

Satsang with Om Baba

(Rishikesh 2019)

The beauty of Mahamaya

The purpose of being here is of course because we want to know the Truth, we want to awaken to some higher realization, we want to step beyond the illusion, we want to realize who we are, we want to know something greater, more beautiful, more pure, more genuine.

Now, why should it be difficult? Why should there be any difficulty at all to know our true nature, to know Life itself? Why should there be any difficulty in knowing our Self? One very obvious difficulty is that the illusion is so beautiful! This grand illusion, this Mahamaya, this manifestation, this cosmic play is so beautiful! Is ever fresh, ever changing, has such a variety, infinite variety! That's why in the Vedic tradition it is compared, it is illustrated as a very beautiful lady, that is Mata Devi, Durga Devi, Mahamaya. A supremely beautiful lady who knows the art of being ever beautiful, ever perfect, ever attracting the attention of Lord Shiva or the Self. It is her art to be so attractive, it is her science.

So, who can say really how it started? Did Lord Shiva created Mahamaya? Probably... and when I say Lord Shiva, I mean did our own Self – did we create this extremely beautiful manifestation? And if we can create anything, if the Supreme Being has the capacity to create anything why not to create something supremely beautiful?

It makes sense! But...by manifesting such a great beauty, the Supreme Being has been captivated and absorbed into this – He has forgotten his own Self, his attention is always outwards, absorbed, captivated, trapped in the great beauty of the illusion, so He never turns his attention inwards! The Self never turns his attention towards Himself, but is addicted to the beauty of the Mahamaya, is drunk and intoxicated by her beauty. So that is the main difficulty in knowing our Self – Mahamaya is so beautiful!

The great illusion that we want to be free from is so beautiful, that it is questionable *if* we want to be free from this or not. Everybody can say *I want to be free from the illusion*. Everybody can say *I want to transcend the illusion, I want to turn my eyes away from the unreal and towards the real*. Everybody can say – but who can do it? So, observe this in yourself.

We were saying the other day “*the entrance to the real is the exit from the unreal*”. It is one door, entrance and exit is one and the same thing. So, the process of turning our attention inwards, it requires that we shut off the attention from the outside.

That’s why meditation is so precious. During meditation we should be able to forget everything else, forget our worldly duties, our worldly concerns, our worldly desires, fears, anything, forget completely all this, forget the people that surround us, the people we love, the people we hate, the people we don’t know. Forget our worldly duties, ultimately forget our own body, forget our own mind, forget our beliefs, our opinions, our religions, our identities, forget all this, this is all external, this is all illusion!

And if we manage to do so, then we have the capacity to turn the attention towards its own source, towards the source of the awareness and realize where this awareness emanates from. Realize the entity that shines, realize the shining One, realize the Self. Should it be difficult? Of course not! But we are very much intoxicated by the beauty of the Mahamaya, by the beauty of the illusion - so much intoxicated, so much infatuated! We believe we cannot live without it, we believe we cannot live even without a part of it, if somebody removes a part of the illusion we feel *I will die, I cannot live anymore without it*.

This illusion is so intelligent, it knows when to smile at you, it knows when to scare you, when to slap you, it knows how to keep your attention constantly on her, it knows the science. When this illusion becomes exceedingly beautiful it is of course much more difficult to transcend, it fully and forcefully catches our attention. We have no chance. That’s why they say that Heaven is not the correct place to realize the Self, that’s why they say in the Vedas “*don’t wish for the Heaven, this is not the place to realize your Self*”. If you are so much attached to things of medium beauty, what will you do in Heaven when everything is so perfect? What will you do in Heaven when there is no pain, no frustrations, no sickness, no death? What will you do there, how will you detach yourself from that beauty? You have no chance, that’s why here is the perfect place.

On the other hand, on the other side of the coin, if Mahamaya, if the illusion is too much difficult, too much heavy or too much painful, it becomes very difficult to disassociate from her. This difficulty, this pain, again attracts our attention too much! For example, if you have a big pain in your body, if you suffer in your body, you don’t feel very much like meditating. The pain attracts your attention! Just look yourself when you sit for meditation you have pain in your knees, you can’t meditate, just by little pain. If you have psychological pain, it will disturb very much your meditation. It will catch your attention completely, and that is the reason why they also say “*in hell you cannot realize the Self*”. Neither in heaven, neither in hell. Because in hell constantly you run for your survival,

you run to bring some balance to yourself, you think to yourself *First I bring some balance then I will sit and meditate...*but this “*then*” never comes.

So, the space in between, this earthly plane, this human life, that is the best place for Self-realization, that is the best place to transcend the Mahamaya, the grand illusion, and in this space, the earthly plane, the best manifestation we can have is this human being. Only the human being has the capacity to do it because only the human being has the capacity to transcend his instincts. The animal cannot do it, is too much dominated by its instincts. Cannot say ‘no’ to them. The human being has the capacity to step above his own instincts, above his own animal or earthly tendencies. This human embodiment, this earthly plane, this is the grand opportunity, this is the great invitation for Self-realization. That’s why you should not lose this chance! Utilize the tools you have in your hand, utilize your own intellect, utilize the guidance you have from the wise beings, utilize your clear determination to know the Truth, to know your own Divinity, to know your own Self.

It is true that the Mahamaya is very beautiful, but the beauty of the illusion is not compared the least with the beauty of our Self. And the great beauty of the illusion has one very great defect that you should know. It is very unstable! In one moment it is beautiful, in the next moment painful. It goes up for some time, then it goes down; it appears as success one day, it becomes failure the next; it is peace one day, it is conflict the next; it is a continuous sequence of ‘ups’ and ‘downs’, like waves. That is the great defect!

So, when we realize that the pain that we receive from the illusion is not only equal to the joy, but many times even greater, then we can start to consider if there is something more beautiful, something without this element of pain. You may think it’s a utopia... You may think you cannot be free from pain... Here the wise people come and tell us ‘*Yes we can be free!*’

This is what the Buddha actually taught, the Four Noble Truths. He said the first truth is that there is suffering! Can anybody deny this truth? Can anybody say *I do not suffer? This is the first truth*, said Lord Buddha. Then he said *There is a solution to be free from suffering*, that is very important! That is very important because the majority of people feel there is no solution to this, they feel ‘*This is my life, I suffer... I was born through suffering, I will die through suffering and in between I will suffer. There is no solution.*’ So Buddha said something very revolutionary, he said ‘*Yes! We can be free from this...*’.

And the way he suggested is called the eightfold path. We will not go into detail in this now, but, in two words, the way to be free is spiritual practice itself and spiritual

realization in any form... Maybe the Buddhist form, maybe the Hindu form, any form... But ultimately whatever form leads to the realization of the Self.

So, we said that the Supreme Being created the Mahamaya, the great illusion through His own natural power. Some people ask '*How He created it?*' It is His natural power, just like the ordinary human being has the natural power of imagination. Through our imagination we can create whatever we like. In the same way the Supreme Being, let us call Him Lord Shiva, created the Mahamaya, the manifestation and He was Himself captivated so much by her beauty that He forgot Himself.

Now, whatever this Supreme Being experiences externally, either joy or suffering, that is part of the illusion, that's not part of Himself. That suffering is an object of our awareness, it is something that we perceive externally, if it is suffering of the body or it is suffering of the mind or it is suffering of emotions, whatever suffering it is something we experience externally, is not inside the One who experiences. Can you follow what I'm saying? It is not inside the source of the awareness, it is an object of the awareness. It is a part of the illusion, it doesn't belong to the Lord of the illusion. If the Lord is identified with this illusion, then He will suffer. If the Lord remembers Himself and stays inside His own nature, He will never suffer, because suffering does not belong to His nature. Pure existence is His nature! There is no suffering there, there is no ups and downs.

So, the message of Lord Buddha was '*You can be free from suffering*' and the way to do it is by realizing who you truly are. By realizing that this suffering is something external to you, something coming and going, by stopping identifying with it. In other words we *can* be free from suffering! We can realize our Self, there should be no doubt about this!

But...the vital question is: '*Do we want to? Do we want to be free from our precious suffering? Do we want to be free from the sources of our suffering?*' There is no question if we can or if we cannot, but there is a question if we want to. Many times we have things in our life, maybe it is people, maybe it is objects, maybe it is duties and we can clearly see that this is the cause of my suffering! We can clearly see it! But we don't want to be free from that, we say *No, I stay with it, it is precious to me!* Or we have some kind of hope, we think '*Maybe one day it will stop being a source of suffering*'... And this hope is never fulfilled and it keeps us bounded.

There are things in our life that perhaps is not easy to be free from, even if they are a source of suffering. Sometimes there is some destiny working, sometimes there is some greater duty working, perhaps... But there are so many things in our life which are simply our own fancy, we just keep them because we enjoy them and we endure suffering from them. The intelligent person must be able to recognize the difference, like: '*Ok there are*

some things we are suffering from, we cannot be free from them at this moment, we endure them, no problem,' and there are some other things that 'Just a moment, what am I doing here? Why do I stay here in this place? Why do I stay in this connection with this person? Why do I keep on doing this work? Just a moment, do I really have to?' So, there are many times, many moments that we do have a choice to be free from suffering or from the source of suffering and this is the moment to put our intelligence and our willpower into practice.

The practice of the true spiritual person is to be content in his own Self. When we grow this contentment we become more and more independent of the ups and downs of the illusion, simply staying content on our own existence!

*Because this existence we cannot lose,
this existence cannot be polluted,
it cannot be taken away even by time itself,
this existence is permanent, is perfect,
it is our own.*

This is the highest practice, then all other practices they help towards this indirectly, like Japa, Self-enquiry, studying of the Scriptures, meeting people of realization, charities, austerities, Yoga, etc..., all this helps indirectly to recognize our taintless nature and stay in this.

So, the beauty of Mahamaya is very great, supremely great! But remember, it is mixed with suffering and suffering cannot be removed from Mahamaya, it's impossible. It can be reduced, it can be minimized if a person is very, very intelligent and very moral and lives in a way harmonious to the universe. It can be minimized, but it cannot be removed. On the other hand, it is naturally absent in the Lord of Mahamaya, naturally, without effort. And the Lord of Mahamaya is the Self.

So, the beauty of the Mahamaya is one of the greatest obstacles for Self-realization. Our attachment to this beauty, our unwillingness to let it go, our unwillingness to let go even of a part of it, our unwillingness to let go of anything – that is the great obstacle. Our self-imposed obstacle.

In the Mahabharata there was a great king by the name Dhritarashtra and he was without sons. He grew old and he didn't have a progeny, he didn't have children and then at his old age his wife became pregnant. He was so happy, he was celebrating! Finally, he got

son, he got a successor to take the throne, finally there's a hope in his lineage. But... at the time of the birth of his son, terrible omens appeared all over the Earth, in the sky, in the land... The sky became red, the Sun was hidden behind dark clouds, the jaks started howling, children were crying everywhere, the birds were hidden...many, many terrible omens happened all over the land. Now, the wise people recognized these omens, they went to the king straightaway, they said to him: *"Oh great king, please listen to us, you have always listened to our advice, now listen to us now at this grave moment! This child of yours that is now born, will bring destruction to all of our race, it will be the source of the destruction to the whole kingdom. Please, O lord, give him away! Renounce him, send him to the forest!"* Now the king said: *"How can I do this? He is my son, he is my only son, how can I renounce my baby son? I cannot possibly do this thing!"*

Then the wise people said to him: *"Listen, O king, for the sake of a family one child can be renounced. For the sake of a village one family can be renounced. For the sake of a country one village can be renounced. For the sake of the whole world one country can be renounced. And for the sake of one's own Self the whole world can be renounced!"* The king didn't listen. He grew up the son, who became Duryodhana the greatest villain of Mahabharata. Indeed, he destroyed the whole kingdom by himself. The king wanted to save one child, then he had the whole kingdom destroyed by his infatuation, by his attachment.

So, many times our life is like this. There is sometimes one small thing we need to take out of our life to save our whole life and we have the option, we have the choice. Don't do the same mistake like king Dhritarashtra! And as the wise ones said: *"For the sake of one's own Self the whole world can be renounced!"* The whole Universe, the whole of Mahamaya can be renounced to know who we are. Be ready to do so! It's worth! Even if you are intimidated to do so, even if you are scared to do so, why not experiment? Why not try? This is what makes the difference between revolutionary and exceptional beings and beings who are staying on a lower level. Revolutionary beings were brave, they experimented, they stepped out of their boundaries! They did something radical! They stepped out of the mass mentality. They thought: *'What will happen if I renounce everything? Everything, including my own beliefs, my own attachments, everything, everything! If I take everything out what will happen?'* Great bliss happened!

Of course, to renounce something materially and to keep pondering about it in your mind that doesn't help very much. Just to wear the clothes of a monk and go in a monastery and keep on thinking about anything, people, objects, gadgets, everything... That will not help much! When we speak about renunciation, means to be free from it!

Renounce the desires, renounce the worries, renounce the concerns, renounce the identity, everything, everything... What will remain?

If you cannot do it in your material life, you can do it in meditation, and you should do it in meditation! To renounce everything! When you sit for meditation, say to yourself:

“Now for one hour I have no father, I have no mother,

for one hour I have no husband, I have no wife,

I have no children, no brothers or sisters,

I have no neighbors,

I have no duties, I have no obligations.

Nobody expects me, nobody expects anything from me.

For one hour I am free to stay as my own Self.

I don't need to do anything, no duty!

For one hour the world does not depend upon me,

for one hour the world does not concern me,

only my own pure existence concerns me, only what I truly am!

For one hour I will be content in my own Being.

Why to desire anything else? I have everything here, this very moment!

For one hour I renounce all opinions I have about myself,

I renounce my nationality, I renounce my gender,

I am not a man, I am not a woman,

I don't have a religion, I am not a Hindu, I am not a Christian, I am not a Buddhist,

I am not a spiritual man, I am not a material man,

I am not a householder, I am not a sannyasin.

For one hour I am nothing! I am just free!

I am nothing and no one!

For one hour I am without labels, I cannot be defined, I cannot be limited.

For one hour I will not limit myself with any concerns,

I will not limit myself with any beliefs, I will stay unlimited, pure, untainted.

For one hour I have no name, no identity, no story,

I have no past, I have no future.

For one hour I am free, boundless, pure, fully content in my own Self, in perfect peace.

For one hour I am Life itself, pure Life, pure awareness.

I am complete in my own Being. In that Space I am complete.”

And this is my natural space, I can come back here any moment, this space can never go away, this Space is my Self. I don't need money to have this space. I don't need some special qualities or qualifications. This is my natural space, this is my home, this is where I can always return.

In this manner the spiritual person can always return to his natural place. It is so simple! In this manner one should meditate and grow this capacity, so you can do it by yourself. Staying in that space for one, two hours per day is a necessity, it's a vital necessity! After this you can come out and do all your worldly duties as you like, but you need to come back in that space of the Self daily to recharge yourself, to remember. And although the beauty of Mahamaya is great, it cannot at all be compared with the beauty of the true Self.

- Om Shanti Shanti Shanti! -