

Centennial Celebrations at Holland

August 4th – 14th

Holland Ashram hosted a ten day Centenary retreat, Aug 4- 14, of initiations, guided meditations, daily discourses and question and answer sessions under the guidance of Baba Paramahansa Prajnananandaji assisted by Swami Mangalananada Giri and Yogacharyas Peter Baba of Holland, Durga Ma of Chicago and Christina Ma of Vienna.

The program was held in the specially constructed tent in the ashram premises of beautiful lush greenery with many trees shrubs and a huge pond, displaying the exhibits on the life and teachings of Gurudev and the many charitable projects of Hand in Hand and Prajnana Mission. About 200 disciples from many countries of Europe-Holland, Germany, Poland, Belgium, England and Ireland and USA attended the program. The guided meditations were elevating; the question answer sessions were enlightening. The daily discourses of Baba Prajnananandaji on the Gurudev's life with many interesting episodes and dating back to a century gave rare insights into the noble life of the great Master.



Sunday August 6, 2006

August 6, was the main Public event, a festive day with several activities planned in honor of Gurudev.

The morning event was talks by a panel of invited speakers from different religions on the chosen theme "God is One, Religions are Many." in keeping with the love of Gurudev for all religions and their one goal.

The morning program concluded with a short meditation followed by a delicious Prasad lovingly prepared by the disciples. There was a video presentation on Gurudev's life and teachings after lunch.

At 4 pm another public event a special music concert was held in the Village Hall where many devotional and spiritual songs were presented by professional artists of Holland thrilled the audience. This was followed by a brief meditation guided by Baba Prajnananandaji.

After dinner there was yet another soul stirring presentation of Indian Classical Bengali music, an attribute to Gurudev by artists of the Amsterdam area. The day ended in heavenly bliss with everyone absorbed in the thought of beloved Gurudev and his great compassion for us all.

Excerpts from the Talks of the Invited Speakers

Peter Baba of Holland a longtime disciple of Gurudev and Kriya Yogacharya, in his opening remarks mentioned how Holland ashram was Gurudev's first ashram in the West and introduced the distinguished speakers.

Prof. Dr. Witteveen , of the Sufi order, a former minister of Finance in Holland was the first to speak on the subject. In his invocation he pointed out that Allah is the name given to symbolize Perfection, Love and Harmony. He pointed out that the many religions are not able to come together under that one God as a result of the many names and forms adopted by different teachers to make it easier for the people to communicate and express their devotion to God. But unfortunately over the centuries people have become attached to these names and forms and were deeply convinced that the form they adopted was that one God and not of others and this has lead to many religious wars.

He said Sufism clarifies this 'God Concept' explaining that images and idols are only to help us along the path but they are not the reality which is beyond name and form. We should remember we are all the children of one God. All different scriptures are only different wave expressions of one voice speaking to us and pointing to the one goal – God. He complimented on the wonderful work that was done by Gurudev as a world teacher and hoped that many more illumined souls would follow.



Jeroen Witkam a monk of a monastery in Holland and also a pioneer who combined Christian tradition with Zen Meditation by introduced Zen meditation in the Monastery said it is true that there is only one God but which God? God is like electricity and we are like bulbs. Full power of God is deadly. We need to first transform to a higher voltage to be able to receive God In this multiplicity we can find oneness only as we discover the magnetic receptivity in each of us.

Rev Kunnekkadan Avarachan SVD a catholic priest from the state of Kerala, who also extensively studied Hindu philosophy and Sanskrit and is presently stationed in Amsterdam area, spoke on how religions which are supposed to bring unity among people have instead become a contradiction and cause for conflict. God should be

understood as a living and loving relationship enriched by other religions and the religious plurality. He paid a tribute to Baba Hariharanandaji coming to Europe and distributing the cr me of Indian spirituality to the West through Kriya Yoga which is very important in this multi religious and multicultural pluralistic society.



Baba Prajnananandaji's Talk

Addressing humanity as the children of immortality, Baba talked of how the modern science and information technology have made the world a smaller place. But while it cut down the distances from place to place Baba said it also has increased the distance from person to person. Even family members have no time for each other. All barriers between mind to mind and heart to heart should be broken in order to make us spiritually one.

Baba said, "God is one and religions are many - was often quoted by Gurudev Hariharanandaji. It is great opportunity for all of us to be celebrating his birth centenary at this beautiful meditation center of Holland. This great noble son of India has sacrificed his life for the spiritual uplift of all people. He had traveled to the West in spite of his failing health and taught Kriya Yoga. Gurudev said breath is his religion and all of us are connected through the breath. Breath unites the body, mind and soul and we are all breathing the same air."

Baba Prajnananandaji also said religion means reunion and separation is caused due to ignorance. All religions are like different petals making up the same beautiful flower. We should face life with a smile. Paramahansa Yoganandaji said we should carry a portable heaven wherever we go.

Giving a new meaning to the often quoted verse of the Gita, where the Lord said, sambhavami yuge yuge - he would manifest in every yuga (period of time) to protect righteousness

- Baba said yuga means a set of two, our inhalation and exhalation and divinity is waiting to be manifested in our every breath.

He concluded saying, "the challenge of the times is to live and let live and serve without ego. God is everywhere and God is in all. The sutra of breath binds us all. Through love you can experience oneness."