

SRI SARVESHWARI TIMES

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“This life and the whole world are made up of dreams. All the dreams you are seeing about your life are imaginations arising in you and will disappear with the arrival of light.”

~Wisdom of Aghoreshwar Bhagwan Ram~

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

MAYA

According to the Yogic tradition, this world is nothing but *maya* - illusion. Or, as Baba said, “You are not what you think you are.”

On this stage of life, we play so many roles, like an actor. We wear different costumes, and play many different parts, like mother, father, husband, wife, son, daughter, friend. *Maya* is at work in each of those roles. But who is the one who is playing all of those parts? Who is the one identifying with all of those characters?

We get trapped in *maya* when we identify only with our struggles in life and do not keep the bigger picture in mind. The very moment we remember the bigger picture, whatever is in front of us loses its grasp. The truth is that everyone has come alone and will leave alone. For everyone who is born, the day of his or her departure has also been set.

There is a saying in Hindi: “This *hamsa* will fly away alone.” The literal translation of “*hamsa*” is swan, and in Indian thought, it is a metaphor for the soul, the life force, the one that is residing in this house that is the body.

Listen to the breath coming in and the breath going out – the sound is HAM-SA. This *hamsa* lives in this house - the body. We spend our whole life identifying with our body and our story. But when *hamsa*, our breath, our life force, leaves the body, the “I” is gone, and the body is taken by our relatives or caretakers to do with it whatever they need to do.

Realizing this life force that is within is identifying with the true Self. The identity that we ascribe to our body, is the illusion, is the *maya*. Everything that we do in this life, all of our struggles, all our dramas ... they will pass. Anything that passes, anything that is transient, is not real. What is real is that which is constant, that which is always there. That is the Self, with a capital “S”. Identify with that.

The blue sky is always there. Clouds come and go. Sometimes clouds can come and stay for weeks and we can get totally overwhelmed by them. We are not even aware of the blue sky, but it doesn't mean that it's not still there. It's there, sometimes we just cannot see it.

Thinking about that blue sky, thinking about that part of the self which is beyond the drama right in front of us, which is beyond what we are so consumed by - even thinking about that can be called



a spiritual practice. Yes, we are born and we have our struggles. We have our challenges, our celebrations and all of those things. What gives us strength to go through it all is not losing the sight of that which is always there.

Rama was the God incarnate on Earth. His dear brother Lakshmana was shot by an arrow, and he was laying on the ground, unconscious. Rama sat down next to his brother's unconscious body, and started weeping, "You left the kingdom with me, and I have given my word to your mother that you will come back with me, and here you lay in the dust."

One of Rama's ministers came to him, and said, "You are God incarnate. Why are you crying over this unconscious body?" Rama said, "Yes, I may be God incarnate, but I am in a human body, and there is attachment to this brother of mine. So yes, I am crying. But I'm also aware that this is *maya*."

We will feel emotions through our experience of the world - through our challenges and struggles. Cry if you want to cry. But also be aware of the stillness that lies behind it, the steadiness and firmness that is behind it. Know that, in taking this human life, I will go through this *maya*. I will experience that which is moving, that which is transient, that which is changing.

There are schools of thought that will say, "Everything is *maya*, don't pay any attention to it." But in our tradition, *maya* has its place. We just need to remember that it is not the whole thing. Be human - go through your emotions and fears, go through your struggles. Do not deny them - embrace them. What gives you strength to do that is knowing that they are not the whole thing in life. That is what makes you free.

Maya can be very, very, very tricky. Narada is known as one of the great sages. One day in his meditation he became so still, and he could see that the world was nothing but *maya*. The clarity had come to him so deeply. He went to his guru, Narayan – Lord Vishnu, and said, "I have overcome *maya*, Gurudev, I can see that it's illusion, it's transient!"

Vishnu said, "Oh, very good. Come, I'm just going for a walk." After walking for a little while, Vishnu said, "I'm a little thirsty. I'm going to sit under this tree. Narada, could you go and fetch me a glass of water from that pond?"

Narada went down to the pond, and dipped his pot in the water. As he lifted the pot out of the water, he looked up and saw a beautiful celestial maiden rising out of the water, her sari drenched by the water, clinging to her body. Narada looked at her and totally lost himself in her beauty.

He approached her and introduced himself, and said, "I would like to spend my life with you." Narada went to meet her father, and the father agreed to let them get married. They started living a happy life and had seven children. One day the flood came to their village and the water started rising all around them. His first son drowned. Then, the second son, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, the seventh. Then his wife drowned.

Overcome by grief, Narada pleaded, "Oh, my God, please help me. I have lost everything." He sat down, sobbing at his misfortune. After some time, there was a little tap on his shoulder - "Narada, where is my water?" Narada had become so caught up in *maya*, that he had totally forgotten what he had come there to do!

Whatever we think we are very close to, that in itself is *maya*. Yes, engage in the world – we are a part of it too. But know that whatever we are identifying with, it's not everything and try to sometime take a step back from that, to recognize that freedom.



Ashram's Daily Meditation Schedule

Monday - Friday

6:15 am - Meditation

7:00 am - Morning Reading

6:00 pm – Meditation

*Thursday 5:00pm – Guided Meditation & Yoga in Spanish

Saturday

8:00 am Meditation

8:30 am Morning Reading

6:00 pm Meditation

Sunday

10:00 am Meditation

10:40 am Babaji's Satsang

6:00 pm Meditation

Take a moment to check out the Ashram's new website!

www.sonomaashram.org