



Aghoreshwar Baba Bhagwan Ramji

GURU PURNIMA ISSUE

Cultivate Trust

On the occasion of Guru Purnima in July, 1971, Aghoreshwar Baba Bhagwan Ramji addressed the gathering with the following words: This auspicious celebration today is observed only by sincere and faithful disciples. As far as Gurus and teachers are concerned, every day is the day of celebration for them. They do not have any special day for observance. That is why I say that this day belongs to you - to only those of you who are dedicated and devoted. On this festival the divine virtues that are attained only through much hardship by divine beings will descend on you easily according to your faith and devotion.

On this occasion we are expressing the devotion and nobility that we feel within our selves. Whenever that expression is sincere, divine attributes and virtues will definitely blossom in

our hearts. If our expression is merely a show, or superficial, those attributes will not even come near us. All the activities born of our illusions are superficial. The artificiality of false pride not only keeps tormenting us but also those who come in contact with us. I request that you shed artificiality and false pride. Only after you lighten yourselves of this load will the currents of divine virtues and attributes flow within you.

The practice of accepting a Guru in your life has no restrictions of any kind. According to my understanding, you can establish this sacred relationship with even a chandal (an untouchable) and investigate your soul. You must have heard that Meera (a great poetess of ancient times) was a disciple of Rabidas (an untouchable) and, bringing his ideals and teachings into her life, she became a saint. The religious texts of today talk about many things that are incomprehensible and impractical. We are unable to bring those teachings into our day to day practice. It is for this reason we take refuge in a teacher or the Guru-peeth (the Guru's altar). Short and simple teachings can be given by a teacher or Guru in detail and you can understand if you have a clear heart. The teachings of a Guru can never be grasped by a heart laden with cunningness or false pride.

The divinity appears within when there is cleanliness of heart. It tickles the heart where it is arising and brings about a special kind of movement in the mind. It makes your own being as sacred as a place of pilgrimage. The impossible seems possible and the things that once were incomprehensible become clear. Such divine virtues arise within when the Guru (the divine) is constantly established in your hearts, as your behavior today reflects. The awakening of these virtues does not mean that you should become inactive and run away from your responsibilities. The different limbs of your body should remain engaged in whatever action is required by the time, but your heart and mind are immersed in the divine (your Guru).

On this auspicious occasion I will request that even if you cannot give your trust to the society or the nation at least you will give it to your relatives and to your next of kin, to your children and grandchildren. Trust them and let them trust you. I see many people are unable to trust their own family members, let alone winning their trust. For the fulfillment of any task, small or big, trust is needed. Many people are not able to trust themselves, nor to trust their own actions. In such a situation a strange kind of conflict, disturbance and indecisiveness permeates their minds and keeps them entangled there. Their previous misdeeds follow them like shadows. My only advice in such a case is to look ahead, not to look behind. Looking back will only be painful and obstruct your path. Setting afloat your past deeds in this Guru-Ganga (Guru as the sacred river), start your life anew, then you will find and experience the emergence of a new kind of strength and enthusiasm. You yourselves will be happy in yourselves and will be able to make others happy who come in contact with you. The bitterness from your heart will fall away.

When our minds becomes wicked, our lives become aimless and useless. It seems as if we are living for the sake of being alive, wandering about as if drugged, with neither the mind nor

the body balanced. In such a situation we are unable to comprehend anything, nor to make others understand. In such a state we make the others who come in contact with us like ourselves. Such a meaningless life become a weight in itself.

Dear friends, wherever you live or whatever situation you are in, trust yourselves. Listen to that divine message and pay attention to those divine indications that arise within you telling you that certain acts are desirable and certain are undesirable. Listen to it and pay attention to it and then bring it about in your behavior. It is only then you will remain happy and make those happy who happen to be in your surroundings. When we point a finger at another, three fingers are pointing towards us. The meaning of this is that when we point out the evil in others, three times that wickedness resides within ourselves - the shortcomings lie within ourselves.

All I can say is: Don't pay attention to the shortcomings of others. Looking for shortcomings in others is a weakness of the mind. Keep looking at yourselves repeatedly. In such a situation the force of divine virtues will awaken within you and your faith in the teachings of your Guru and in God will strengthen. You will be able to live a happy and healthy life on this earth, and you will be able to give direction to your children and family members which is urgently needed in this time and age.

As you keep your home and Ashram clean, with the hope that this place will uplift your spirit and will act as a shelter in the time of need for yourself and your children, keep your mind clean. Our life span on this earth is so short. In such a short span of time why should we harbor bitterness? Whom should we criticize and to whom should we pray? In such a situation, why not just maintain a clean soul, which is eternal, pure and blissful by nature. If we are able to maintain it in its true nature, we are able to experience liberation from the cycle of rebirth which is very painful. If we have to take a rebirth, we will be born in a good land and among good people. O friends! Give up inauspicious deeds which keep you in darkness and let go of false pride which keeps immersing you in unbearable sorrow. With so much love and reverence you have been patiently sitting here for a long time. Your dedication to being a meaningful social human being and bringing about a healthy society is praiseworthy. For this I will not thank you but I will express my gratitude for it instead, and I bless you all on this auspicious occasion of Guru Purnima.

Guru Purnima Celebration in Sonoma Ashram

The scene was a peaceful one. It could easily have been on the bank of the Ganges under a spreading banyan tree. It looked like a tiny corner of India. But it was on the bank of Carriger Creek, under a giant bay laurel tree. For three days people had come to sit in the shade given

by the branches of this great tree, which seemed to reach out, giving shelter to more and more guests as they arrived. The smells of incense and the sound of tinkling chimes wafted gently on the summer air.

This peaceful scene had been preceded by a three-week period which had not seemed quite so peaceful! The ashram had been moved from one house to another. As with most changes of home site, there is no clear idea of what is what. Our Hariji gave us an example of grace under pressure. First, the accoutrements of the arati were moved carefully, protected, kept intact. Other things such as books and kitchen articles were put in their new places, item by item, while a battery of workers miraculously arrived to clear a jungle of weeds and to make the place operable as an ashram. The date for an Open House had already been set, and the Guru Purnima celebration would follow. But the question was, "Will a house be open for Open House?" And Guru Purnima waits for no man. When the Guru moon is full, it is Guru Purnima, ready or not.

A yurt had been ordered for yoga classes, and a place for the fire ceremony (havan) was under construction. Meanwhile, the "trailer" was the only space with a roof. There was no easy access, no real parking space, and no luxury of the flowering plants and landscaping that had characterized the former location. But Hariji was cool.

A drama unfolded then, with an overwhelming outpouring of energy, time and effort by those great souls who participated in the work. With weed eaters, bulldozers, cement mixers, dump trucks for hauling in load after load of dirt and cement, hauling out load after load of debris, with buzz saws and board planers and sanders, these willing workers created a transformation. It was like a movie speeded up for fast action.

Baba Priyadarshi Ramji and Anil Ramji, Hariji's brother monks, were here at the time of the move. During the first few days of construction, three monks were working at the site. Their white monk garb could be seen being spattered with wet cement along with the others. Babaji officiated in molding the havan when the clay and cement had been mixed, while Hariji tamped down the dirt into a firm base. Babaji performed the first fire ceremony in the new Dhuni. Then the Babajis were gone, returning to India.

The next question was, "Will the yurt arrive on time?" The arrival of the yurt looked dubious. Hariji talked pleadingly to the manufacturers. Meanwhile, life went on with its devotional aspects as usual, with Arati performed morning and evening. More and more areas of weeds were cut back, and one Saturday ten workers tackled the vegetable and flower garden, which had begun to need some attention. Miraculously, the yurt arrived on time. And now the movie was speeded up some more.

On top of the base that had been prepared for it, the circular structure began to go up. First walls were raised, then beams for the domed roof, with a round, moveable opening at the top. At last, the three layers of roofing were hauled and pulled through the circular hole at the top

and fastened over the beams on the outside, and the structure was complete. Not a day too soon. Standing back to look at it, one could see how beautiful it was. Now it has a name. It is our "Devi Mandap". Mandap means a circular space, and Devi is the Mother (Shakti) who has many names of female deities.

On the appointed day of the Open House, Hariji was able to sit at his completed "dhuni" (sacred fire), with the Devi Mandap to one side, Ganesh Peetha in front and the trunk of the great bay laurel tree behind him, looking out at a wide vista of mountains and fields beyond the creek bed. He could see the procession of the guests arriving, parking their cars in a place newly prepared for them. Smells of cooking spiced the air, and guests were invited to partake of food and drinks.

On the second day of the three-day Purnima, preparations were made for the following day, July 30, when the Guru would be honored. Flag-raising in the early morning of the third day took on special significance because of our gratitude for this new environment. We adjourned to the Devi Mandap for our first Arati in the new structure. It was beautiful. Bouquets of flowers, fragrant incense and lighted lamps decorated an altar where Baba's picture was adorned with garlands of roses. Baba's face showered grace. Chanting went on as some sat in small groups under the oak trees as others enjoyed the grounds. In the early afternoon, the feast which had been so lovingly prepared by Carol became our prasad. Many special dishes with their own distinctive flavors flowed like a fountain of good things, being offered at various times of the day and evening. Hariji spoke eloquently about the role Guru plays in our lives, saying the Guru is the embodiment of our highest ideals. He affirmed the validity of the Guru tradition which had originated so many centuries ago in India. Shastriji demonstrated by use of harmonium and voice the significance of the sloka that we chant at the beginning of Arati. Others spoke simply of the importance of the Guru in their lives and what Guru means to them.

Twilight was deepening. A mellow, yellow light spilled out of Devi Mandap along with the sweet sound of the mantra being chanted inside, "Aghoranna paro mantro, nasti tatvam, Guru param". Havan was being performed, one group at a time encircling the dhuni. Flames from the havan leaped up as the participants repeated "Swaha" and made their offerings to the fire.

On the horizon a giant moon, the Guru Purnima moon, made its anticipated arrival and, ascending the heavens, looked down on this peaceful, happy scene in the valley of the moon. The celebration ended with distribution of khir, the customary prasad at such events.



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