

SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

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“Whom you find peace in your soul on meeting – they are a Guru.”

~Wisdom of Aghoreshwar Bhagwan Ram~

On a beautiful Sunday morning, Babaji addressed a group gathered at the Ashram in Sonoma with the following:



Love and Trust: Setting the Environment for your Practice

Somewhere, I was reading that people are trying to grow Ayurvedic herbs in the U.S. with seeds from India. But the herbs just don't have the same quality, the same intensity than if they had grown in their native environment. They look very nice, healthier, bigger leaves, stronger roots. But the effect is not the same. We grow tulsi right here. I brought the seed of red tulsi, and in two years it became green tulsi. It changed.

It is the same thing in our spiritual life, too. We like to read something that was written a long time ago in a totally different environment. Then we try to bring it into our life, compare our life, and become little disenchanted. Baba always used to tell us that all of our religious books have to be re-written, because they were written a long time ago in a totally different environment. Things change and those scriptures need to be understood according to the time and environment. The essence is there, but it has to be said in a way that the listener can easily comprehend.

The same thing happens with mantra. There are all of these self-help books that present all kinds of words as mantras. Just say, “Love, love, love---dog, dog, dog, -- -God, God, God.” According to these books, it doesn't matter what you say as long as you repeat it. Just say “compassion, kindness, love, forgiveness.” It doesn't matter. I just repeat it. But *mantra* is a very particular science. It has to have its own environment. It is a friend. The environment in which the mantra is maintained is very important.

The true *mantra* comes from a guru-based tradition. You don't read it in book or find it on the internet. It has to be transmitted orally from the guru. There is a lineage behind it. It's not somebody just pulling something off from the top of their head. There is a tradition. There is a responsibility to maintain the sacredness of that lineage.

Where do I find a Guru?

You meet someone in whose presence you are inspired. In whose presence you are reminded of your divinity. In whose presence you are reminded of the Divine. Someone who has walked the path. Someone you can trust. Someone who has time for you. These are the qualifications of a *Guru*.

Once we have found someone, who we can trust, who we can appreciate, who has time for us - then we can approach for receiving the mantra. Once we have received the mantra, there is a responsibility to maintain the right environment for it. If the environment is not right, it may not survive or may not have any vitality.

The right environment for the mantra to flourish is love and trust.

Forming a relationship with the *Guru* is very important in our spiritual path because that's where the work is. Everything is thrown right in your face. All of your judgements, everything will come. It's not because it's required or expected, but your own higher-self requires you, your lower-self, to rise in *Guru's* presence. In the *Guru's* presence, our love is so strong that we give ourselves permission to come out of our self-created limitations.

When Baba was in the U.S., he liked to go for a little drive in the afternoons and one time I had the chance to drive him. I felt so blessed to be in his company, in such a close proximity, in this little box on four wheels, just him and me. Thousands, if not millions in India, would dream about spending a moment with him, and here I am sitting, driving around with this great being. My heart was so full in that moment with gratitude for that moment.

My memory of that moment visits me from time to time. Although it was just an event in history and it has come and gone, I can always visit that moment. And not

that that was the only time I was in his presence. There were many moments, many months that I spent with him alone – intimate moments where I was with him in the middle of the night, when he was meditating and I was massaging his feet. But that moment in the car stands out as a very special moment to me. It was so powerful that it keeps nourishing me. Do I have that---have a visitation of such a moment with my *Guru*? It's not the quantity, it's the quality. If you have even a moment, it will keep providing that environment.

Do I have a relationship in my life where I can stop, take a step back and give myself permission to change? This was one thing I learned by being in the company of my *Guru*. I learned how to change. Where is that relationship when I can truly look at myself and give myself permission to change? Change through the power of love, not through force or guilt or criticism.

It reminds me of a story. There was a man who was very clever and stingy. Recognizing this about himself, he goes to his Guru because he wanted to change. The Guru says, "I know. You have that problem. Sit down and imagine that you have mountains of gold, and think about it that all the people who are close to you. You are going to give it to them." So the man sat down and imagined having the gold and imagined giving it out. But then he started thinking, "No, no, no not that much. This much. No not that much. This much." His Guru tuned into his mind and saw what he was doing. The man had only imagined two people and was continuously adjusting their share. When the Guru brought him out of his meditation, he asked, "What's going on?" The man said, "Oh, they didn't deserve all of that gold." The Guru said, "Oh fool, that's what I'm trying to get you out of! Just give it to them."

Start with imagination. In our practice, there is a big role for imagination. In order to cultivate that love, imagine the perfect love. The mind will come with its judgement, but really if we look at it, everything starts with imagination, even your fears and doubts. Everything. In our practice, the day starts with imagining yourself bowing to your *Guru*, bowing to the divine, offering a flower. Imagine you are receiving a blessing. Be fearless.

Om tat sat.



Ashram's Daily Meditation Schedule

Monday - Friday

6:15 am - Meditation

7:00 am - Morning Reading

7:00 pm – Meditation*

Saturday

8:00 am Meditation

8:30 am Morning Reading

7:00 pm Meditation*

Sunday

10:00 am Meditation

10:40 am Babaji's Satsang

7:00 pm Meditation*

*Join the Ashram's Arati every evening at 7:30PM by livestream:

<https://sonomaashram.org/satsang/webcast/>