

SATSANG

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G H A N A



NEW ERA 65

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER, 2008

Perform Agnihotra



Heal The Atmosphere

NEW ERA 65

SEPTEMBER & OCTOBER, 2008

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*Cover: Some of the 90 children
at the Day Care center run by Judy Menyah*

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Self-development

Vasant

All those sensual pleasures are totally automated in the average person. Any opportunity to seek pleasure is quickly grasped by the mind and automatically the intellect tries to find ways how that enjoyable situation can be extended.

If your goal in life is God intoxication, liberation, 'Not my will but Thy will be done', then you have to make special effort to get out of the grooves of mental behavior and set into motion another automated behavior pattern. Instead of sense enjoyment, you have to think how you become a better instrument to execute HIS will. You have to make a serious conscious effort to achieve this. This is a very special process in your life. When you succeed in doing this you will come to know what real joy in life is. Simultaneously you will be accumulating great good Karma without attachment to the fruit and the Law of GRACE operates.

First you have to make your vessel empty before Sadguru can pour HIS Grace in it. This means all your selfishness has to go. For this to happen, begin practice of AGNIHOTRA and DAAN, the two material aids of happy life. Concentrate your mind on the Sadguru. Take Mantra as a help.

Mantra should be steadily repeated with attention on the energetic meaning. Thus the energy field is maintained by repetition.

Yajnya fire atmosphere takes you from gross to more subtle levels of consciousness. It is a place where the Supreme Power, Almighty Power bends towards us, to bless us. Get into the habit of performing Karma for self purification and automatically you will be lifted higher into HIS Kingdom of GRACE.

You may feel lonely or deserted. However, every single thought of yours is known to the Divine. If your prayer is earnest and if you are trying to be more and more pure, if your aim is to be most fitting instrument to spread HIS Grace towards other human beings, it shall be done and your load of past Karma is reduced.

Practice the Fivefold Path of Yajnya, Daan, Tapa, Karma, and Swadhyaya. You will be lifted from the valley of death and illusion into the Kingdom of Heaven which is within us.

From The Orion Transmissions

received by Parvati Rosen-Bizberg

April 23, 2008

On self-sufficiency and change

BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT.
BECOME SELF-AWARE.
BECOME THE CHANGE YOU SEEK IN YOUR
ENVIRONMENT.

STAND FOR TRUTH.

DO NOT BECOME WEAKENED OR DE-
TERRED BY THE OUTSIDE SITUATION.

EAT ORGANIC.
GARDEN ORGANIC.
GROW YOUR OWN FOODS.

ESTABLISH YOUR OWN SECURITY. DO NOT
RELY ON OUTSIDE SOURCES FOR YOUR
SAFETY. YOU WILL NEED TO PROTECT
YOUR HOMES, BUT DIVINE WILL PROVIDE
YOUR PROTECTION. DO NOT USE GUNS OR
ARMS.

BE THE PEACE WHICH YOU SEEK.

REMEMBER THE OLD WAYS, LEARN FROM
THEM.

MOVE FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE WITH
LIGHT, TOWARD LIGHT.

For more information, please contact:
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Trip to Accra, Ghana

*Jannette and Henry Gregory
Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.*

May 15 to June 2, 2008

On May 15th, Jannette and I went to Accra, Ghana in West Africa for a dual purpose trip. I had been commissioned by an agency that I work with to train young psychologists in Accra, and as representatives of the Baltimore Homa Community we were to connect with Agnihotra practitioners in Ghana and identify a site for a Homa farm.

Our host for the trip was Nii Ada Boafu, a longtime Agnihotri and special assistant to the President of Ghana. Nii coordinated our efforts and provided all transportation. He arranged for us to stay at the home of Judy Menyah, an Agnihotri who lives in an area of Accra called Nima with her extended family.



Judy Menyah's extended family

Judy provided us with a place to stay and all the delicious meals one could eat. Judy is the director of a day care center that accommodates about ninety children in classrooms situated right beside that fire room where she maintains daily Agnihotra and Om Tryambakam fires.

Jannette and I led a three-day retreat and two days of follow-up training for the staff of Progressive Life Center Ghana. While the training is for certification in a clinical intervention model called NTU Psychotherapy that I helped develop over the last twenty years at PLC, these trainings, as are all the trainings that we provide, are grounded in the teachings of the Fivefold Path that we have practiced for over thirty years. So it is with this understanding that we accept the commission to provide professional training in Ghana while looking for a Homa farm site as Shree's Grace.

While in Ghana we met twice with Ghana's "Fire Family", a group of Agnihotris who had been introduced to the Agnihotra by Nii.

They meet on Saturdays for collective study, singing and Agnihotra. We were most delighted to bring greetings from the Baltimore Homa Community, to share our mission and participate in Agnihotra with them. On one occasion after we shared some information,

"Fire Family" members began to share their anecdotal experiences with the fire. One man explained that his fifteen-year-old son was born with one testicle and regularly experienced stomach pains. After they began to perform Agnihotra regularly, the young man's testicle dropped and all stomach pain left. Another man commented that he had sprayed Agnihotra ash and water on a dying banana tree and it was revived. Next to Agnihotra itself, however, the treat of the gathering was hearing angelic voices of the young people as the group sang songs.



We looked at about five or six plots of land in our search for the Homa site. It seemed that everyone we met wanted to help with this project, once we shared our mission. It probably helped that news of the escalating

food prices was all over the news and our discussing the need for sustainable farming was well-received. Over half the people in the world now live in cities - some cities with as many as twenty million people. These cities are overcrowded, unsanitary and unresourced. The availability of food and water is already a critical issue in many places.



Jannette looking at land with Nii Ada Buafu

We looked at forest sites quite distant from Accra and savanna sites that were closer. Each site had some advantages and but none seemed just right. Any site that we choose will require that we build housing, as there is no such thing as vacant, usable housing in Ghana. Nii and Judy are continuing the search for the property and I am certain that we can find a site as more and more people are offering their assistance.

Our attention has now turned to developing businesses that can sustain the Homa farm as it develops and transitions into a self-sustaining entity. We have been in regular contact with our Ghana family since our return to the U.S., as we are collectively looking at trade possibilities.

Ten Reasons Why GM Won't Feed the World

by Mark Anslow

Genetic modification can't deliver a safe, secure future food supply. Here's why...

Date:01/03/2008

1. Failure to deliver

Despite the hype, genetic modification consistently fails to live up to industry claims. Only two GM traits have ever made it to market: herbicide resistance and BT toxin expression (see below). Other promises of genetic modification have failed to materialize. The much vaunted GM 'golden rice' - hailed as a cure to vitamin A deficiency - has never made it out of the laboratory, partly because in order to meet recommended levels of vitamin A intake, consumers would need to eat 12 bowls of the rice every day.¹ In 2004, the Kenyan government admitted that Monsanto's GM sweet potatoes were no more resistant to feathery mottle virus than ordinary strains, and in fact produced lower yields.² And in January 2008, news that scientists had modified a carrot to cure osteoporosis by providing calcium had to be weighed against the fact that you would need to eat 1.6 kilograms of these vegetables each day to meet your recommended calcium intake.³

2. Costing the Earth

GM crops are costing farmers and governments more money than they are making. In 2003, a report by the Soil Association esti-

mated the cost to the US economy of GM crops at around \$12 billion (£6 billion) since 1999, on account of inflated farm subsidies, loss of export orders and various seed recalls.⁴ A study in Iowa found that GM soybeans required all the same costs as conventional farming but, because they produced lower yields (see below), the farmers ended up making no profit at all.⁵ In India, an independent study found that Bt cotton crops were costing farmers 10 per cent more than non-Bt variants and bringing in 40 per cent lower profits.⁶ Between 2001 and 2005, more than 32,000 Indian farmers committed suicide, most as a result of mounting debts caused by inadequate crops.⁷

3. Contamination and gene escape

No matter how hard you try, you can never be sure that what you are eating is GM-free. In a recent article, the New Scientist admitted that contamination and cross-fertilization between GM and non-GM crops 'has happened on many occasions already'.⁸ In late 2007, US company Scotts Miracle-Gro was fined \$500,000 by the US Department of Agriculture when genetic material from a new golf-course grass Scotts had been testing was found in native grasses as far as 13 miles away from the test sites, apparently released when freshly cut grass was caught and blown by the wind.⁹ In 2006, an analysis of 40 Spanish conventional and organic farms found that eight were contaminated with GM

corn varieties, including one farmer whose crop contained 12.6 per cent GM plants.

4. Reliance on pesticides

Far from reducing dependency on pesticides and fertilizers, GM crops frequently increase farmers' reliance on these products. Herbicide-resistant crops can be sprayed indiscriminately with weedkillers such as Monsanto's 'Roundup' because they are engineered to withstand the effect of the chemical. This means that significantly higher levels of herbicide are found in the final food product, however, and often a second herbicide is used in the late stages of the crop to promote 'desiccation' or drying, meaning these crops receive a double dose of harmful chemicals.¹⁰ BT maize, engineered to produce an insecticidal toxin, has never eliminated the use of pesticides,¹¹ and because the BT gene cannot be 'switched off' the crops continue to produce the toxin right up until harvest, reaching the consumer at its highest possible concentrations.¹²

5. 'Frankenfoods'

Despite the best efforts of the biotech industry, consumers remain staunchly opposed to GM food. In 2007, the vast majority of 11,700 responses to the Government's consultation on whether contamination of organic food with traces of GM crops should be allowed were strongly negative. The Government's own 'GM Nation' debate in 2003 discovered

that half of its participants 'never want to see GM crops grown in the United Kingdom under any circumstances', and 96 per cent thought that society knew too little about the health impacts of genetic modification. In India, farmers' experience of BT cotton has been so disastrous that the Maharashtra government now advises that farmers grow soybeans instead. And in Australia, over 250 food companies lodged appeals with the state governments of New South Wales and Victoria over the lifting of bans against growing GM canola crops.¹³

6. Breeding resistance

Nature is smart, and there are already reports of species resistant to GM crops emerging. This is seen in the emergence of new 'superweeds' on farms in North America - plants that have evolved the ability to withstand the industry's chemicals. A report by then UK conservation body English Nature (now Natural England), in 2002, revealed that oilseed rape plants that had developed resistance to three or more herbicides were 'not uncommon' in Canada.¹⁴ The superweeds had been created through random crosses between neighbouring GM crops. In order to tackle these superweeds, Canadian farmers were forced to resort to even stronger, more toxic herbicides.¹⁵ Similarly, pests (notably the diamondback moth) have been quick to develop resistance to BT toxin, and in 2007 swarms of mealy bugs

began attacking supposedly pest-resistant Indian cotton.

7. Creating problems for solutions

Many of the so-called 'problems' for which the biotechnology industry develops 'solutions' seem to be notions of PR rather than science. Herbicide-resistance was sold under the claim that because crops could be doused in chemicals, there would be much less need to weed mechanically or plough the soil, keeping more carbon and nitrates under the surface. But a new long-term study by the US Agricultural Research Service has shown that organic farming, even with ploughing, stores more carbon than the GM crops save.¹⁶ BT cotton was claimed to increase resistance to pests, but farmers in East Africa discovered that by planting a local weed amid their corn crop, they could lure pests to lay their eggs on the weed and not the crop.¹⁷

8. Health risks

The results of tests on animals exposed to GM crops give serious cause for concern over their safety. In 1998, Scottish scientists found damage to every single internal organ in rats fed blight resistant GM potatoes. In a 2006 experiment, female rats fed on herbicide-resistant soybeans gave birth to severely stunted pups, of which half died within three weeks. The survivors were sterile. In the same year, Indian news agencies reported that thousands of sheep allowed to graze on

BT cotton crop residues had died suddenly. Further cases of livestock deaths followed in 2007. There have also been reports of allergy-like symptoms among Indian labourers in BT cotton fields. In 2002, the only trial ever to involve human beings appeared to show that altered genetic material from GM soybeans not only survives in the human gut, but may even pass its genetic material to bacteria within the digestive system.¹⁸

9. Left hungry

GM crops have always come with promises of increased yields for farmers, but this has rarely been the case. A three-year study of 87 villages in India found that non-BT cotton consistently produced 30 per cent higher yields than the (more expensive) GM alternative.¹⁹ It is now widely accepted that GM soybeans produce consistently lower yields than conventional varieties. In 1992, Monsanto's own trials showed that the company's Roundup Ready soybeans yield 11.5 per cent less on harvest. Later Monsanto studies went on to reveal that some trials of GM canola crops in Australia actually produced yields 16 per cent below the non-GM national average.²⁰

10. Wedded to fertilizers and fossil fuels

No genetically modified crop has yet eliminated the need for chemical fertilizers in order to achieve expected yields. Although the industry has made much of the possibil-

ity of splicing nitrogen-fixing genes into commercial food crops in order to boost yields, there has so far been little success. This means that GM crops are just as dependent on fossil fuels to make fertilizers as conventional agriculture. In addition to this, GM traits are often specifically designed to fit with large-scale industrial agriculture. Herbicide resistance is of no real benefit unless your farm is too vast to weed mechanically, and it presumes that the farmers already farm in a way that involves the chemical spraying of their crops. Similarly, BT toxin expression is designed to counteract the problem of pest control in vast monocultures, which encourage infestations. In a world that will soon have to change its view of farming - facing as it does the twin challenges of climate change and peak oil - GM crops will soon come to look like a relic of bygone practices.

Mark Anslow is the Ecologist's senior reporter

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Making the Fire the Center of Your Life

*Maria Broom
Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.*

I was in the health food store and a gentleman came up to me and said, "I would like to show you something. May I come to your home?" His name was Kibwe Bey and he did come one evening, sat down on the living room floor and proceeded to make a smoky little fire. I fell in love with the fragrance immediately and so began my Homa-centered life. This was 32 years ago in 1976.

I learned all about sunrise and sunset Agnihotra and managed to do it quite often during that first year or so. But I had also read that doing a small Homa fire at the beginning of meetings and gatherings was an excellent way of getting everybody to relax and to focus. So I decided to begin every adult and children's dance class in my studio, here in Baltimore, Maryland, with Vyahruti Homa.

In the summer of 1979, when I went away to study the dance arts of Bali, Japan, Indonesia and India at UCLA, I did not take the fire with me. What a year that was! What a lesson! Upon returning in 1980, I made the commitment in my mind and in my heart...to serve the fire.

It was written in one of the early early Satsangs, that if we center our daily life around the timings of Agnihotra and the various Homa fires, we would find that our

day flows more smoothly, time management becomes easier and being efficient takes less effort. It's true, true, true.

And if you cannot make all of the timings, I have found that if you begin whatever you do with a small fire, things seem to flow with ease.

So we fast-forward to 2008 and I look back and realize that I've taught thousands and thousands of dance classes, storytelling classes, yoga classes, workshops and staff retreats in many studios, schools, camps, colleges, universities and public office spaces. And they all began with Homa fire. And all the people, young and old, heard and often learned the Sanskrit words of the Vyahruti mantra.

Hundreds of performances with "Miss Maria the Story Dancer" in schools, at festivals, in museums, libraries, prisons, at church and government events, all began with Vyahruti Homa and the fire.

It is all Grace. Grace poured on top of individual effort. It is such a blessing to constantly do the work you love in Homa atmosphere. What else but Grace would make the way clear to teach and perform for more than 25 years, lighting the fire, in public and private schools where no open fires are ever

allowed? What else but Grace would allow Sanskrit mantras to be chanted and taught in public schools with rarely any challenge from the administration or from parents?

And now as I approach a birthday that marks the end of six decades, I find myself beholding three tremendous gifts.



The first is a CD that has been created called, "Songs and Stories with Miss Maria". It's interactive, child-friendly and somehow appeals to teens and adults. There are three marvelous tales like, "Why the Sky is Far Away" and "Amma and Her Secret Dances"

plus call and response singing with drumming that makes you want to dance as you listen. And there are two Sanskrit mantras taken from the 5:00 A.M. mantras, presented in a way that children find easy to learn and enjoy chanting.

The second gift is a DVD called "Dancing at Home: with Maria Broom". It's a 45-minute dance class, complete with Homa fire and a guided meditation, followed by easy stretching and gentle dance movements. It ends with an encouragement for everybody to dance freestyle, from the heart, sending love and healing energy around the world to those who aren't able to dance.

The third Gracious gift has been the invitation to come teach dance and yoga classes on the grounds of the resonance point here in Baltimore, a few yards around the corner from my home. In what was the large lovely living room in the house of the Couto family, a unique space for classes and gatherings has been created... Karme' Studio. A few weeks of World Dancing and Quiet Yoga classes this summer attracted more than thirty-five people who came and danced and did yoga, in a place where there's daily Agnihotra and four hours of Homa, plus monthly 24 hour New Moon and Full Moon Yajnyas. The comments of the people who came, and the numbers of those who plan to come this fall,

Agnihotra in Ottawa

*Richard Powers
Madison, Virginia, U.S.A.*

make me even more grateful to be able teach in this special, very precious place.

So, I end by strongly cheering you on, to do what you do while making the effort to publicly include the fire whenever and wherever you can. You plant seeds every time you do. You catch the attention of those who have been looking for the gift of Homa every time you do. You create an atmosphere conducive to learning, listening and teaching. My experience has taught me to not always ask permission to do the fire. Sometimes, as soon as people hear the word 'fire', the automatic response is NO...not in here. But if you just sit and do it, inviting the people to rest and breathe with you, then the healing energy and love is released before anyone can object. Then continue with your class, meeting, lecture, program or performance and answer any questions as they come up. It's always good to bring handout information.

You take one step and Grace makes a way for the next ten. Blessings!

Ana Karyn Garcia of the Bioenergetics Institute in Ottawa, Canada invited me to come and talk about Homa Therapy farming and to establish a Resonance Point or two.

Several times I witnessed that my trip was totally in the hands of Shree. Halfway to the airport, we stopped for gas. At the pump I realized I had forgotten the key to the gas cap on my truck. After vainly attempting for ten minutes to pick the lock, I went inside and asked the clerk and a couple of customers if anyone knew how to pick a gas cap lock. The lady clerk told me to push in on the cap really hard and turn. Lo and behold, it worked and we were able to continue our drive to Dulles International, outside Washington, D.C.



l-r: Raham, Luz, Richard, Ana Karyn and Sahaj

After my son Matthew dropped me off at the airport I proceeded to check in. Fortunately, I had purchased my ticket when the allowable luggage limit was two checked bags, so I was able to get all the Agnihotra supplies and books through to Ottawa. The limit now is one bag, so for future trips I will have to ship supplies ahead.

I met with Ana Karyn Friday afternoon and had a very enjoyable dinner prepared by her resident student Raham, a recent graduate of video studies, focusing on documentaries. I was to stay the weekend at Samadhi Studio, an Ayurvedic and health studio run by Sahaj, another of Ana Karyn's students.

Saturday morning Ana Karyn, Sahaj, Raham, Dianna and I went to a small farm owned by Lyle Tweedy, who had quit his computer programming job recently to get back to nature.



Lyle Tweedy

We decided on the best spot for the central pyramid and performed the Resonance Point

activation ceremony in the shade of a large tree. People seemed to come by for no reason, so by the time we had finished and were about to have a picnic lunch, there were six additional people.

The weather in Ottawa had been rainy and cool until the day I arrived; then it turned hot and sunny. It went back to cool and overcast after I left. How fortunate to have had good weather for our outdoor activities.

We returned to Samadhi Studio in time for the 6:30 P.M. talk. About thirty people showed up, many of them Ana Karyn's students. I presented a Power Point presentation, modified from the program Bruce Johnson produced for India. (Nice work, Bruce). The talk went well, with time to teach those who wanted to learn how to perform Agnihotra. We then sat in a circle outside and had a great Agnihotra with about fifteen fires.



Performing Purusha Sukta



Picnic under an oak tree at Lyle's farm.

Sunday had no set schedule, so Sahaj, Dianna and I drove into the country to see the sights. Sahaj drove us to her friend Jesse's property where he gives tree-climbing experiences. I was amazed at Jesse's attunement to the trees and rocks on this very steep, boulder-strewn mountainside with huge pine trees. He communicates with them and has built a treehouse in one, which he is now modifying for handicapped access. He works with groups, but loves to take one person at a time up a tree, to reconnect them with nature. Children come with all sorts of electronic gadgets, I-Pods, Blackberrys and what-not, and to start, he has them empty their pockets and hug a tree. I could really feel the energies of these 300 year old trees and, for the first time, appreciate the intelligence present in them.

I performed Vyahruti Homa there, and then Jesse took us to a farm where he was preparing for the arrival of six Alpaca animals he was going to incorporate into his program.

We arrived at Eco Echo, an environmental campus for sustainable land management and stewardship programs. The farm was just recently established and is being managed by Eric Corneau. His business partner, Christopher Minnes, the owner of the land, lives in Hawaii, and was visiting. Chris's father had bought the property and had blasted a quarry there for its minerals. The idea came to turn the quarry site into an acoustic music and dance performance

amphitheater. I performed Vyahruti Homa at both the house and the quarry, with some Om Tryambakam Homa at the latter. Everyone was quite enthusiastic about these Homas.

Shree obviously had a plan, even if we didn't.

Monday's return flight was at 7 P.M., so I had time to meet with Luz, who had moved from Mexico to Ottawa eight years ago and is also a student of Ana Karyn's. Luz had just come back from a seminar in Montreal where the interest in Agnihotra is great, and she is pursuing those leads. Luz, Sahaj and I went to visit with Ana Karyn at 2 P.M., and at 3 P.M. Ana Karyn decided to install a Resonance Point in her backyard, with the outer pyramids placed in some of her neighbors' yards. I dug the hole for the Resonance pyramid and performed the ceremony with plenty of time to leave for the airport.

On the one-hour flight to Ottawa, the pain in my ears had been terrible. Ana Karyn suggested putting ghee in my ears before the return trip; I did so, and had no problems at all flying home.

My heartfelt thanks to Ana Karyn and her students for their warm hospitality and love.

I had asked Shree to guide me prior to the trip, and as He is ever present, I know He will always guide our steps on this remarkable journey. Om Shree.

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FIVEFOLD PATH for Happy Living

1. Perform **AGNIHOTRA** for purification of the atmosphere which leads to automatic purification of mind.

2. Practice **DAAN** (sharing of assets in a spirit of humility to reduce attachment to worldly possessions).

3. Practice **TAPA** (becoming better managers of our energy expenditure by training the body and mind to react to all circumstances in life with Total Love).

4. Perform **KARMA** (every action for self purification only and thus no expectations which bind us to the material world).

5. Practice **SWADHYAYA** (Self-study) for liberation. Who am I? Why am I here? My work on this planet is to learn to react with total LOVE with each opportunity given to me.

This is the Fivefold Path for happy living on the planet. By practicing the Fivefold Path you become better members of your society, group, religion, community, etc.