

SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

DECEMBER 1999 & JANUARY 2000

If you want to live peacefully,
forget the good that you have done
to the other, as well as the harm
that the other has done
to you



AUGHAR VANI, Avadhuta's Wisdom

Aghoreshwar
Baba Bhagwan Ramji

On World as Illusion

Living in an illusion, known as maya, is the subject of this title. Every religious tradition has grappled with the truth of this matter. Some refer to the real as Ultimate Reality, Brahm, or God. Everything else is an illusion, or maya. The state of consciousness which we live in is the world perceived through the body/mind. It is what we call living, as it includes all our senses and emotions, and the various situations we find ourselves. Holy men and Holy scriptures tell us that there is a greater existence, or higher state of consciousness or awareness. This state is like the sky, except you live in an area that is always cloudy. It is always there, but you don't see it because of the clouds. One might say that love is the Ultimate Reality, but because of our conditional attachments we rarely experience that quality of love.

Away from the worldly life, when one turns his attention towards the spiritual life, one hears reference to this state of consciousness or awareness. Those rare beings who try to lead us to this awareness are recognized by their kind, selfless acts, and the ability to love unconditionally. To go between the worldly and spiritual we experience fear and fearlessness, worry and carefreeness, confusion and bliss. Tasting the difference between the two leads one into serious inquiry.

The Buddha concluded that desire was the root of suffering, and yet desire is the nature of the mind. The path out of suffering therefore is to understand how the mind actually causes suffering. The mind never wants to let go of its control, and the control is based upon the misunderstanding that you are your body, you are your mind.

Never are you allowed to be without words and judgements, and allowed to relax, quiet down, and be who you really are, that what we call the Divine. It is only through the teachings of those who know the higher states of consciousness that can lead us to that

higher ground. Teachers of that magnitude transcend time, as their teachings guide us any day, year, century, or millennium.

The following verses are taken from the book, "Unmuni Ram" (the self absorbed Self), a book by Baba Kinaram. Baba Kinaram is the founding father of the ancient Aghor seat of Varanasi. Having received the teachings from Bhagwan Dattatreya in Girnar mountains in 16th century, Baba Kinaram wandered for some time in a trancelike state. When he reached Varanasi, once again he was met by Bhagwan Dattatreya and was tested and tried by him. Later on he was directed to avail himself to be of service by establishing himself in the city and by rekindling the ancient wisdom for the general public.

1. With discipline, the mind is stabilized and the world born out of illusion is annihilated. Such a mind remains stable and straight like a churning stick in the middle of the milk-pot.
2. It is due to the samkalpa and vikalpa, certainty and uncertainty of the mind, jagat, the world is born and annihilated. By curtailing the prana (breath control), the deviations of mind (passions) or the expanse of surface mind ceases to exist.
3. The world that is seen, in reality has no substance. It appears to exist only due to vikalpa (conceptualization) in our mind. With the cessation of vikalpa, the world as it is seen burns to ashes, i.e. ceases to exist.
4. As by looking at a picture of a snake and knowing it to be not a real snake, people are not afraid by it, in the same fashion for a knower this world as it appears, has no real meaning.
5. Because of the delusion in the mind this world appears and tortures like a ghost. Contemplation on the Brahman (Absolute) cleanses it, thus drives away the torturing ghost.
6. O seeker, happiness as well as sorrow are due to the maya (illusion). A creature keeps indulging in its company without understanding its true nature, taking it to be sweet but the truth is, it is the source of all the sufferings.
7. Although maya is like a picture (not real) yet the whole world is deluded by it. How strange it is that the atma (soul) that permeates everywhere in the body is unable to see itself.
8. Whatever is seen (as the world appears) is not the truth; it is just like a mirage or dance of ghosts, that it all appears to be real but is not real.
9. Those who become dispassionate towards the world and are never again attracted towards it, taking the atma (soul) to be immortal become established in the Self.
10. In the expansive mirror of mind all the things are reflected just like the reflection of the trees in the lake.

Comments: Although trees are not in the lake but appear to be there, in reality trees are somewhere else standing on the shore. But the person who has not

seen a tree takes the shadow of the trees in the lake to be real trees. In the same way all the things that are seen by the mind are nothing but reflection. The true things are somewhere else.

11. The cycle of birth and death is a creation of the cita (mind). After knowing the atma (Self) this illusion is removed just as the after finding out that the snake was really a rope, the fear is removed.

12. In order to break the shackle of suffering humans begin to gather various objects of enjoyment, instead of liberating from it they get entangled in it and suffer even more. The only way to get out of suffering is to relinquish the desire of enjoyment.

13. As millions of restless waves are borne out of a calm ocean so are senses and restless mind borne out of poised Param Brahm (Almighty, Consciousness).

14. It is the mind that makes believe an unreal world to be real, just as a magician makes believe an unreal thing to be real in a magic show.

15. Just as a ghost keeps torturing a possessed child till death, this unsubstantial world becoming real keeps tormenting the ignorant.

16. An ignorant who does not know about gold, becomes happy just by the outer appearance of a bangle but the wise becomes happy not by the outer appearance, but by recognizing the gold that the bangle is made out of.

Comments: A person who is deluded by maya and is unable to see Param Brahm (Almighty) is like the ignorant who sees only the outer beauty of the bangle and does not recognize the gold.

17. Animate and inanimate, still and moving, and whatever else is visible - it all is the creation of the One who is also the seer.

18. For the ignorant, this world seems filled with misery but for the wise it is joyous, just as for the blind the world is filled with darkness, and for others it is filled with light.

19. Just as in a pure sky, clouds appear and after a while get fused in it, in the same way, in this pure consciousness jagat (world) appears and dissolves.

20. The one who finds the sun and the rays of the sun (Brahma and the world) to be the same, is a saint. The one who sees the sun in each ray is the one who has realized the truth.

21. As in the sleep the subconscious mind produces many kinds of thoughts as dreams (which are not real), if we think clearly we will find that it is the atma (consciousness) that produces jagat (that has no independent existence of its own).

22. Pure Brahma (Consciousness) is like an ocean and the world is like the waves. As the waves keep appearing and disappearing in the ocean so does the world keep appearing and disappearing into Brahma (consciousness). It has no independent existence of its own, it is all Brahma.

23. Just as water appears in various forms as foam, bubble, a wave, a drop and dew etc. none the less it all is water, the Brahmn also appears in various forms and names yet it is all the same, Brahmn.

24. Just as ripples of water appear after dipping a pitcher in a well and disappear into it and a mirage appears and disappears in the sand, in the same fashion the whole world appears from atma and disappears into it.

25. Just as a rope in the dark appears like a snake but after knowing it the fear of snake vanishes, in the same way after knowing the real nature of Brahman, the world that appears because of misconception disappears.

26. When we forget the atman, we see the world as its manifestation just as when we forget about the rope, it appears like a snake.

27. In the dream state one is not awake and once awake there is no dream in the same way in a ignorant state one perceives death, for a awakened one atma is beyond birth and death.

28. The world is neither real nor unreal, it is a grand illusion. Although with experience it becomes visible. It is fully understood only after knowing the self.

A sweet evening at the Ashram

Tom Pickford

My New Years eve in the past have been typically a raucous meaningless event often followed by feelings of unwellness. This new years eve millennium celebration at the Ashram was none of the above, but rather one of the sweetest evenings in history.

What started out as a small gathering of people who wanted to spend a quiet meditative observance quickly grew to more than 120 folks looking for a safe and meaningful way to shed the old and slip into the new.

The ashram grounds were transformed into a festive city. Entry was by way of a path of candle light. What once was a hay barn became a pavilion hung with lanterns, tapestries, and flowers, and filled with music and laughter.

Everyone had the opportunity to let go of whatever and welcome everything by way of a fire ceremony. There was lots of chanting, dancing and the opportunity to just BE in the company of like-minded souls. Bellies were filled to bursting with sumptuous food Reminiscent of a loaves and fishes event. The cheesecake was divine.

Satsang with Babaji was inspired and the sharing was both wise and humorous. Midnight tiptoed in during a quiet meditation and the new year was honored with wave after wave of OM, OM, OM and silence.

New Millennium welcome gathering at the ashram:

John MacKay

The new years eve celebration held at the Ashram was a huge success. After being greeted with warm hellos and a gardenia boutonniere, more than one hundred participants were invited into the brand new family hall, to enjoy a sumptuous feast lovingly prepared by Carol Bojarsky. Following the meal was satsang, then chanting and a supta (circle) dance around the fire, where everyone made offerings of letting go and of gratitude, a half dozen at a time. As the new year approached, everyone quieted down, chanted OM, and then observed silence through 15 minutes into the new year. Finally the meditation bell rang, and we celebrated with hugs and well wishes, champagne and desert. The joyful evening ended the same way it began, by doing Arti, acknowledging the Divine within.

The event actually began back in July. Many people through out the world were expressing fear of catastrophic possibilities, so we decided to offer our community a safe and loving environment to bring in the New Year. Having made the commitment, we proceeded to convert a rough work shop and adjacent horse stalls into our new family hall and fully equipped kitchen. The miraculous aspect of the project was that while we were pouring concrete and hanging sheet rock, we were actually cementing permanent friendships, which are the very foundation of a genuine community.

Upon reflection, as wonderful as the food and chanting and dancing were, the core of the evening was satsang. At this time we all gathered in our cozy yurt to share our thoughts about community and the New Year. Baba Hariji declared that the message for the new millennium is that the individuals must come together as a family, as a community, leaving behind their fears and anxieties. He said that mankind has found itself isolated from its true Self, and is paralyzed with fear. The way out of the pain and suffering of this isolation is helping others, putting others ahead of your self. For too long man has put a premium upon material things, and out of fear of losing them they isolate themselves from others. Fearing they might be robbed of these things, they rob themselves of what is truly of value, being their spiritual, loving self. Coming under the shelter of the community founded upon love and compassion, and under the guidance of the Guru is the salvation of this age.

The Blemish of Bad-Company

(excerpt from the discourses of Aghoreshwar)

Date and Time: February 20, 1982; 11:00 A.M.

Darshi! The company of ignoble and mean people is sorrowful. The company of fools brings sorrow. The company of people of low tendency and temperament also produces pain and aggravation.

I have heard a story. A swan helped a crow in sorrow. You know, the crow is ignoble, cruel and foolish. Even later the crow kept meeting the swan to express his gratitude to the swan. The swan's wife advised the swan - "You did right to help the crow, but now leave it at that. Do not keep the crow's company now. It can bring bad results." Darshi! The swan ignored his wife's words. On the crow's request, he went to him in the tree where the crow had its nest.

The two differed also in family traits, character, and category. The swan was aware of this fact, but when one's right judgment is lost, this is what happens. Sitting in its nest on that branch, the crow let its droppings fall on the head of a man sitting directly under the tree,

and then leaving the swan on the branch, it flew away to sit on another branch. The person on whose head the droppings fell shot pellets at the branch in the direction where the crow had been, but where the swan sat now. The pellets wounded the swan. It staggered and fell to the ground. It did not die, but because of the pellet wounds, it remained in excruciating agony. And there, the crow left the swan and ran away.

When the she-swan heard the news she came to the accident site. On seeing the swan's condition she said - "I humbly told you again and again the company of a person of ignoble background is hurtful. It is not worth keeping such company. Such a person is not fit to be a friend, but you did not listen to me. The result is, that cunning fellow showed you his cleverness and ran away leaving you helpless in this condition."

Darshi! The results of keeping the company of idiotic and cunning people are terrible. The company of ignoble people is similarly terrible. One should never make friends with them or keep their company, under any circumstances. One should not even help them. One should not even talk to them.

The company of dirty people, and that of dirt itself, inevitably stinks. This is a fact. Something happened just today along these lines. I have known a certain man for a long time. He used to keep the company of undesirable people. He used to look down upon a friend of his own village and never missed an opportunity to put him down. In reaction to this treatment, this maligned person plotted revenge. The elder brother of this first man died this day of a bullet wound, and the man himself has been admitted to the hospital with bullet wounds and broken limbs. The company of undesirable people resulted in this merciless and terrible situation. He bears this heartless outcome because of the low companions he once kept and the desire to gain praise amongst them.

"The noble are thoughtful and are fit to be befriended."

Ashram steps into the new millennium

Sri Sarveshwari Samooh Ashram believes in one Humanity and one God. Children of the same Mother, we want collectively to grow, develop and attain peace, prosperity and happiness without any conflict among us. The members of the Samooh are trying to implement these ideas in their own lives, and in so doing benefit others in society through their actions. It is the Aghoreshwar who, symbolizing Sarveshwari gives energy and direction to the members of the Samooh through his potent teachings.

The Samooh is a meeting place for those people who gather together to try to solve the problems and difficulties facing them day to day, not only in their personal lives but in the greater society. The Samooh is an organization of persons who have the desire to practice devotion., cultivate virtue and to be of help to others in the spirit of service without pomp or show.

For the purpose of carrying on the work properly and systematically in accordance with this particular aim, a Board of Directors has been formed. Persons who have faith and experience as well as will and determination to carry on the work of the Samooh are invited to be members of the Board. The Board is made up of a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and working committees to oversee the sustenance and growth of the Ashram and ideals of the Samooh.

It is important for members of the Board to gather together as well as participate in the various Ashram activities, including Guru Purnima, the two Navaratri and other gatherings that they continue to grow in the teachings and deepen in their own practices. It is only through unity and strength that the ideals of the Samooh can be achieved. With the blessings of Aghoreshwar Bhagwan Ramji, the Samooh will go a long way towards helping and guiding mankind.

The Sonoma Yoga Ashram has taken steps toward the goal of being of service to mankind. For the first time in the western hemisphere the teachings of Aghor are offered on a daily basis. There can be no greater service to society than to house the direct transmission of Guru to disciple, maintaining that ancient tradition. Under the daily guidance of Baba Harihar Ramji, the Divine Force and Blessings of the Aghoreshwar become active in each participants life. The Ashram offers the highest model on how to live, teaching peace and harmony to all. This teaching takes place during all activities, building projects, cooking, in formal classes, or sitting by the dhuni, fire quietly sharing.

The Ashram has made a commitment to the youth of all ages to create programs to enable them to take upon the challenges of life as a responsible citizen and set examples in society. The goals of these programs are to develop self-motivation, develop self respect and respect for others, develop deep sense of peace and well being, develop deep interest in the progress and prosperity of life and society, and learn essential disciplines for success and happiness in life. This project has been under way for one year, and is in process of growing in scope to encompass more children.

The Ashram is making plans for the expansion of its herb and vegetable garden, and it's fruit orchard to meet the communities need for organic medicinal herbs, and to provide free food for those in need. The most important goal of the Sonoma Ashram is to expand further into the local community, embracing each individual with love and kindness.

Peace and Purpose

During Sunday morning satsang at the Ashram in Sonoma, Baba Hariji spoke these words about peace:

Peace.....Remember that peace. Touch that peace that is always there within you. Acknowledge its presence. Welcome the breath, a mindful breath, holding that peace in your heart, and be grateful for it and feel its blessing. The more we remember that it is there, the more it shines in our life. When we are peaceful, our life expresses itself in such a beautiful way. When we are peaceful, no matter where we are, our presence brings peace, and our very touch becomes a healing touch.

With peace in our heart, as we sit and meditate, the relationship with our mantra deepens. That is when we begin to taste the richness of our mantra, begin to feel the Guru's presence and protection in our life. In such a state we feel grounded and steady like a rock or a mountain. For a sadhaka, practice is very important. Maintain and remember that peace within. Do not to let go of it; do not lose it for anything.

When we get into arguments about this or that, come back to the peace. Take a step back to reconcile with whatever is agitating you. When we do this, it always makes us greater. Taking a step in the direction of humility is not a weakness.

When I was a child, I remember my father taking me to the mango grove on the farm near my village. I was 6 or 7 at that time. He pointed toward a tree with one branch so heavy with mangos that it nearly drooped to the ground. Another branch had no mangos. It was up in the air, being blown by wind in many directions. My father said, "Look. The branch that has mangoes is bowing down to the earth." That's all he said. It really didn't make any sense to me at the time, but much later it made plenty of sense. The one that has some weight within, is always humble, is willing to bow, willing to allow the will of others. If I have no weight, I'm up in the air reacting to every little thing that comes my way. This is a sign of poverty.

When I find myself allowing others to express themselves without my intervention, it helps me to maintain my inner peace. I can smile at myself. Although knowing that I can do it better, I allow others to express themselves. Such moments are moments of glory, moments of bliss.

Together we are creating this beautiful place (Ashram). Yesterday, someone asked me, "What is the purpose of the Ashram? What is the vision? Why are we building these things? The way I look at it, what is ours? What does 'ours' really mean? There is nothing that is permanent, not even this body that I claim to be mine. It is leaving me everyday. Anything could happen in the next moment. This place is as permanent as any other place.

If we sat around and waited for a million dollars to come to buy more suitable land, we would find ourselves waiting around, and waiting around does not go hand in hand with our teachings. Live fully in each moment, with trust that if we are doing the right thing, whatever happens will happen for the good.

If we have to leave, we leave a place in better condition than we found it. We are not taking anything from here. We are only adding to it, and for the time being it will be a comfortable place where community can gather - a place, which is warm in the winter, and pleasant in the summer. Then this person said, "Well, I am really uncomfortable with growth. I don't want to really see growth. It's nice when it's small and less to maintain." I could exactly see where this was coming from. People get so comfortable and stuck, that anything new threatens them. We have to keep ourselves open and accessible to new people and ideas.

A sadhaka's life should be exposed to all kinds of people, many kinds of people. The more people sadhaka touches, the better. Creating an Ashram, particularly for those who are regular or longtime participants in the ashram requires a large heart. They, especially, have to have a tremendous amount of space in their hearts to welcome others, to accept whoever arrives.

I have an image of an Ashram resident in my mind. The image of an Ashram dweller is one who is very steady, quiet, very peaceful and very respecting. Visitors and guests have to be exposed to it. This is the Ashram's job, to expose those qualities to those who may be deprived of it. It is one of the functions of the Ashram. There are many others.

In so doing, we become a school in our community. We also become a place that nurtures growth in ourselves while teaching. It is not easy to live in a small Ashram like this one. In such close quarters you get to face yourself in many ways. There is no place to hide. Where there are crowds, it is easier to live. Joining the crowd, you sing and dance and feel good for a while, but seldom do you get a chance to work on yourself.

I have many thoughts in my mind on this subject, but what is your vision of the Ashram?
What is your vision of maintaining peace in your heart?

I am going to pose a question, a direct question to each one of you. Have you experienced growth in yourself, and have you really acknowledged it without seeking acknowledgement from someone else? Have you ever acknowledged to yourself your growth and really accepted it? And were you so firm in your acceptance that you didn't seek approval from anybody else? Have you experienced this lately? It could be something very small; it doesn't have to be something big. What did you feel at that moment? It could be something like an act of humility, kindness, or forgiveness that you did, and felt that expansion within. Remember just one incident. I want to hear just one incident, which stayed with you. Thank you for listening so patiently. I bow to that peace in the form of the Divine in your heart.

OM.



SRI SARVESHWARI SAMOOH, USA
Sonoma Yoga Ashram

P.O. Box 950 1087 Craig Avenue Sonoma, CA 95476 USA
PH 707-996-8915 FAX 707-996-0388
Send email: info@sonomaashram.org

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