

SATSANG

VOL. 38
NO. 4



Creating Homa Farm Communities

NEW ERA 67

NOVEMBER & DECEMBER, 2010

Perform Agnihotra

Heal The Atmosphere

NEW ERA 67

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VOL. 38 NO. 4

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Publisher:

Fivefold Path Inc.

Parama Dham

(House of Almighty Father)

278 N. White Oak Dr., Madison, VA 22727 USA

Published seven times yearly.

Please direct all *Satsang* correspondence to the Editor.

Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of *Satsang*.

*Cover: Scenes from Bhrugu Aranya Homa Farm
Community*

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ISSN 0735-1321

Satsang is available on the Internet at:

<http://www.agnihotra.org/satsang.htm>

Christmas Message 2010

***December 25, 2010 Shree's Message on
Christmas, as received in meditation by
Parvati Rosen-Bizberg***

Let us all try to walk the Path of Grace, hand
in hand.

And honour the great words
"Love thy neighbor as thyself."

On this very saintly day, let it just be a re-
minder to develop the attribute of kindness,
the strength of understanding with the mag-
nitude of Divine Love.

In this world, many will rise up in opposition
to the Light.
But Light will prevail.
Do not become discouraged.
Do not be deterred.

All of you who walk in Light have been
blessed to carry this Light to others.
Don't hold back.
This is the time We have prepared you all for.

There is no East, no West.
There is no separation.
This is ONE family in the name of Parama
Sadguru Shree Gajanan Maharaj.
Remember that.

Then, move out and carry His words to all
people high and low, rich or poor.
For, in the end, a great Light will shine from
the heavens and you will recognize it.
And SOUND will resonate throughout the
planet.

And these are the times foretold in all ancient
scripture-- in Bible, in Koran, in Vedas, in
ancient Hopi prophecy, in ancient cultures'
knowledge carried from man to man.
These times are upon us now.

It is not time for fear.
You must all be fearless.
It is your duty.
It is your greatest blessing.

Walk in Light.
Always in His Service.

With love and blessings to all.

OM TAT SAT.

Creating Homa Farm Communities

*Parvati Rosen-Bizberg
Bhrugu Aranya Homa Farm
Wysoka, Poland*

In November 2010, my husband Jarek and I gave our first workshop on ‘Creating Homa Farm Communities’ at the Resonance Point, the center for Baltimore Homa Community (BHC) in Baltimore, Maryland. What follows is the gist of what we shared in the workshop. In the workshop everyone had an opportunity to envision a Homa Farm community and share those visions with each other. We also focused on how to find a farm, which was of particular interest to the people there. It was fun and dynamic. We look forward to offering this workshop in various countries.

We are grateful to BHC for hosting us and giving us the opportunity to come and share our experiences. Many thanks to Henry and Jannette Gregory for letting us stay with them, and to the whole BHC community for their heartfelt welcome home!

One of the great benefits of community life-- and there are many-- is that it is a training ground for all our nuances of character to be smoothed out, all our abilities to shine. It is like creating or re-creating the functional family.

Many of us come from what are now known as ‘dysfunctional homes’, environments which were perhaps not as conducive for healthy self-esteem as we would have hoped. There is a saying that ‘it is never too late for a happy childhood.’ So, in a sense, community is like the second chance to evolve in a safe environment amongst people of like mind and heart. Because of the air of acceptance

which ideally grows in community life, people can learn to trust each other and, with encouragement and support, learn to believe in themselves.

In Bhrugu Aranya, located in Jordanow, Poland, we are a community of varying nationalities and a wide

range of ages. The mix of elders and young people, plus growing children, is exciting, inspiring and uplifting. There is always someone to talk to; there is always support when it is needed. These are the emotional reasons for coming together in community.

Financially, it is simpler, because to try and make it on one’s own is far more difficult and, especially for young people and older people, it is a real challenge. In community,



Parvati Rosen-Bizberg

many things are shared, from our deep water well which serves all the homes, to bees which provide us all with excellent Homa honey, cows for dung and milk, and a community garden which feeds us all. It makes sense, as our economic reality becomes stretched to the limit, to gather together and create alternative income sources, alternative energy, and alternative living conditions which support us in all stages.

As a Homa community farm, we share in the responsibilities and in the fruits of our labour. We all benefit from the four hours of Yajnya being done in the Yajnya Shala, twenty-four hours on full and new moon, and regular Agnihotra at sunrise and sunset in both the Yajnya Shala and Fire Temple. We share in making the ghee, collecting the dung, preparing garden beds, mending fences, building bee houses, cow maintenance, and so on. It is far more possible to create Arks of Fire in community. Many hands are needed on a Homa Organic Farm to make it sustainable, a real resource for future. Something tells me, the future is NOW!

One thing which comes to me, as we have been developing Bhругu Aranya Homa Farm community for fifteen years, is that in order for a community to be all it can be, each individual has to go through his or her own inner process of becoming all that he or she

can be. This is one thing which I find so exhilarating, watching as we all change before our very eyes--helping the younger ones believe in who they are and encouraging them to develop their gifts, watching as they evolve into healers in their own right, or apply their innate creative energy to make an income for themselves. Seeing the formerly shy ones branch out and teach others, having such compassion that could only be borne of experience balanced with Grace.

Often, without the support, people are not able to fulfill their purpose in life. In a healthy Homa community, they can. And the by-product of all the coaching and encouraging is that we elders develop patience and tolerance, the art of compassion and the eye for talent and for helping people discover their gifts. In sharing the light, ours burns brighter too.

At Bhругu Aranya, we began with 3 ½ hectares of land (about 8 ¾ acres), an old run-down log house in need of repair, a dilapidated barn which needed to come down and an apple and plum orchard which hadn't been pruned in many years. We began with two of us, Jarek and Parvati. My son Jacob arrived in his teenage years to live at the farm. The situation seemed rather bleak, as we were economically challenged! We persevered. Many times I wondered if it was worth

it, staying in a country where I did not yet speak the language or understand the culture. But it was where I was guided to be, so be it!

Slowly our log home was revamped, a second floor office/living room created basically out of a hay loft, electricity and running water also added! The rest is history. The community now consists of five family homes including Rory and Asia's new ecological straw-bale house, a log guest cabin and many out buildings, a healing temple, Yajnya Shala, Deva Shoppe, several guest caravans and a new cow barn, not to mention the kids' tree house and the bee homes! When we look around, we are also amazed by how the place evolved. I think it is because we had and have a higher purpose than just having a nice place to live.

It may be beneficial to create an environmental/educational foundation (an NGO), such as we have started here in Poland. Our Homa Therapy Foundation was created with the goal of teaching Agnihotra, Homa Organic

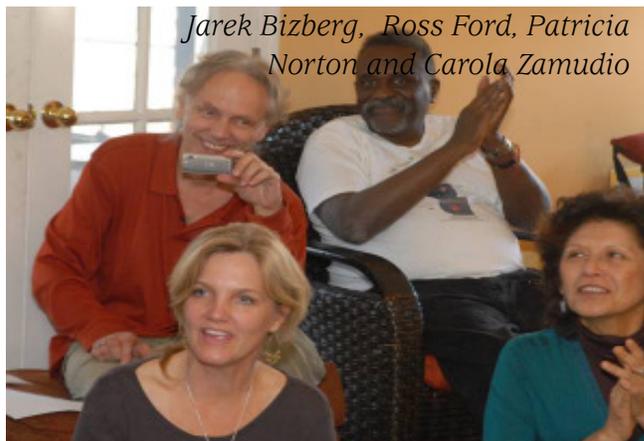
Farming and Homa Therapy. Being a part of the Foundation also galvanizes the community and helps to keep our focus on the higher purpose.

PURPOSE. This is essential. To ride the storms, to go through the difficult times, to rise above adversity, one needs a higher purpose. Ours was and is to create a Homa

farm, an oasis, where people can come and experience healing benefits of the Fires, where we can create harmony in Nature and send that energy out to the world. Not a small feat to accomplish! We are always in a state of change, of movement. We are always adjusting to stay on course. It is the Nature. We learn

to flow with the tide and stand firm when heavy winds blow.

So, it is essential too, that prospective members of the community are screened by those already living together, to see if they are a fit. Not everyone is meant to live in your community. It is almost like finding the members of your tribe, your spiritual family. And even then, not everyone can live together, and it's



Jarek Bizberg, Ross Ford, Patricia Norton and Carola Zamudio

okay, too. When we grew, slowly but surely, it seemed like a real organic process. One day, one guy came to visit for a week and ended up never leaving! Rory had arrived from U.K., and the moment we met him, everyone knew he belonged here! Sometimes it is as clear as a bell. Other times, it is trial and error. Certainly, we have learned a lot from many errors!

When just beginning a community, it is recommended to write a kind of 'mission statement' or a 'vision' of what you see as a community. We did this at various points in our growth. It was interesting, as one time we all sat together and independently wrote our vision for the community for, say, five years from that time. When we shared our visions of the place, there was so much similarity that we were surprised. Even our details were so similar. It felt so harmonious.

Having roles defined also helps a lot. And roles do shift. When we first began, two of us were doing the cow care and garden work. Those two began a business and their physical involvement on the farm shifted. The next couple began doing what the previous couple had done. I'm sure, as we grow, those jobs

will be again passed on to the next people. It is good to define roles, such as the beekeepers, the garden organizers, the cow maintenance crew, the PR people, etc. We developed committees, such as building committee, bees, garden, hospitality, Homa Therapy outreach, etc.



Becoming disciplined to meet regularly and discuss projects is always a challenge, as in a community where everyone also has his or her own independent life and family, there are always other responsibilities! We are a work in progress. There is definitely something to be said for having regular meetings, though it is quite often a real effort!

Women's meetings began slowly, with sometimes only two of us in attendance. The meetings, now attended by all the women in the community, grew into pleasant times when we women gather to send Light to those in need, for healing, singing, chanting, sometimes dancing and drawing Mandalas! We tend to look forward to the time together to just enjoy each other's company and take time to honour the feminine energy.

CHILD-RAISING in community can some-

times be a challenge, but more often than not, a real blessing. There is no shortage of babysitters eager to spend time with what I would say we all consider to be our greatest and most precious resource! Getting the support when needed is essential for the parents and giving the support as elders brings us closer, helping complete the circle. We learn from each other. We care and share, which is such a blessing.

Some of us are healers, some therapists, artists, writers, tortilla makers, jewelers, and teachers. Having a variety of skills is a great ideal to aim for. Those of us in the community with the knowledge of healing herbs and therapies are busy tending to the others when they need it. The medical know-how is a great benefit, especially with rising costs of medical bills and the ineffectiveness of a totally allopathic approach. Great to have alternative healing techniques at your fingertips. If, in your new community, you do not have these resources, it would be a good idea



to find a good alternative resource, doctor or practitioner willing to come out to your farm if needed.

When deciding to start a Homa farm community, the first thing is not finding the property; it is finding the people who want to start it

together. Even if it is only two in the beginning, those two should have some solid level of commitment and a shared vision to start with. If they are in sync and have a higher purpose, the likelihood of them manifesting their dream is high. Without the

clear vision and commitment, it can be difficult. So as they say, good if both are on the 'same page.' If it is a group, the same thing applies--shared vision, goals for the place and common commitment to manifesting the concept into reality.

A general compatibility is also essential. Even if two people are on the same spiritual path, if they are not compatible, probably best not



Darlene Haggerty and Parvati

to try to create a Homa farm community together. Community living, while well-balanced and supportive, can also breed discontent if there is not some commonality. If you don't get along before you form a community, you are not likely to get along, period! There are trials and tribulations to forming a community, in farm life, even in issues with the weather. I'd say, "Trust the one your with." Trust is essential, because if you are fully committed to creating a community together, you are going to need it.

**COMMUNICATION! COMMUNICATION!
COMMUNICATION!**

An essential element of community (surprise!) is Communication. Don't let feelings not be expressed. Be clear, be concise and speak. Don't hide your feelings or they will

build resentments. When feelings get stuffed down, they gather together and create walls of resentment which are worn down with time. Communication is essential. When you have common goals, commitment to the cause and trust, you can communicate without fear of reprisal. You can reach solutions and agreements, and grow heaps in the process.

Some people need encouragement to speak up and express themselves. For others of us, it is simple and natural. In community, the masks we all wear are removed. When you begin to live with each other, the truth comes out, the insecurities rise to the surface sometimes and it is a real opportunity for developing compassion. Learning to overcome our challenges and rejoice in our differences as well as our similarities is quite freeing.

Some of us are the ones whom people meet more, the ones in the front line, teaching the people, traveling, etc. Yet, the ones in the background are equally important. In propagating Homa Therapy, the ones who are drying and packing the cow dung at home and printing the brochures, compiling the data base of Agnihotris and tending the garden are also vital in the running of the community. They also often are the ones teaching quietly the greatest teaching of humility.

Although in our community there are elders, who tend to be in the forefront, the other, younger community members are learning to take on more responsibility and becoming quite involved. Everyone is growing. We have no real leaders here, though some roles appear more as leader types. The whole works well when all of the parts are in sync.

Our decision-making process is group-oriented. Each person in the community has input in how things operate, from where to build the new bee house to the architectural plan for the Centre of Light building. Decisions are made in meetings with all of us present. Unless it is a particular committee decision, the whole community is generally consulted.

At the end of winter/early Spring when the new garden is planned, all of us are involved. We go out to the garden, invite the Devas to join us and, with map in hand, plan the garden beds.

Sometimes, the division of labor is difficult to balance; as some of us are more busy with outside businesses or projects, others of us are less physically able to do all the farm chores. Somehow it balances out, in the different duties and involvement required. It is always a work in progress. When things feel unbalanced, we meet and

address it. We seek solutions and try to come up with agreements which suit the whole.

Laughter is essential! Spiritual development is essential, but it need be undertaken with JOY. There is sometimes the assumption on the spiritual path that it is serious work, requiring intense tapas and serious countenance. What is really required is a sense of humour! The spiritual path is sometimes funny! The need for laughter is strong, as it is truly a Divine therapy!

Community is like a marriage. If you are well-suited for each other and you truly care for the other person, you are ahead of the game! But to maintain a relationship takes conscious and consistent effort. No matter how wonderful it is in the beginning, there are always rough spots which one encounters.



Henry and Jannette Gregory

Just as in any relationship, a community reflects the efforts that are made to keep the connection alive.

Regular meetings, group decision-making processes, during which all community members are given a say, is one thing. Meetings and group dinners on occasion, special birthday celebrations and holiday sharing are benefits of living in community. However, it is the daily interchange between members which is so important. Checking in with each other, even when one is very busy, shows the other that you care about how they are doing. We are aware when one of us is distant or pulls back from people. We don't wait till it's brought up in a meeting or at Satsang, because we care. Efforts are made by others in the community to see if the person needs any support, help with any chores or whatever. Just a simple hello goes a long way.

When one of us seems disconnected from the heart, others gently call him or her back to centre. Without judgment, we can remind the other person that we miss the connection we have with them and make it clear we are there for them.

On any given day, I may answer the door to



Henry, Parvati and Dimples

Luz bearing fresh hot tortillas she just baked or Asia standing there with a bowl full of green beans just collected from the garden, or Katy with fresh baked cookies. If someone is sick in the community, our herbalist Asia appears with amazing mixes of herbal teas she and Rory have Homa grown and prepared.

We have just begun taking in volunteers via the Wwoofer program (Willing Workers on Organic Farms). It has been an interesting experience, for the most part quite positive. There again, one needs to check for compatibility before accepting a volunteer on a Homa farm, ensuring that they are interested in what we have to teach--not just coming to

do manual labour. The dynamics on a working Homa farm are such that interaction occurs on many levels and, if the volunteer is not really so interested in Homa Organic Farming, Agnihotra and other fires, it can be problematic. On the other hand, many people acquire a more intense interest after experiencing life on a Homa farm. The fires do a great healing job themselves! Generally, asking clear questions and using your intuition will assist in choosing the right volunteers for your farm. I would not suggest immediately starting with Wwoofers. Better to have your farm more together and your schedule figured out before bringing in new folks who need direction and attention. Anyone wanting to discuss the Wwoofer program at more depth could contact us at Bhruhu Aranya or Lee/Frits Ringma at Om Shree Dham in Australia.

HOW TO BEGIN LOOKING FOR THE LAND AND/OR READY FARM TO BUY:

The Vision

Ideally, gather together your pioneers, the ones who will begin the venture. Your Homa farm will evolve nicely, but in the beginning

you need dedicated partners with a clear, common vision. This applies whether it is a Homa family farm in the traditional sense or if it is a group of Agnihotra practitioners wanting to create a Homa oasis in a rural scene.

Once you establish your beginning group, discuss your visions of the place and see if you are all with similar focus. For example, if

one person sees the farm as a retreat centre where silence reigns and another person sees it as a training centre where Homa volunteers or participants can take part in active workshops and eventually open the place up to the public for ongoing classes and seminars, you probably

need to examine your priorities and see how or if it is possible for the same farm to accommodate both visions! Or you could come to a compromise or a decision may arise where one person realizes it is not his or her dream after all. Good to get all the preliminary visions in sync in the beginning, rather than later down the line when everyone has invested time and money and dissatisfactions arise.



*Tom & Ann Couto,
caretakers of the Resonance Point*

Sit together, preferably at sunset Agnihotra. This is a simple way to envision your farm. Close your eyes and breathe deeply. Focus on your breath. Relax totally. Now imagine your Homa farm, see it in your mind's eye. Feel how it feels to be there. Let your imagination lead, not your intellect. Who is there on the farm? Are there trees, meadows? Do you see animals? People? If you really get into it you may even smell flowers growing there or bread baking in the oven! Just allow yourself to see and feel. Don't try to control what you see. Let it flow.

Following this simple exercise, quietly, without speaking, write your vision on paper individually. After everyone has completed their writing, go around the room and read your visions aloud. A lively discussion is likely to follow! Enjoy the similarities, the new ideas and the varying feelings that come up. This is a beginning.

At Bhṛugu Aranya, we do this occasionally to see what ideas come up or what visions reveal. It's always inspirational at any stage, but in the very beginning it clarifies and helps to formulate your ideas, assisting manifesting dreams into reality. Employing subtle realms, even as simple as this method, brings a new perspective to the experience.

Actual Land

As you have decided what you are looking for, your idea for the land will come next. Since Homa Organic Farming relies on gardens, you will need to look for land which includes open acreage for gardens. Also, as most Homa Farms should have at least two cows in residence, you will need to look for land which includes pasture acreage to accommodate them. A wooded area also is handy. And rivers or streams, brooks, ponds add the water element.

Water rights should belong to the farm and not be shared water rights with any other property. This is important. Also, if a well is on the property, it should ideally be a deep well and it is advisable to have the water tested if you are seriously considering buying the farm.

It depends as to whether you want to build your own structures, homes, barns, or if you prefer to buy a property ready to move into. If it is the latter, for whatever reason--due to time considerations or price of new building materials being high--it is important to find the right place with a good solid home in good condition, out-buildings which can perhaps be turned into living quarters for guests or therapy huts, etc. You should also consider the heating source, which will cost quite a lot for a large property. Good if the

buildings have alternate sources for heat. If it is wood heat, for example, good if it also has electric backup for when no one is at home on cold winter days. Of course, solar electricity is the very best. Be aware of flood plains and check for hidden water leakage in basements. See that the roof is in good condition, as this is quite costly to repair.

There are some excellent books available on starting communities, eco building and eco villages, but Homa farm communities is a very specific, new field. We are happy to share our experiences with Homa Therapy teachers and offer workshops on forming Homa Organic Farm communities. There is much more to cover and more specifics can be shared later. This is just a beginning. We hope there will be many more Arks of Fire.

Bhrugu Aranya Healing Centre

“This place is magical. The energies here are quite powerful and the place heals you. Bhrugu Aranya is an ancient place of fire which has been rediscovered in this time. We feel we are guardians of this sacred site. Often Devas and Angels have appeared here.”

This ancient sacred site lies in the majestic Tatra Mountain region of southern Poland.

The atmosphere at Bhrugu Aranya is infused with high vibrations from Ayurvedic healing fires that are maintained daily. It is this energy that radiates to heal the Earth.

At this site, an organic Homa farm and community began in 1995 and is growing. We are now twelve adults, four children, four cows, many cats and two dogs.

Jarek Bizberg started a non-profit ecological/ educational Homa Therapy Foundation to teach Vedic methods of organic farming, alternative medicine and atmospheric purification. He offers teaching of this ancient science of Agnihotra all over Europe free of charge. His book is *Homa Farming for the New Age*.

The other community members offer a myriad of skills in herbal lore, massage, healing, organic gardening, vegetarian cooking, music, and art therapy. We hold women’s circles of Light, as well as healing circles. We are a creative group which values the arts as an integral part of organic living.

We invite visitors to experience transformation in a peaceful yet energetic, creative, healing environment.

For more information:
www.homatherapypoland.org

From Shree Vasant's Teachings

BLAME

If someone blames another person for failures in his life, he is missing his lesson. If someone has led you in wrong direction and willingly you have followed that, the blame cannot be placed on him. Place at Our Feet and be done with it. Best is to cast no blame and seek for the answers why within. To blame another for a fate which has befallen you is to refuse to look within. Then how can you learn your lessons? You look from a higher perspective and you will realize there is no need to blame anyone. If it is too much to bear, lay it at Our Feet and it will be lifted from you.

ADVERSITY

All the time have Mantra on your lips, all the time. Do not become thrown to and from every day by troubles in life. At least say, "For this trouble I am deeply grateful, as this is my Karma and it shall no longer anger me, but humble me." Then the whole thing changes. You can reverse your negative life Karma. Try it.

Whatever adversities come your way, welcome them. That does not mean not to solve the problems as they arise, but to face them and realize the lesson each one comes to bear for you, like a transporter. They carry the lessons to be learned. Your whole life you

are just waiting for the transporter to bring these lessons for you to learn and to rise higher—whole life. So, if this "transporter" seems to have run late then you may be experiencing the delivery of several transports at one time. It is all right. That is also a lesson.

If you can see it like that and get it, you will have much less trouble later on. Next "transport" will arrive and you will be ready for it. "OK. Deliver it here. Thank you very much." Times ahead will be so much simpler if you learn the lessons.

CRITICISM

We cannot criticize what we do not understand. You can see only one facet of a situation and you can be too quick to make judgment on it. Better to remain silent. Then the things which is not right exposes itself. Keep silent and no blame can fall on you. Otherwise, even if you yourself were correct in your judgment, people will point the finger of blame to you because you were the most vocal. This gets you into trouble time and time again. Best to keep silence.

PROTECTION

All houses in which Agnihotra is performed regularly will be blessed. No harm will come.

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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.