

SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

JULY 2001

Before talking of saving the world,
Brother, save yourself!

AUGHAR VANI, Avadhuta's Wisdom



Aghoreshwar
Baba Bhagwan Ramji

Guru is the Grace, Guru is the teaching

On the occasion of Guru Purnima in July, 1995, Baba Hariji addressed the group who had gathered to honor the Guru. The following are excerpts from his talk.

Dear friends, with great love and respect I welcome you all with my heart. Today we are celebrating the presence of the Guru in our lives and expressing our gratitude to the Guru.

There are many among us here, right now, who have been on this path for many years. There are many who have been with various Gurus. Guru Purnima is the day to pay our love and respect. In America we have a father's day, mother's day, and secretary's day. This is the Guru's day.

Baba says, "The Guru is not the body. The Guru is Prana; the very life force is the Guru."

The Guru is not the body. The Guru is the teaching; the Guru is the knowledge that we seek for our own. That's the real Guru. This can be true in any tradition. Once we are with a true Guru, we are beyond all those limitations of name, form, and religion. When we have reached the knowledge that guides us, we are not bound by anything else.

In the beginning, when we can't imagine the nameless, formless Guru, somebody has to hold our hand; someone has to point us in the right direction. The paths are many, we have to choose one. A person who helps you in choosing this path, who removes your doubts and fears, is the Guru we know of. Our spiritual journey begins only after accepting a Guru. It is the Guru's grace that avails us everything of substance. Finding a Guru is the most valuable aspect of human life. It is said, "Even after giving your head, if you find your Guru, it is still a bargain".

When I went to meet Baba for the first time, I didn't realize who he was. But something brought me back to him and I saw the embodiment of perfection. I felt just right in his

presence, I saw what he was doing through his Ashram, I saw the people around him, and everything somehow balanced, made me feel whole. I felt I had met the Guru who could be my guide on the spiritual path.

The Guru is the one in whose presence we are reminded of the Divine. A Guru can hold your hand. Once you are ready to be on your own, he lets you stand on your own and leaves his grace with you. The Guru is not someone who holds your hand until you are old. That's not a Guru, someone who is making you dependent on him. When you can stand on your own, then you know you have been in the company of a true Guru. Baba said, "A true Guru does not make a disciple. A true Guru makes another Guru." He's not in the business of making disciples.

Three years ago was the last time a group assembled with Baba on Gurupurnima and what he said to us was, "Silence." There were many of us who wanted to say something to him, or ask for his blessings, but he spoke one word only, "Silence." It was a beautiful day in New York City with everyone there in silence all day long. We were preparing food, doing our other duties, silently, and it was beautiful, a very powerful experience. I have been reflecting on that inner strength which arose like that, and I could see that ultimately the Guru is not outside, but inside us. That Guru is available to us when we can listen to our own heart and trust it, when we hear the Guru's voice whisper in our ears. That is the day you can begin to trust yourself.

Rituals and practices are just the tools to make us walk in a straight line. I know some people wake up in the morning and don't know what they're going to do next, how the day's going to be, whom should they call first, what they should eat. They are going in a circle. Even the simplest tools for discipline can be very powerful sometimes. The chanting, the prayers, the bowing down to that embodiment of perfection, these things bring an order into our lives. They create a living example.

Once I met Baba, I stopped reading books. They didn't make sense to me anymore. You can read all about enlightenment and this and that, but that is all theoretical. I wish only to live what I know. We all want that. We wish we could live what we know. That's why a Guru like Baba or any other enlightened being can be inspiring, because we know they have lived like that.

Three days before Baba left his body, he was murmuring the words: "I am present in the rays of the sun, in the rays of the moon, in every single drop of water. I am present in every atom of space between the earth and the sky. I am present in happiness as well as in sorrow. I am present in light as well as in darkness. In whatever form you search for me, with your friend, faith, you shall find me." That "I" he referred to was not his body.

The image you see here in this picture is just a reminder. The Guru is not the body. The Guru is the grace. The Guru is the teaching. As you think of the teaching, ponder it, contemplate it, test it, and stick to it. Then you are with the Guru. When inspiration comes to you, that is the divine moment. When you listen to this moment, you are paying your love and respect to the Guru. When that inspiration comes to you, that is the Divine whispering in your ear. Listen to it.

In a previous newsletter, you read about Baba saying, "You are the Guru." If we are not careful enough, this could enhance our ego and delusion. Before we can get in touch with that Guru within, we have to learn humility, patience, forbearance, and devotion in the

company of a Guru. Developing these qualities brings us closer to the Guru. Baba's picture is here to remind us of our highest state, to bring our attention, our focus, to a standstill, to rest there. It is a very sentimental moment for me because it is through this body that I have received love, trust and everything of substance. That is why I offer my adoration, love and worship in front of the picture.

Baba's grace is always with us. Then we can move beyond body and form. In the Vedas, it is said, "Oh God, I know you are formless, nameless, without gender or color, yet in order to tell my friends about you I have to give you a name and a form. Please forgive me for this contempt." Anything I say about Baba, my Guru, will be trifling; it pales to nothing next to the reality.

I offer the lotus of my heart to the spirit of the Guru, who is residing within us all.

Om hara hara Mahadeva.

Guru Purnima at Sonoma Ashram

Gurupurnima was celebrated at the Ashram on July 05. It was a wonderful day at the Ashram with over 150 guests who signed in the guest book. In addition to locals there were visitors from Garberville, south bay, Italy (Giorgia), India (Bantuji), Atlanta (Ron) and Hawaii (Mr. & Mrs. Watumull). The morning started with the flag unfurling. Melissa Goode was given the honor of pulling the string of the flag as a gesture of her consistency of devotion to the upkeep of the Ashram. After the flag unfurling every one moved to the yurt for Guru puja. In the yurt, after puja each person had a chance to offer flowers at the Guru-Charanpaduka on the alter and receive personal blessings from Babaji. After the morning puja, tea and sweet rolls were served. Again people gathered in the Yurt for an hour and half for chanting with Laura Bonazzoli. Afterwards a heartfelt hour of sharing evoked much devotion and tears in many eyes. The topic was, the presence of the Guru in our lives.

Lunch was served around 1 pm. The loving gift of Carol Bojarsky, Penny Snyder, Isa Jacoby, Peter Humes and Gayatri Raman clearly manifested in a fabulous feast. After lunch there was time to just be with the community and people mingled with each other in the shade of the giant bay trees.

Another hour of chanting was led by Pandit Anirudh Shastri in the late afternoon. After the chanting Babaji addressed the gathering. The night ended with Arati and Prasad (light snack of samosas and Kheer).

Many tents were put up in the barn for the visitors, it looked like a small village. Late at night people built fire and played music in the barn.

It was truly a very sweet and heartfelt Gurupurnima at the Ashram. In the morning Babaji had evoked the fire in the Dhuni and it was going all day with people doing havan alone or in small groups while others chanted, mingled or stayed busy with seva.

In his evening Satsang Babaji spoke about the importance of the Guru, Guru's teachings and a Samooh or a sangha in our lives.

There are many who helped to make this Gurupurnima a special event but we would like to thank a few who clearly went out of their way to be of service. We thank Rob Adler,

Ramdeo, Chris and Maurice Horn for all the hard work in getting the patio done in time. Carol Bojarsky, Penny Snyder, Isa Jacoby, Peter Humes and Gayatri Raman for all their hard work in the kitchen. Wendy Walsh, Howard Morris and Pam MacDonald for their support to the kitchen. Melissa Goode, Kashi Gomez, Giorgia and Karen Sapper for flowers on the alter and leigh. Robin Brett for sewing and painting the flag as well as puja flowers.

Meet the faces at the Ashram

Through this column we salute the special individuals at the Ashram

Rob Adler

Rob Adler was sitting in the back seat of the airporter, when it pulled into the parking lot of the Ashram to pick up another passenger. First, he noticed the different shapes of the structures, and then noticed a man dressed as a monk, and he pressed his palms together and bowed. The monk noticed and gestured back. As the bus pulled out to continue its journey, Rob told himself that he must return. This might be the community he could feel connected with.



Rob returned and came to visit the Ashram. He was touched by the simplicity of the place. He recalls saying to Babaji, "I am here, what can I do?" Babaji said to him, " Make yourself at home first and if something grabs your attention try to connect with it." Rob was gravitated towards rocks, that we have plenty of at the Ashram. He first built a beautiful circle of rocks around the Ganesh peeth. He says, "Beauty is a form of energy that enhances life." His projects evolved from personal expressions like stone patterns, toward doing what needed to be done, like putting up the clothes line, cleaning the leaves from the fountain, or washing the dishes. In worldly life, Rob works as a psych- tech at the Sonoma Developmental Center. Working with the developmentally disabled people is truly an act of compassion and challenge. He is very generous with his time and resources towards the ashram. One can always count of Rob for being there.

In Rob Adler's own words, To love Baba is to feel and express the reflections of the higher self in each one of us, and let the false ones fall away. It is uncomfortable for some, and painful for others, but for all, Baba's heart of Divine compassion shines through to guide us. Sometimes Baba is firm and disciplining as a father, other times He is soft and consoling as a mother. When you are confused, He shows you already have the answer. When you feel separate, He says that you are already here. When you're in joy, it's a feast. I give my gratitude and reverence for the patient loving kindness He continues to show all of us.

Ashram News

Babaji will be India until Aug 9th. All the scheduled activities of the Ashram will continue as usual.

Our Annual Garberville retreat is scheduled for August 24, 25 and 26th.



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