

Haidakhandi Universal Ashram



February, 2007

Dear Friends of the Ashram,



This is a photo of Shri Babaji that I took in 1981. He was just about to leave the Ashram to travel to Navratri in Chilianaula. I remember, He asked me if I wanted a horse to take me through the river bottom too. I told Him I would like to hike out at His side rather than ride behind Him on a horse. The river was fairly low, the day was lovely, and the two-hour hike was wonderful walking next to Babaji. At one point I did slip slightly on the slick stones as we were making one of the dozen or more crossings of the Gautama Ganga River. Babaji's hand was immediately on my shoulder supporting me from falling. I realize that this is how He always is, ready to help in every moment. I feel that love and support so strongly in my life and I am so grateful.

Here at the Ashram, we commemorated Shri Babaji's Mahasamadhi on Valentine's Day with a touching paduka puja, aarati, chanting, and meal. It was an evening full of His love.

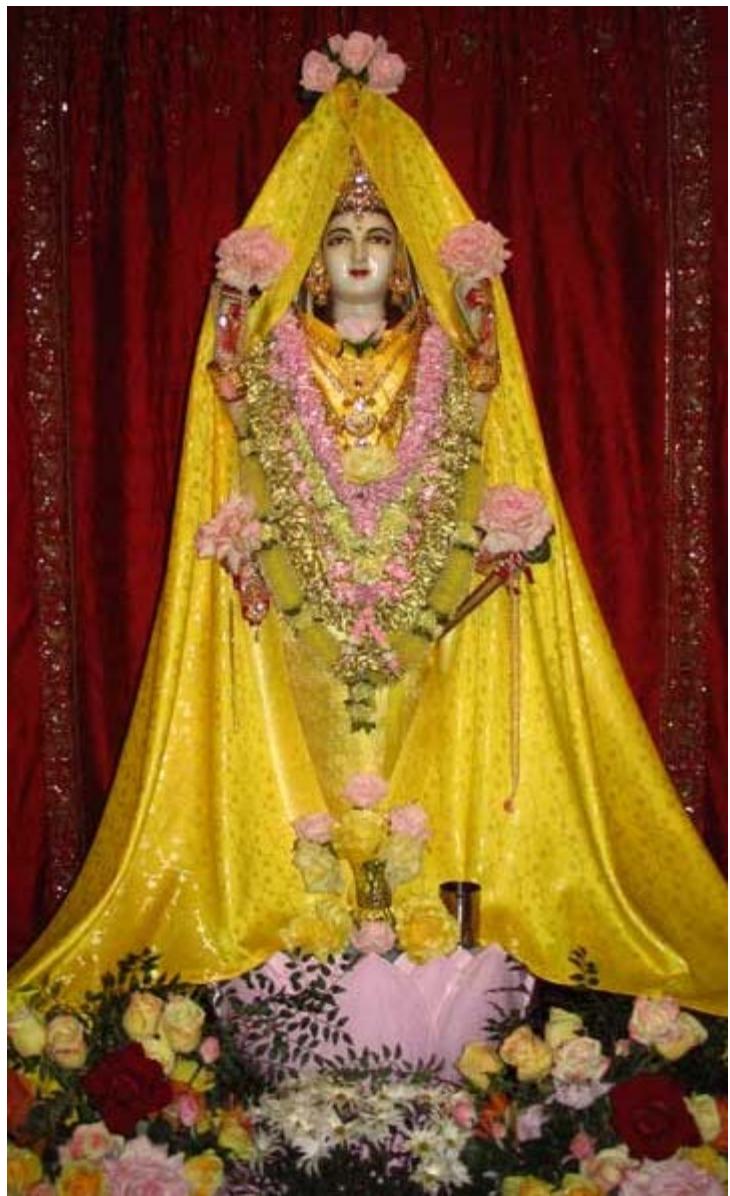
Two days later, we chanted all night for Shivaratri, photos and story follow about that spirited event. It was a great welcome home after all of our touring in Santa Fe, Florida, and California. Some photos follow of those wonderful events as well.

We are now busily preparing for Spring Navratri (Divine Mother Festival), which is early this year, March 18-26. Perhaps we will see you during this festive time. Read on for more details. Our evening aarati remains at 6pm for the remainder of the winter and morning aarati is at 7am. Our next full-moon fire ceremony is on Saturday, March 3, and the new moon-fire ceremony is the beginning of Navratri, Sunday, March 18. The fire ceremonies in April are full-moon, Monday, April 2 and new-moon, Tuesday, April 17. The fire ceremonies begin at 10:08am and are followed by a meal. If you would like to sponsor a fire ceremony (\$108) or bhandara (feast) (\$108) you may make the donation on line by just [clicking here](#) or call 719-256-4108 or e-mail the Ashram at

info@BabajiAshram.org or send us a check at P.O. Box 9, Crestone, CO 81131. Thank you for all of your support.

In truth and love, Ramloti

Spring Navratri, March 18 - March 26



The Divine Mother Festival (Navratri) in Spring is always such a wonderful time at the Ashram. The weather is beginning to warm and the garden is getting ready for planting. There is always so much to be thankful for. This year the festival begins on a Sunday, March 18 and ends on a Monday, March 26. There will be daily fire ceremonies at 10:08am, as well as daily discourses, pujas, readings, communal meals, and lots of Mother chanting. We hope you can join us by coming to the Ashram or by remembering Mother in your homes during these special days. If you would like to sponsor one of the fire ceremonies or a bhandara (feast) during this time, please let us know. Just follow the instructions above.

Please indicate if you have a preference of day or days to sponsor. We honor Mother Durga the first three days asking Her to remove any hindrances within us that keep us from Divine Knowledge. The following three days, we pray to Mother Lakshmi asking Her to fill us with abundance of satvic or more positive tendencies. On the final three days, we supplicate Mother Saraswati to bestow Divine Knowledge upon us.

We also honor children during this time with gifts and lunch. We normally do it on the last day of Navratri but since the eighth day falls on a Sunday, we will do it that day so that more families can participate. This will take place after the fire ceremony and discourse at about 11:30am. If you have a child under 10-years of age that would like to participate, let us know so that we can prepare the proper amount of gifts. Children ten and over can be helpers and if you let us know, we will prepare some gifts for them too. It is a great treat to watch all the children grow up year after year at the Ashram.

If you would like to stay at the Ashram during Navratri, please call at 719-256-4108 or e-mail us info@BabajiAshram.org soon as we are already quite full.

Kirtan Hall Update



Every large event, like all-night chanting at Shivaratri, renews our appreciation for this wonderful, spacious, beautiful kirtan hall. We have consolidated our loans into one and are continuing to pay it down. We now owe about \$64,000. Thank you for all of your support. If you are able to contribute, you can send a check to the Ashram at P.O. Box 9, Crestone, CO 81131 or donate online by [clicking here](#).

Tour Report

The events during January in Santa Fe, Florida, and California all went very well. There was lots of love and enthusiasm and each place had its own special energy. Photos from some of the gatherings follow. Several of the gatherings were filled to capacity and I want to thank the folks that hosted and help organize each program. We are also grateful to all that transported us from place to place. We were just wonderfully taken care of at each stop.



Indira and Nirmal Sharma, the American Samaj president from Shrewsbury, MA., joined us in Delray Beach for the Makarsankranti fire ceremonies and festivities. They were so energized by the gathering that they have initiated the idea for us to come to the Northeast for a tour. Our first window of opportunity is the middle of June. We are currently organizing the schedule, so if you would like to host a program in your area call (719-256-4108) or e-mail info@BabajiAshram.org

soon.

Mark Mathiak, who met Babaji in the early eighties, joined us for most of the tour in Florida and shared some inspiring stories about his time with Baba. Here is what he writes about the tour:



I started on the tour with Ramloti and Prem Friday night in Jupiter, FL. It was a wonderful evening having the presence of the Divine Mother with us.

Sunday, Jan. 14th in Delray Beach was a very special day for me. It started by doing the Sacred Fire with 50 people. I was given the honor to take the Divine Mother Murti (statue of Divine Mother that holds the living

energy of the Divine Mother) to the fire. As I was carrying Her to the fire the 25-30 lb. statue became weightless, when I looked down, there was a ball of light surrounding Her that I could see and feel.

After the Sacred Fire and chanting that followed, a group of 14 of us went to the ocean for the ritual bath of Makarsankrant. (Only 4 had swimming suits, the rest went in too, in their clothes!) The rest of the day was effortless and blissful.

The next weekend, I once again joined up with the tour in Treasure Island. It was a smaller group here but the aaratis and fire ceremonies had so much heart.



Days later I'm still in BLISS. I feel the Sacred Fire and the sacred bath did wash away a weight from me. I feel like a new person emerged from



the Fire and Water.

And this is what Premanand wrote about the tour:



Just wanted to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who hosted us on the recent tour. Thank you for all your organizing, support, participation, food preparation, transporting, enthusiasm, love and kindness! I am always blown away by the incredible quality of hospitality that we receive when we do these things. Highest blessings to all!
Love and Peace,

Premanand

Shivaratri Festivities

All-night chanting on Shivaratri was full of very high energy with about 65 people participating throughout the night. At 4am, when we formally ended, there were still 35 folks and several continued to chant until



6am.

Throughout the night we bathed the Shiva Lingam in milk, honey, ghee, and yogurt accompanied by the Sanskrit prayers of our visiting Brahmin priest from Denver.

This year we had a new, larger Shiva Lingam as one had been donated to us last year at Guru Purnima. It was a lovely initiation for the Lingam and a powerful night.

We then had a large fire ceremony at 10am the next morning. Once again, about 65 people attended. As the 108 names of Lord Shiva were recited at the fire, His presence could be strongly felt.

Following the fire we had a delicious Indian bhandara (feast) made by an Indian family from Fort Collins. The day was unusually warm and sunny for February so we could eat outside on the lawn. What a special Shivaratri!



Other Recent Events

Crestone Spiritual Alliance Tour

The Ashram has been actively involved in the Crestone Spiritual Alliance since its inception. It was originally formed to present a united voice (nearly 20 spiritual centers) to the Forest Service, the new Sand Dunes National Park, and other decision-making government entities in regards to our concerns for the land on which the spiritual centers have been built.

We have organized three different all-day tours for various decision-makers so that they could experience for themselves the large infrastructures and areas that the spiritual groups in Crestone occupy. During these tours we have been able to hear about proposed decisions, discuss our concerns, and present alternative ideas. As we traveled from center to center together and shared meals and snacks, we were also able to get to know one another on a personal basis.

The photo is from the start of our recent tour last week. A dozen or more Forest Service and National Park personnel joined about a dozen spiritual group representatives at the Carmelite monastery for initial tea, coffee, scones, introductions and a presentation by the Forest Service. The land just behind the Ashram is now owned by the Forest Service, so their decisions on management plans are extremely important to us.



Crestone Charter High School Fund-raiser



The final India Night Fund-raiser dinner and auction was held last Saturday night. The students came to the Ashram and helped prepare food for the 125 people that attended. The preparations and evening all went very smoothly. Thanks to many generous people the school raised about \$3,500 toward their

trip to India. Although they still have some funds to raise, they are ready to leave for India at the end of March. This is a very exciting trip for them, the amount of places they will see in India is notable and should be quite an education. Needless to say, the fact that they had to raise a good portion of the funds needed for such a big venture will be a great part of the overall learning experience.

As you know, Premanand and I will be leading the students to the Ashram in Haidakhan, so I hope to bring some great photos home which I will put in the next newsletter.

Winter Visitors

It has definitely been a snowier winter than usual. We were actually fortunate not to be hit by the big storms that you may have read about in Denver or Santa Fe. We did however, get plenty of snow, for which we are very grateful. Despite the cold and sometimes poor weather, we have had a fair amount of visitors. Here are a couple of photos of some of the children that have



been here. Turns out some of the paths at the Ashram make pretty good sled runs!



Calendar for 2007

March 18 - March 26 - Spring Navratri, nine days honoring the Divine Mother. Daily fire ceremonies, chanting, special pujas, discourses, and bhandaras.

April 28 - Raw food day. Meal preparation class at 9-11am, lecture by Matt Monarch from 11am-1pm followed by a raw lunch.

July 23 - July 27 - Annual Family Week and Kirtan Workshop.

July 28 - Annual American Haidakhan Samaj Meeting. ([click here to learn more about the Samaj](#))

July 29 - Guru Purnima, the day you honor your teacher with paduka puja, fire ceremony and bhandara.

October 10 - 18 - Fall Navratri, nine days honoring the Divine Mother. Same as Spring Navratri.

November 9 - Diwali, Festival of Lights.

Maha Lakshmi Shop Report



We have lots of new items in the shop. Bracelets, bangles, handbags, bindis, head bands, om baseball caps, deity magnets, plastic oms with sticky backs, books, and lots more. You can call the shop toll-free at 1-866-686-4185 to find out more details. We are open daily from 9am until 5pm. We do take Mastercard, Discover, and Visa. To view all the items in the Maha Lakshmi Shop, please refer to our newly updated [web site at BabajiAshram.org](http://BabajiAshram.org). You may [order on line](#) through paypal or e-mail us at shop@babajiashram.org, or of course, place the order over the phone. We love to talk with you. We thank you for all of your shop purchases as the revenue from the shop is a huge support for the Ashram. Bhole Baba Ki Jai!