

## A Guru Disciple

Guru Aruneshwar was big and burly enough to play defensive line for the Dallas Cowboys back in the early 90's. And he looked like he could move quick enough to play but sometime in his life he must have made the decision to pursue his talents as a Hindu artist rather than a Dallas Cowboy.

My friend Cheridyn and I met this man in Mumbai, India at his art exhibition. He was showing his paintings of the Hindu Lord Shiva. We must have had some twinkle in our eye that attracted him about us because as we alighted to the street he said, "If you come back at 7:00 I'll show you the heart of Mumbai..." We looked at each other and then at the Guru and said, "Ok, maybe we'll see you then."

Cheridyn and I make a good team for exploring the city. We're both curious, tough, and brave or stupid enough to chance upon an adventure almost wherever we go. Needless to say we took a chance and were back at 7:00 to meet the Guru. Nobody was left in the gallery and when he saw us he moved at us like he might if he was ready to blindside a Buffalo Bills quarterback on third down. To my relief he only shook our hands.

The first thing to see in "the heart of Mumbai" was a cozy Indian restaurant. He took superb care to make us comfortable by ordering our food (being sensitive to spice limits), telling us the names of dishes, and the proper way to eat them. In conversation he was so excited about our opportunity to travel the world. We were "living out (his) dreams" he said. He encouraged us to journal hard and take lots of pictures and reminded us of our responsibility to share our dreamlike experiences with others.

After paying for the bill he took us to his van and we drove to the temple he prefers most of all in Mumbai. Along the way he imparted his Guru-like wisdom (I don't know if I'd call it that) to us. He had a little scuffle about a parking ticket before we left and explained that he yelled at the man because he was angry at his greed. He said, "The have-nots are always trying to take from the haves." An interesting proverb...

He tried to park near the temple right in front of a man's store. The man asked him to park somewhere else and the Guru couldn't understand why but he moved. He told me, "He is a have-not so he is trying to show his power." I guess I wouldn't want the Guru to park in front of my store either.

We walked up the 100 steps to the temple and took off our shoes. I saw some men meditating and was curious about the practice. I asked the Guru about it in hopes of a lesson on meditation. In a few seconds he was directing us to sit next to him on the ground. We looked up at Lord Shiva and slowly closed our eyes while taking deep breaths. Then he asked us to chant with him, "Om Nama Shiva". I think it meant something like "I praise Lord Shiva". Well, I didn't think or connect with Lord Shiva during this but I did have great peace and concentration. I asked myself how can I make Jesus the center of this religious experience to make it more meaningful for my own religious convictions.

At the end he asked how we felt and I said I felt extraordinary- with peace of mind and spirit. It was a refreshing experience. Almost as refreshing as the time at the temple was the unique Indian ice cream that our Guru treated us too on our way home. We scarfed it down quickly and all too soon our hotel was in view and we were saying

goodbye to our friend. He didn't get out to give a hug so I shook his hand and tried to express in words the special evening he gave to us. Our Guru left and Cheridyn and I hugged to at least express what a special evening it was to each other- all because we took a chance.