

“Honouring the Guru Within”

A Weekend Retreat

A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE
OF SIDDHA YOGA

A PROPOSAL

*Preparing Australia for
Gurumayi's Tour.*

Stage One.

THE SYDNEY ASHRAM GURUSEVA
COORDINATION TEAM

30th April 1996

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Overview

Following the success of the “*Honouring Baba Day*” which was created in preparation for the “*I Met Baba - Reunion*” it is proposed to continue the momentum by offering a very special “Weekend Retreat”. This Retreat would utilise existing resources and the current Ashram schedule. It will be held over the weekend to provide both long-term devotees and new people a real way of “connecting” with the experience of Siddha Yoga in all its fullness and glory - with great enthusiasm and certainly singing God’s glory!

It would act as a focus for bringing the entire Siddha community together and attracting people from all over Australia, even from around the world, to visit the Sydney ashram for “*Honouring the Guru Within*”.

*“The more one follows the discipline of a
sacred place, the higher will one rise, the more
intense will be one’s longing for God.”*

Swami Muktananda, Ashram Dharma

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There are three main benefits from having the “Honouring the Guru Within” Weekend Retreat:

1. Long-term members can be offered something with a little more depth, and more importantly, a “vehicle” to connect with the Ashram that has clearly defined boundaries. Namely, something they can plan well ahead and know they only need to commit from Friday to Sunday, and can then resume their outside activities. *(I feel we will attract far more long-term devotees, more often with this type of structure...)*
2. New people often take a long time in experiencing the wholistic nature of Siddha Yoga before they are ready to offer themselves to a regular Guruseva practice. By offering a weekend where they can experience all the aspects of Siddha Yoga in the context of the Ashram, they are more likely to be inspired with enthusiasm to understand and give themselves whole-heartedly to Guruseva which is in fact *the only way it works*.
3. we can plan Major Seva Projects well ahead and have them carried out on a regular basis, (not in a Panic at the last minute.) These projects would be a primary focus of the Retreat.

The added impetus to this Retreat is that it would have the inspiration of Gurumayi’s upcoming Tour behind it to give it real Shakti and meaning.

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The Ashram Schedule was set up by Baba to provide a vehicle for seekers to attain spiritual awakening and the supreme knowledge. A weekend Retreat based on this schedule would create a focus for honouring the Guru within, the essence of Siddha yoga. This could be achieved without creating any significant additional strain on our current resources.

It would be held once a month with various simple additions to create a cohesive, informative and meaningful experience for new comers, plus a way for long-term devotees to immerse themselves fully into the ecstasy of spiritual practices for a weekend. This Retreat is a natural follow-on from the “*Honouring Baba Day*” and “*I met Baba Reunion*”. And it is a natural focus for Gurumayi’s upcoming Tour.

It could even be adapted to other Ashrams and centres around Australia. The Sydney Ashram has a fantastic opportunity for being the catalyst for igniting the fire of Guruseva and Spiritual Practices within seekers.

A “*Honouring the Guru Within*” Coordination Team could be made up of the Seva Team, the Ashram Coordinator and a representative from Programming. It would be a main focus for the Seva team. Special Seva Projects would be planned for the weekend well in advance.

The Basic Cost would be \$60 for the whole weekend. (Normal accommodation cost.) **See Appendix A - Honouring the Guru Within: Proposed Weekend Retreat Schedule.**

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A Brochure could be produced and the Retreat could (with appropriate approval) even be advertised in the wider community. This would also be directed in communicating a greater understanding of the “Guru within” in the general community. The concept of a “Weekend Retreat” is very popular in the wider community.

There would, of course be limited places available and there would need to be an awareness of the ratio of new people to “old-timers”.

The weekend Retreat would also stimulate a greater interest and awareness for new people to attend the Ashram on a regular basis. It would also provide an understanding of what it is to live in the Ashram. It would give an “inoculation” for anyone thinking about living in the Ashram. It would therefore develop a stronger base of Ashramites with greater understanding of Ashram Dharma.

Someone said of living in the Ashram, *“There are more comfortable places to live, there are less crowded places. But there are no places nearer to God.”*

The Seva Coordination Team would like to suggest the following initial dates for consideration to commence the “Honouring the Guru Within” Weekends:

- 21 to 23 June 1996 - (5 to 10 people)
- 26 to 28 July 1996 - (10 to 15 people)
- 23 to 25 August 1996 - (15 to 20 people)

We truly feel these weekends could become a powerful and effective means of preparing for Gurumayi’s Tour and continuing the Guru’s mission for Siddha Yoga within Australia.

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Summary

*The important thing to realise about starting
“Honouring the Guru Within” Weekend Retreats
is that we really not creating anything new!*

The retreat is about following the Ashram schedule; offering the spiritual practices and adding a few existing programs, as appropriate into *a very powerful combination*.

“Honouring the Guru Within” will help maintain a inner focus for everyone coming to the Ashram. It will imbibe the essence of Ashram Dharma and the Gurukula.

The Sydney Ashram was opened and blessed by Gurumayi. This means the blessings of a *living* Siddha Guru reside here. The only Siddha Ashram in the world to have that honour. This presents the opportunity. for connecting with the *inner Guru* - the true goal of Siddha Yoga.

The Ashram is a bright shinning diamond radiating out its light for seekers to see the extraordinary opportunity of receiving Shaktipat from the Guru. A primary role for the Sydney Ashram.

Everyone would be welcomed in participating in “Honouring the Guru Within” - Trustees, Managers, Team leaders, coordinators, sevites. Together we could generate great enthusiasm, love and joy for the Guru that is here all the time! She is here in a far more powerful form within our hearts.

The weekend Retreat: “Honouring the Guru Within” would simply create the vehicle for facilitating the community to “*tune in*” to Her “*wavelength*”.

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The Next Steps...

- 1.** Approval by managers.
- 2.** Select members and initiate meetings by
“Honouring the Guru Within Coordination Team”.
- 3.** Determine dates and prepare detailed Weekend
Retreat format and requirements.
- 4.** Have Information meeting with Ashramites.
- 5.** Start preparations & commence promoting.

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Appendix A

Proposed Weekend Retreat Schedule

Friday

Registration & Moving in.	5.00pm to 6.30pm
Dinner	6.30pm to 7.00pm
Orientation	7.00pm to 7.20pm
Nama Sankirtana (Fast Chant)	7.30pm to 9.00pm
Swadhyaya Orientation	9.20pm to 9.45pm
• Guru Gita	
• Arati	
• Rudram	
• Shiva Arati	
• Shiva Mahimnah.	
Lights out	10.00pm

Saturday

Meditation	06.15am to 07.00am
Breakfast	07.00am to 07.45am
Guru Gita	08.00am to 09.30am
Guruseva	10.30am to 12.30pm
Special Project for new people	
Regular Devotees can:	
• Coordinate the teams;	
• Join the teams or	
• Do other specific seva.	
Lunch	12.30pm to 1.30pm
Ashram Dharma Study Group	02.00pm to 2.30pm
Study/Contemplation in silence	02.30pm to 3.30pm
Introduction to Siddha Yoga	04.00pm to 5.30pm
Evening Arati	06.00pm to 6.20pm
Dinner	06.30pm to 7.15pm
Satsang - Public Program	07.30pm to 9.00pm
Lights out	10.00pm

Sunday

Meditation	06.15am to 07.00am
Breakfast	07.00am to 07.45am
Guru Gita	08.00am to 09.30am
Hatha Yoga Basics	10.30am to 11.30pm
Lunch	12.30pm to 01.30pm
Nectar of Guruseva Program	01.30pm to 03.00pm
Special Puja/Finale celebrations:	
• Explanation	3.00pm to 3.30pm
• Puja Ceremonies	3.30pm to 4.15pm
• Finale	4.15pm to 5.00pm
Sankirtana: “Om Namo Bhagavate Muktananada.”	
- Gurudeva Hamara Pyara	
Darshan	