

SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

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Reform yourself first

The world will get reformed automatically

AUGHAR VANI, Avadhuta's Wisdom



Aghoreshwar
Baba Bhagwan Ramji

During last month's Guru Purnima celebration at the Sonoma Ashram, Baba Hariji addressed the gathering with the following talk.

On this sacred day, I would like to welcome you with my heart. What we are celebrating today is called Guru Purnima. Purnima: Purna + ma. Purna means full, fullness. Ma means mother. Fullness of the mother. The mother that we are referring to has nothing to do with gender. It has to do with the quality that the name mother represents. Mother is the one who gives birth, who nurtures us with her milk, giving us her unconditional attention. It's the fullness of those qualities that we are celebrating today, that is at our disposal.

Guru: You may have wondered at this morning's discussion, What is the Guru? The Guru is not some big person clad in a saffron robe with a big beard. It has nothing to do with that. Guru means that which is higher. There is another meaning of Guru: one who takes us from darkness to light. Purnima is the fullness of that which is also infused with the qualities of mother. So it is a loaded word. It has many meanings and connotations.

So again, what is the Guru? Guru is the higher Self that resides within us. It's not something from outside. It's the Guru that resides within us that we are seeking. When we are in touch with virtues like unconditional love, acceptance, tolerance, whenever these qualities are coming out in us, we are in touch with the Guru. We are the Guru. We are our higher Self. We are one with the Guru. We are the Guru in that moment.

The tradition of the Guru-disciple relationship has existed for a long, long time, not only in India but in various parts of the world. It still exists and it will continue to exist

Until we come into touch with that higher Self within, we look for it outside. It seems easier to find outside, because we are so used to depending on our senses@something we can see,

something we can touch, something we can interact with. So the physical Guru is basically a symbol of that Guru within. Nothing more. You are the Guru. You have to remember that. You are the Guru. You have that potential. You have that capacity to reach to your highest state of being. And this is what this celebration today is really about: the potential that lies within us.

This is a beautiful journey. When we find a person who can be a symbol of that highest Self, those negative tendencies, those negative qualities that make us feel separated from the Guru within, begin to fall away from us.

Why are we not in touch with the Guru within? Because we are unable to love ourselves, we are unable to appreciate ourselves, we are unable to truly accept ourselves. It is only in these situations that we are separated from the Guru. The very day I begin to love myself, accept myself and honor myself, I am in touch with the Guru within. So when we meet someone outside that we are able to love, respect and appreciate, those qualities begin to pour out from us.

Then we become aware, "Oh, I do have those qualities. I am able to love, I am able to accept, I am able to surrender". So the Guru is basically a person; an altar just like the altar we have here. An altar where we pour out our love, our attention, our devotion. Then it comes back to us manyfold. The Guru in person is not different, not separate from me. This truly has to be understood. Otherwise, there is the possibility of deception, of false expectation. It's you who give it all to yourself

Baba used to say it is humans who create God and then turn around and beg from that. If you give God that power, if you give God that acceptance, then that God exists for you. And he does exist for you. And then you can get from him whatever you really need. If you don't believe in that God's existence, if you don't give that God that power, he doesn't exist for you. We can't go and pray to a god that we don't accept. So as humans we create God. We have that capacity, that ability.

Coming in touch with that power is coming in touch with the Guru. The Guru in person is a must. Because we can become clever with ourselves. Most of the time we do, we become very clever. Because using our mind we can talk ourselves into anything. The mind resists any kind of discipline; anything that is contrary to what it is conditioned to think. We don't like anything over our head that tells us what to do. So we say, "Oh, the Guru is not necessary." There have been many saints who chose not to play the part of a Guru. But I do not know of any saint that did not have a Guru. If it was not a human being, maybe it was a statue, or something in the nature. We have to find a Guru somewhere or in something. We have to establish that seat, the Guru peeth. We have to find it in something that we can bow to. For bowing is such a priceless act. The minute we bow, all the burdens fall from our shoulders, they just slip off. The entire burden, all the worry just goes to something higher.

There are many stories about the Guru-disciple relationship. There is one in the Mahabharata, the story of Eklavya. Eklavya was a tribal boy. He wanted to learn archery, so he went to the best teacher of the time, Dronacharya, who was teaching kauravas and pandavas. Dronacharya would not accept him. He said, "No, no, you are from a lower class, I cannot allow you to be my student." So the boy went out into the forest and made a little statue of Dronacharya. And in front of the statue, the boy practiced his archery every day. First he humbly placed his flowers and gave his respect in front of the symbol of the Guru, and then he practiced.

One day the Guru was in the forest with his students. His cherished disciple, Arjuna, was with him. There was a dog who was barking and it was disturbing Eklavya's practice. So he shot five or six arrows in such a way that they didn't hurt the dog but were stuck in his mouth, so that he couldn't open or close it. The Guru was very impressed. "Who is this archer who can do this," he thought. He was superior to Arjuna, the Guru's most cherished disciple. So he goes to find out, and says, "Son, who is your Guru?" Eklavya says, "Dronacharya, it's you who are my Guru. There is your statue."

The story continues and maybe it's wise not to go on, but it bears fruit: having a symbol. The Guru's company is not always pleasant. If you have some person as a Guru, it's not always blissful. It's very hard because the very moment we are disciplined, we are told to do something different and our mind protests. All those mental habits that condition us to think a certain way throw a tantrum, and we cannot see any further. But then there is a Guru who is adept, who out of love comes to prune the tree, which is growing wild. In our scriptures it is said, *Shishu diye yadi Guru mile to bhi sasta jan*—even after giving your head, if you find a true Guru, it is still a bargain. It doesn't mean chopping your head off and giving it to somebody. It means surrendering, putting down your ego, shedding your ego. And when we really have to shed our ego, we truly cry.

I remember many instances with Baba, my Gurudeva. The first time I met him, I was so full of myself: that I had come to America to be educated, that I lived here, that all the people around me were so sma... And he just looked at me like this, and said, "Huh!", and that was a big blow right there. But next time I went to see him, he welcomed me with open arms and loaded me with flowers and fruit. I went there out of the blue, without expecting anything. When I went there without any expectation I got plenty. So it is said, whenever we go to a holy place or to be in the presence of a Guru, in that moment we are giving up our ego and attachments. Go there like a container, which is empty. Then it will be filled.

The Guru-disciple relationship is very sacred. It is up to you to tread very carefully on this path. Choose a good person and put your trust in his hands with great care. But once you have chosen, once you have accepted the Guru, there is no turning around.

Sometimes when the Guru starts working on your ego, your mind reacts and you say, "Oh it's not working. Let's go somewhere else." That is like digging lot of potholes. If you really want to taste water, you have to dig one deep well. There may be rocks that you have to grind on for weeks, but if you really want to get to taste the water, you have to keep on going. Any spiritual practice has its ups and downs and its hardships. It's not always a bed of roses.

Bhave vidyate deva. Once we have found our Guru, it is in our bhava in that sacredness of our attitude that the guru resides. How to present ourselves, how to conduct ourselves in front of the Guru is what we have to learn. Bhava is the environment in which the crop of our spiritual growth grows.

Once I met one of the disciples of Baba in New Delhi. He was a big politician. He said, "You know, Baba is gone, I spent so much time with him, and he didn't give me anything." Most of the people came to Baba for material blessings and he gave it to them freely. I never asked for anything so he didn't give me anything." He was really bitter about it. I asked him, "So what are you doing nowadays to fill that gap?" He said, "Oh, I am going to see different Babas and Matajis". I asked again, "So you have been to other Ashrams?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Let me ask you a question. When you bow to the other Babas, do you have the same

bhava, feeling as you had when you bowed before Baba?" He thought about it, and he said, "No." I said, "That's what Baba has given to you. The bhava, that feeling of interconnectedness. It's like coming back home to Ma." When you find that happening in you, that you have come back home, you should understand that this is the place of my Guru. He had tears streaming down, and he said, "You have answered my question. I was so bitter. But now I know what Baba has given me."

That's what Guru really gives you. Guru gives you a home to roost. Guru removes the doubt. Paths are many. They are all valid, they are all good, whether it is a Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Jewish. Whatever your heart and mind accepts, and you feel you have come back home. That is your path. That is your Guru.

. . . to be continued

Meet the faces at the Ashram

Through this column we salute the special individuals at the Ashram

Wendy Walsh

Wendy first came to the Ashram about three years ago for Yoga classes.

She felt the tranquility of the place the moment she passed through the bamboo entrance. It was so welcoming. Before long, she was invited to stay for puja. Wendy says, "My first puja was with Melissa and Howie; Baba was in India at that time. I was a bit nervous about singing prayers in a language I didn't know, so I began singing quietly. Howie turned toward me and asked me to sing louder. At that moment I felt a sense of permission to be right there in the moment, without being concerned about being judged."



"The practice has enriched my life beyond words," Wendy says, "the Ashram has been such a blessing to me. The community that connects here is truly beautiful, it's my home. The continual presence of seva has made it really easy to connect with the Divine presence that is abundant here. I would like to finish up this introduction with gratitude for all the love my husband and I have been continually given from this community. I have seen the Divine within each one of you, and for that I am truly blessed. I could never even begin to repay Baba for all the light he has brought into my life. My life began again when I found this Ashram. May my actions always be a reflection of the source of Sri Sarveshwari Samooh."

Ashram News

Orphanage update

Babaji has just returned from India. He was there for three weeks overseeing the progress of the orphanage Ashram under construction. The outer shell of the first building is complete. Now doors, windows, and plastering will be done. Please keep this project in your mind. We are still seeking funds to complete the project. It would be helpful to have some funds before our trip to India in November.

Full Moon Havan: Sunday, September 2nd.

Garberville Retreat: August 24th - 26th. For those interested, please notify the Ashram as soon as possible.



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