

American Meditation Society



Newsletter

Volume 9, March 2009

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Welcome to this - our first newsletter of 2009! Inside you will find information about the weekend retreat in Pennsylvania at the end of March. We also have a beautiful submission from a new meditator describing her experience attending the Thanksgiving retreat.

To find out what else is happening soon - please click the "Events" link at the top of this newsletter!

Namaste, Vidya

Weekend retreat in the Poconos

"JUST BE"

Date: March 27 - 29, 2009 (5:00 PM Friday - 2:00 PM Sunday)

Place: Villa of Our Lady Retreat House, HC#1 Box 41, Meadowside Road,
Mount Pocono, PA 18344

Cost: \$150 double room (cost per person)
\$170 single room

These prices include room and wonderful meals served family style. The retreat house is nestled in the beautiful Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania and provides a peace-filled environment for meditation and reflection. Each room has a private bath.

Join us for a weekend of meditation, relaxation, introspection and fun. This is a wonderful opportunity to drop your daily routine and dive into meditation.

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Programs will include chanting, meditation, silent walks, video tapes, discussion, & free time.

Our theme is "Just BE"

"There is nothing to find! What has been searching is the mind. The mind has been searching and, in the end, like the spinning top, the mind becomes still. We have nowhere to go. There is no search required; there is no goal to reach. One just has to be. There lies the secret. Just to be has an eternal value, for being is forever eternal. Becoming is something different altogether. Man tries to become and that is where all the trouble starts. It is simpler just to be. The goal of man is to return to the stillness."

~Gururaj

Please click [here](#) for the schedule and registration form. You may type on the form, print it and mail to Vidya Anderson at the address provided.

The love song continues on in Vermont

I attended my first meditation retreat this past Thanksgiving with the American Meditation Society held in St Louis. I came a virgin; in the meditation practices that is, with my husband Michael (also known as "Jim" to the meditators) and my closest friends in Vermont, Beth and John Beauchamp. I never would have had this opportunity if it wasn't for John & Beth. My heart will always be so grateful for what transpired from the beginning of our journey, during our retreat together to our adventure back home to Vermont.

It's as if it is imprinted in my memory. I can visualize the retreat center in its entire surroundings; the llama, the little gazebo with swings, a small pond, our Thanksgiving dinner together and the little wooded path Beth and I walked along with a labyrinth. I see different shaped brown & green leaves transformed into vibrant colors from the artwork that Pashya taught us to use as a creative outlet during the in between times of satsangs, chanting and meditating. I hear His voice....Gururaj..... laughter a hmmmmmmnnnnn...spiritual practicesthe chanting. It all makes me feel this connection to something I can't even begin to figure out but just have this knowing that whatever is going on is real and true.



There are lots of special times I experienced while at this retreat. I loved the satsangs and all the stories everyone shared about Gururaj and their relationships with him. I love the honesty that others shared in the circle letting me know that they too had the same confusion that I was going through especially with the practice of Gurushakti.

One of my favorite times was the Communion we shared together with Gururaj. It is strange to me that the my initial thoughts about this Communion time was that it was a little weird and even a bit difficult for me to wrap my head around but now I realize it wasn't my head but my heart that emerged and connected to Divinity. I will always remember John's tears of emotion when I shared at breakfast with some of the mediators my unexpected visit with Gururaj after the 12:00 midnight communion. I smile thinking about John and how lucky we are to have him as our friend. I really love John and Beth and am thankful daily for their friendships.

The other thing that was so cool was I got to be initiated with an awesome teacher, Mary. Mary and Michael really bonded immediately and I know they share similar stories. Mary let Michael and Beth join me in the initiation process and she really helped me understand each practice thoroughly by being patient and asking me to repeat the process of each practice a couple different times so that she was sure I was on solid ground.

The peace and love I felt while there still comes through me in the quiet times of the day or during my commute to and from work. I can feel the memories rise from somewhere within and it makes me smile and feel this sense, a longing....to be somewhere with you all again...hopefully somewhere in New Jersey this summer!

Thanks to you all for "the love song that never ends".

~ *Lisa Jarvis*



WHY DO WE FEAR SURRENDER? (Part 1 of 2)

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QUESTION: A long journey it seems to reach back to the starting point. And yet you know of no journey's start nor end nor flight. We are bewildered in our wingedness. Why do we fear surrender? Why do we resist the very purpose of our existence?

GURURAJ: Why do we fear surrender? Now surrender is devoid of fear. It's like a person wanting to learn to swim. At first the person is very fearful of jumping into the water. He fears drowning. But if he does not take that leap, he will not learn to swim. And he must not jump in shallow waters because there's a protection there. He has not burned his bridges, because he knows, "If I can't swim I can always stand up. The water's only two feet." But the man who wants to learn to swim must jump into eight, ten feet of water. And in that battle the moment just comes where he finds himself swimming. So what has he done? He has surrendered himself and taken the plunge, taken the leap into the unknown, and because he has to take the leap into the unknown, into the matter that balances life and death, he has that fear, "Will I drown?" He does not think, "Will I swim?" He thinks only, "Will I drown?" When he gathers the courage unto himself to say, "I will swim," then all the tensions of his body is released, and in the release of the tension he finds himself floating, and he swims.

What great joy, what an experience that he can swim.

So fear is the obstacle to surrender, and all fear is based on one basic fear, the loss of self. Man clings to himself in delusion. He thinks he is the center of the universe and everything revolves around him. We have assumed the idea that "I am the body," "I am the mind," "I do this" and "I do that." That is erroneous; the illusion that is the basis of all fear. And fear is the mother of all the other ills in life, such as feelings of insecurity, inadequacy, and anxiety. Fear is the basis of ninety-odd percent of the world's diseases. And ninety percent of the world's diseases are psychosomatic, originating in the deluded mind by having misconceptions and false ideas



Now, how does one get rid of fear? Fear has not come into you by accident. There has been a whole buildup. So many lives have been lived and so many experiences gained that might not have been conducive to oneself. So all these little fears all totaled up and added up together produces this big fear. Many people buy newspapers to read the astrological column. Why? Because they fear the day. What is my fortune for today? I know many people as soon as they get the paper that's the first page they open. I'll tell them, "Read that, fine, keep a tote of it over a period of six months and in the evening you write down 'true' or 'false'. And with the experiment that we made we found that over a period of six months only two or three times what that thing said had come true.

You see the insecurity of man, wanting to rely on knowing what is going to happen. His mind is so involved in what is still going to happen that he forgets the present and cannot live in the present. And when man cannot live in the present, then he is not living at all. If you are not here now, you are nowhere. You're living out somewhere else in unknown time. And who knows if we're going to live for another five minutes more?

If man develops the attitude of living in the present, then all fears disappear. There would be no place for fear. And this is not just done by thought, but by every action in life which will formulate that thought, that knowingness, that idea, that conception that I am here and now. Let's use some examples. When we sit down to eat, are we really eating? Are we really eating or just shoveling food down the gullet? How many people really appreciate and have their focus entirely on the food? This is a blueberry pie; enjoy the pie, the blueberries, the effort that went into making that pie, and all that is associated with that pie. The mind should be centered entirely on the pie. That is living with the pie, eating the pie, becoming the pie.

But what do people do? They sit down and eat that pie, but where is their mind? I've got a date on tonight, ahh. What dress shall I wear? What suit am I going to put on? Where am I going to take my girlfriend? What am I going to tell my wife tonight? Shall I tell her that I am working late at the office? Or is that excuse too old now? Where is the mind? And if the mind is not here in every action that is performed, then you are not there. You are not eating that pie. You're just shoving it down your gullet to fill up that little gap there. So eating does not become eating. Have you watched a dog eating? How he



enjoys that food! He slurps it! Because the dog has become one with the food he's eating. Like that, in every circumstance of life. I would sip on a glass of water, and I derive the maximum benefit from this glass of water. I'll tell you why. This is one of the basic elements that composes this universe: earth, fire, water, ether, and air. When I drink this water, my mind is involved in the entire universe. I am drinking the juice of the universe. And with it I'm putting in my system all the prana, the life force, that is contained in this element. So I benefit by it. It gives me extra energy. And not only the extra energy, but I become one with the water, I become one with a certain aspect, a certain constituent of the universe. So the way to get rid of fear is to be totally involved in everything that one is doing. Because fear is never of the present. Fear is always of the past or future. We are by-passing the present. We take the happenings of the past and project it into the future, and, as a consequence, we suffer in the present. What is there really to fear? What is there really to fear in life? What is the worst that could happen to us? What is the worst? We're all tied up in the scheme of a Divine plan, and you cannot change the Divine plan at its basis. You can change the other circumstances in life. Fear is not part of man's nature. The part of man's nature is hope, not fear. And when we realize that in every adversity there is an opportunity, then that fear goes. We do not fear anymore. We think of the opportunity.

So my girlfriend jilts me. Okay. I feel a bit hurt, but, within that, there must be some opportunity. Let me discover that opportunity instead of mulling over who has jilted me. I would say, "This has happened. There's some purpose to it." I always say, "If my milk turns sour, I turn it into yogurt." Because everything in life, never mind how fearful it might seem, can be turned into hopefulness. That is how a person becomes fearless. During the Hindu-Moslem riots in India, when India was partitioned, millions of people died. You know what Gandhi used to do while all this killing was going on? He used to walk right into the center of the riot, and everyone dropped their weapons. So when we develop this fearlessness, we emanate a certain power, a certain force, that conquers everything. Because to be fearless is to have faith in oneself. To have faith in oneself means to have faith in Divinity, for man is Divine.

So when this fearlessness comes, there is no question of surrender. Surrender is automatic. And when surrender becomes spontaneous and automatic, then I do not think of myself. And when I do not think of myself, then "Thy will be done" also becomes automatic. You see how simple it is.

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~ Gururaj Ananda Yogi

This is the first part in a two-part series, "Why do we fear surrender?", by Gururaj Ananda Yogi. The second section of this satsang will be featured in next month's newsletter.