all human beings and the environment seemed to allow this tendency to surface and become strong.

I started to see how it was quite possible to create such an environment in the average household. In fact it is of great necessity to do so considering the rat race we are all caught up in and the instability of our entire social network.

Some of the qualities of an Ashram that I found in both places which could be incorporated into family life are

- (a) purity of atmosphere
- (b) cleanliness of the environment
- (c) regularity in daily activities
- (d) creating a family or group sense by doing certain activities in common everyday
- (e) some sense of purpose

Purity of the atmosphere involves several things. It means first of all that the atmosphere is free from germs and disease carrying bacteria. It also means being free of pollution in the atmosphere. It goes deeper to mean an atmosphere which is free from disturbance and negative thoughts. Such an atmosphere is filled with harmony which in turn stabilizes the mind and makes us feel peaceful. This impurity is caused by angry or disturbed thoughts impinging on the atmosphere. According to Vedas, mind and atmosphere are connected through the life substance Prana which pulsates throughout creation. Thoughts like seeds are not just carried away by the wind but

the effect remains in the atmosphere where they were planted. The atmosphere then affects the mind in a similar way.

By regular practice in the house of Agnihotra, the smallest form of Homa which comes from Science of Bioenergy given in Vedas, we can ensure purity of the atmosphere on both these levels. This scientific method of purification of the atmosphere and removing tension on the mind activating Universal Prana is the special aspect which makes Agnihotra Press Farm in U.S.A. more attractive even to a novice. This thing is lacking in Gandhi Ashram at Wardha.

Agnihotra is a small fire prepared by burning medicinal substances. The fire is made in a copper pyramid and is kept ready exactly at the times of sunrise and sunset. The smoke from Agnihotra becomes medicinal and immunizes the activity of pathogenic bacteria. Agnihotra atmosphere has a wonderful effect on plants by acting as a carrier for subtle nutrients which are carried to the atmosphere. Plants absorb these nutrients and thrive remarkably. Plants become healthy and happy. They in turn feel so much love for the one doing Agnihotra. This love fills the atmosphere and our minds are automatically pushed in this direction. Plants when kept in the same room where Agnihotra is done become Love generators. This is the reason why the atmosphere at Agnihotra Press is much more uplifting and peaceful.

Training of the mind becomes so essential in maintaining this pure atmosphere. Reacting with Love these days becomes only wishful thinking or at best an exception. But in the environment of Ashram I felt it was so easy to maintain such a loving mind. No doubt it requires some effort to train the mind but I also developed the sense of necessity to make that effort.

Cleanliness makes such an amazing difference not only in the health of the body but also the mind. When we live in a dirty environment our thoughts are affected. We don't feel fresh. Taking bath in the morning awakens the body and bathing in the evening helps us to see how dirty we get just by being outside. Changing clothes regularly and washing clothes daily also is a good habit.

A cluttered house also draws on mind energy all the time whether we know it or not. We are always wondering what to do with all the things we have gathered. A cluttered house also attracts dust and makes cleaning difficult. Making the house uncluttered doesn't mean barren however. The main thing is maintenance of a sense of order. This has a good effect on the mind. Maintaining a clean environment was a high priority in both places I stayed at.

Regularity of the daily routine has an opposite effect than what we may imagine. Regulation usually implies a spartan way of life which makes it impossible to relax and enjoy. It is necessary however to take a different attitude in order to see the value of following a time schedule. There are certain menial jobs which we do every day. If we do them at particular times we first of all make sure that they get done and secondly we relieve a lot of burden from the mind. The burden comes when we worry about getting everything done and consequently postpone it. The mind is very fond of following habits. When we do the same thing every day at the same time then we become more efficient in this work and can get it done quicker.

To get into the habit of doing the same thing exactly at the same time everyday has an effect of training the body and mind. This is one of the things that helps in an Ashram. By doing simple manual works we are helped to disengage ourselves from the grips of the up and down cycles of the mind.

Getting up early is also essential. Man is part of nature and runs according to nature's time schedule. The way in which we breathe is affected by the cycles of nature and it changes at particular times. Breathing affects the body and mind and vice versa. When we get angry we can see how this is so. Also there is a major change in our breathing at sunrise. If we are awake at this time we can ensure that this change takes place as nature has planned it. The best time to get up is at least one hour before sunrise. Then it is like setting the breathing system as we would set a clock or timing switch. If this change doesn't take place as nature has planned we may tend to feel sluggish, lazy or that we haven't gotten up on the "right side of the bed".

At both places we got up at 4 a.m. or before. This may sound like we would be exhausted by 12 noon. The feeling of tiredness went after a few days. Then I experienced more energy and endurance. If you see it as a matter of setting back the whole daily schedule, then it is easier to practice.

Here is a sample schedule to follow for a householder.

4:00—Rise, bathe, clean the house etc.

5:00—Chant mantras for 15 minutes in common afterwards do normal duties

Sunrise—Agnihotra and ½ hour meditation

7:00—Breakfast

8:00—Go to work

12:00—Meditation if possible for 15 minutes-½ hour

Sunset—Agnihotra and ½ hour meditation

7:00—Dinner

After dinner some family activity or program

9:00—Meditation for 15 minutes or more

Other meditation times for those who can follow them are: 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. for 15 minutes each.

Having a group sense was really important at both places. There was also a group purpose. Similar purposes can be fostered on the family level. The purpose can be simply to care for one another and help each other out. Some families enjoy doing the same thing together. Whatever it may be it is good to do things together for this sake alone.

A very important feeling I had and others had also was that both places were difficult to leave and very nice to return to. Things are so disturbed in the world now. It is important to have such a refuge and through Ashram way of life it is quite easy to have our own home become such a place. Daily practice of Agnihotra is a big material aid to achieve peace and harmony in the household. From personal knowledge I know that such is the experience of thousands of Agnihotri families in U.S.A. and Europe.

DO YOU OR DON'T YOU WANT TO SURRENDER?

Barry

Since many of us expend much energy at times trying to live according to an image we have about how we should live (or be), it may not be too surprising therefore that we hide the truth from ourselves. If actions speak louder than words—or images—perhaps we should do well to stop and consider what our actions have been demonstrating. Then it might be interesting to see if our words and actions and images bear any relationship in truth to themselves.

If all this sounds a bit obscure this may be due to the inherent obscurity of the topic. In other words if we dwell in self illusion it probably will be illusory i.e. we won't know it, we won't be aware of it. Certainly most of us are aware of the many of our jives, games, fronts and other miscellaneous weaponry. But when it comes down to some basic questions, what are the answers? And the basic question here is "DO YOU OR DON'T YOU WANT TO SURRENDER?"

When one country surrenders in wartime to another it must subsequently adhere to conditions set up. There may be some minor negotiation but basically the “winner” tells the “loser” what to do. If things don’t work out then it’s back to the fighting, back to the war.

In the surrender to SELF which is synonymous with SURRENDER TO HIS WILL it may be the same. We continue to manifest our free will and decide everyday through our actions whether we wish to surrender or keep on fighting. At times it may appear to be a choice between two evils. You don’t want to surrender but you certainly don’t want to keep on fighting. But obviously some of us *do* want to keep on fighting.

“Well I maintain a strict discipline program and since I always am careful about what I eat it isn’t necessary for me to have an ‘arbitrary’ one fixed day a week for fasting.”

“I am able to meditate whenever I want to so if it is 12 noon and I am busy washing the dishes I just meditate while doing the dishes.”

“It seems too ‘arbitrary’ to me anyway to have fixed timings for meditation. If I am doing something important, if I am talking to a group of students then I would have to stop and the mood would be lost...”

Whatever else the hypothetical speakers of these words may be doing, they have chosen *not* to surrender. They have modified a uniform program into a tight fitting individually tailored outfit. It may look good but...

This business of surrendering isn’t easy. If it were we would have done it long ago. If we had already done it we wouldn’t have to be here still trying to do it. SURRENDERING MAY NOT BE EASY BUT WITH THE TOOLS WE HAVE BEEN OFFERED AT LEAST TODAY IT IS POSSIBLE.

WITH AGNIHOTRA AND FIVEFOLD PATH IT’S ALL THERE.

But what you give is what you get. Partial surrender—if that is possible—brings partial liberation (which is probably *not* possible). Full surrender as in “I give up, I wave the white flag, I will do what my Higher Self dictates, I will do what the Avatar commands, I will do what His revealed Messengers have suggested,” can lead to complete, everlasting freedom i.e. liberation.

TOTAL SURRENDER. Sooner or later we will probably realize there is no other choice—and never was. Maybe that is the remaining question: “Will I surrender soon or will it be too late if I wait?”

FROM VASANT'S CORRESPONDENCE

Concentrate all your energy on being full of love. Every waking moment, keep that one goal before you and all else will come unto you.

All confusion will pass, all disagreements will come to a pass, all arguments will cease to exist. Instead of an atmosphere of hostility you will continuously create an atmosphere of love and understanding. You will be guaranteed far more positive energy, heightened creativity and less and less disturbance to the mind.

Do the disciplines as strictly as possible. However, I tell you, keep this goal in mind at all times. Utilize the power of Mantra. If it helps, consciously repeat the words "Be full of love". You will come to know so much so quickly. It will open doors for you you never realized existed before.

THIS ONE COMMANDMENT "LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF" SHOULD BE FIRST AND FOREMOST IN EVERY ACTION, EVERY THOUGHT, EVERY MOVEMENT YOU MAKE. REMEMBER THIS ALWAYS. THIS IS THE KEY FOR YOU.

Do not dwell on the misgivings of others. Do not try to change anyone but you. Just be conscious of yourself. The rest will come soon.

Everytime you say "I cannot stand it" I say stand it. Your life would be total misery without Shree. Everytime you give up I have to try for you. Stand up. Today you think of me and do all your actions with me as object. If you are to kick anyone it is kicking me. I cannot take these kicks when so much is given to you.

Do you know who you are? It will be shown to you. You are a Divine instrument. Through you others will be saved. We pray for you. I am on my knees before you. You are so high a being on this planet with such a mission to perform. You carry light within you. It is our duty in this life to uplift you. Now we take the will and twist it only to follow Shree's Divine plan.

Now there is no more time to lose. You are totally forgiven again. Give love. Even if you want to, we cannot let you fall. It is only more effort on my part if you fail to try. Try for my sake. Make the effort. The pain in my legs is enough to have one in bed for one week but Shree gives me the power to stand on them and the love to bear the pain for all of you.

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