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Your weakness is that you feel weak

AUGHAR VANI, Avadhuta's Wisdom



Aghoreshwar
Baba Bhagwan Ramji

Spirituality is not a mystery

Baba Hariji's talk on Gurupurnima at Sonoma Ashram continued from the last issue,

It is said, "The moment you find your Guru, eighty percent of the work is already done". As to the remaining twenty percent, ten percent is from making a little effort, and ten percent the Guru just gives you a push and you jump over. So finding the Guru is like finishing the eighty percent of your journey. When you feel that connectedness, the bhav (the emotion) that arises makes our journey very special. No matter how hard I try to describe it, putting it into words would be like describing to you what a mango tastes like. You cannot really experience it unless you taste it.

In our tradition, we keep the knowledge, we keep the mantra, very sacred, very secret in our heart. Anything that is sacred to you, you keep secret. People ask me, "What is the name of your Guru?" and I have the hardest time answering that question. We don't pronounce the name of our Guru in a regular conversation. It is so sacred. It's no one else's business really. It's a heart-to-heart relationship. The very moment I think of my Guru, a shiver runs through my body. My whole composition changes in that moment. We don't throw around the name of the Guru, because then it seems like there is a popularity contest.

Guru and Guru's knowledge are all kept in a very sacred space in our heart. Our mantra is kept very secret, very sacred. That is why you are asked to keep your mantra a secret. It's not like you are keeping something very secret because you belong to a special club. It's just to maintain that sacredness. Mantra, mudra and maithuna, these things are kept secret and not flaunted around. Mantra, Mudra (money), maithuna (your private moments with your partner). These things you don't talk about to anybody. Because people will have their own idea based on their own experience, and they'll plant a seed in your head and it begins to go in a different direction. Anything that is sacred is kept secret. Taste that sweetness in your own moments of union.

I could go on speaking about the Guru-disciple relationship; lots could be written on this. But I would like to inspire you to look within yourself. Bhagwan Dattatreya had twenty-four Gurus. He was sitting by the ocean, and saw a dead body just being thrown out of the ocean by the waves. He thought, if you really want to stay grand, you don't keep dead things in you. You toss them out. He saw a kite that was flying with a piece of flesh in its beak, and ten other kites were chasing it. Then the kite dropped the flesh, which was immediately picked up by one of the other kites. Whoever picked up that piece of flesh, was being chased by ten others. So he took this as a teaching.

Establish the seat of Guru in something. This is exactly what Buddha also says, "Buddham sharanam gatchami." I come under the refuge of Buddha. What is Buddha? Just replace the word Buddha with whatever you like... Guru, Divine Mother, God., Baba... Acknowledging something higher than yourself

Secondly, I take refuge in my dharma. What is my dharma? Knowing that is very important. What is my dharma as a father, as a mother, as a sister, as a friend, as a responsible citizen of the nation? It is not that we don't know. But if we don't pay attention to our dharma, we run into all kinds of crazy things. If the father doesn't know what is his dharma as a father, he could have the wrong kind of relationship with his daughter. Knowing your dharma as a father, as a mother, as a friend, is extremely important.

Sangham sharanam gatchami. I come under the protection of the sangha, the community. When I am deviating from my path, there is a group, there is a family, there are friends who can point it out to me, who can say, -Look, you are not doing the right thing." Whenever I am feeling down, low, depressed, I avail myself of that company of the sangha, that samooch of practitioners. Merely the company of those practicing, is inspiring. Just these three and nothing more. 1. Acknowledge something higher. 2. Know your dharma. 3. Avail yourself of a sangha. And this is basically our practice here too.

Baba says, "Before you become Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Christian, at least be a real human being." It is easy to be a Hindu or Muslim, to say that I am so and so. Very easy. But being a good human being is work. It requires attention. We have to be on our toes twenty-four hours a day, because our senses are always pulling us in a different direction, seeking self-gratification, wanting more and more and more. What is being a good human being? Enriching ourselves with those virtues. The virtue of contentment, the virtue of forgiveness, the virtue of tolerance. And hopefully, there is a sangha, a samooch that, when we avail ourselves of it, we are inspired.

It was beautiful this morning the way we started. We began with a puja at the flag, the flag really represents Samooch. The Ashram is called "Sri Sarveshwari Samooch." Samooch means collectivity, gathering, unity, as a family, as a nation. There has to be a sangha before one can excel. In simple language, "Everybody wants to belong to something." Offering our puja to the flag was just a symbol of that-that somehow we are entering into this celebration as a group. And when we learn how to sit like this, quietly, peacefully, with love in our hearts for each brother and sister, it goes out with us into the community, and from the community into the nation, into the world. And this is being a true human being. Living responsibly.

Baba used to teach in very simple ways. In Kumbha Mela, people were always following him around and one person has written a story: Baba had put on his garb and gone out in the night for a walk. And this person thought, Baba is going out to do some special sadhana in the middle of the night. He followed Baba from a distance. And what he noticed was Baba

was going around turning off all the water faucets that were left running. Baba went for a five mile round, and checked all the faucets, then came back.

Life, spirituality, is not a mystery. It is being simple, living what I already know. It's when I don't want to live what I already know that I go and look in some secret books and secret rituals. So, why not live what you already know? Be kind, be loving, be accepting. Be simple. Please keep this in mind also, whenever you want to go out and look for some more. Ask yourself, -Am I living what I already know?" If you are living what you already know, you do not need anything else. Just start living. Life is not theoretical. It is practical.

I am very grateful to each and every one of you. And at this moment, what is going on in my heart and mind is, "I am not separate from you. You are not separate from me. We are just like different appliances, but it's the same electricity running through us all." I bow to that unity, to that presence, I bow to that hunger. Live fully. Live with all the blessings and grace that we are endowed with. Please do remember; you are capable of giving, you are capable of receiving. Living a life of service is the best path for Kali Yuga, for this day and age.

My definition of service is not working in soup kitchens. Maybe you don't have time for that. It's about putting the other's interest first. You could live a life of service right in your living room. Just start at home. Putting the other's interest first. Not me, me, me. But, what can I do for you, my love? The very moment that thought comes, you are living a life of service. That saves us from so much aggravation, when we begin to live a life of service. I may have my own ideas, I may have my own expectations, which is O.K. I am a human being. But the minute we are able to detach ourselves and take a step back, take a nice deep breath, and ask, "What can I do to make you feel good?" At that very moment, I am in touch with my highest, my Guru, I am in touch with God. May we all find that moment in our life. May we all find ourselves rich enough to give to those around us.

Thank you for being here to inspire me. Because your presence here is very valuable. Do not ever think that you are not important enough, that your presence won't make any difference. It does matter. In a big train, even a nut has importance, a bolt has great importance. If that nut and bolt break, the whole train can just stop. You may think that if you are not the engine, your presence doesn't matter. But it does matter.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those people who have been working very hard for the past few days to make this place feel welcoming, to provide food, and so on@there is a very long list. And I am very grateful towards the instruments of the Guru. I give my heartfelt blessings to everyone. Everyone. May we all keep walking ahead, with faith, with trust, with love. With these words, I bow to the Guru within you.

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Meet the faces at the Ashram

Through this column we salute the special individuals at the Ashram

Tony Lane

Tony Lane first heard about the Ashram from his good friend Howard Morris and visited in 1995. His first impression was that it was a nice, peaceful place, unassuming and rustic, a humble environment for worship, meditation, and community. He felt at once the respite it offered from the hustle and bustle of our cell-phone, dot-com world, its materialism and media-worship, and our sense of alienation and isolation from one another.



Asked how he came to be attracted to spiritual life, Tony spoke of some of his past experiences. He was raised in a Jewish atheist family. He first contemplated God when he was three years old: rain must be God's pee coming down into the world of creation, he thought. Fast-forward to his thirty-second year when, singed by the fires of life, he ventured into a synagogue on the Jewish Day of Atonement. There, he prayed sincerely, deeply, opening his heart. Upon arriving home, he realized that his pain, suffering, and sorrow had been mysteriously removed as if the "slate had been completely cleaned." Years later, he met a remarkable Catholic priest who became an example of humility and humanity, and Catholic prayers became an integral part of Tony's meditations. Still later, Tony picked up a handbook on Eastern meditation, which he began practicing, and he came to realize that the experience of the Divine can come from within and is readily accessible at any time. For many years since, he has explored Buddhist and Hindu meditation.

Two years ago, Tony had the good fortune to accompany Babaji to India. One day, Tony visited the Krim Kund Ashram in Varanasi. Knowing little of the lineage of great souls who have lived and been buried there, Tony nevertheless immediately felt a Divine power, a shakti, an all-prevailing presence of great mystery. As Tony explains it, this was the first time he felt the Divine saturated in a location, in a sacred place. This experience gave Tony a lasting memory to contemplate whenever his doubting mind comes in to play. Since then, Tony's interest in Babaji, the Sonoma Ashram, and Baba's teachings has increased.

Tony has a wonderful generosity and joy for helping where he is most needed. Although he says it has been great to see the Ashram go through so many transformative stages since he first arrived in 1995, he himself has contributed greatly to its transformation. Working on the computer graphics for the leaflets for the Ashram's seva projects has been only his most recent gift. Tony extends his many thanks to Babaji, Sarkar Baba, and the Aghor lineage for this gracious place here in the United States.



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