

These are the questions and answers with Baba Hari Dass at the Hanuman Fellowship Satsang at the Pacific Cultural Center on Sunday, October 1, 2000. Prem Dass read the chalkboard. Reading: from the Ramayana.

Q: Is everything that happens to us always connected to a cause?

A: Yes, there can't be uncaused action. Cause is karma samskara.

Q: Does it always have to play out or can it be changed?

A: Karmas to be worked out: they can change from a high degree to a low degree. For example, a person is supposed to get killed; the person may get out with some small injury.

Q: Is the reason for the change in that person's karma their own action?

A: Yes, by virtuous action, the intensity of negative karmas gets lighter. For this reason all religions preach to live a virtuous life.

Q: What's the purpose of aura meditation and what is the benefit?

A: Aura is vyana prana, extending out four fingers width outside the body. It's the life force; it's the divine existence within. By concentrating on the aura, we are contacting the divine within ourselves.

Q: I've heard that you said that a yogi who lives in the jungle might have an aura that lights up the whole jungle?

A: I don't remember saying, but an enlightened sage's presence expands in a form of peace.

Q: Is it one's samskara to be enlightened or is it one's joy?

A: Everything is samskaric; our joy is also samskaric. We choose to be virtuous because we have that samskara.

Q: What's the best way to confront the fear of death which is experienced as pain or fear in the heart while meditating?

A: Fear of death is in all living beings because everyone wants to live. This fear of death is created by raga and dvesha kleshas which are the afflictions of attachment and aversion. As long as a person's mind doesn't go beyond attachment and aversion, fear of death will be there.

Q: If even the choice of enlightenment is based on samskara, is everything predestined?

A: Predestined but the time is not fixed.

Q: What is the message behind the two sad stories in the reading today? The first was the old couple jumping in the funeral pyre of their son, and the second was Dasaratha dying of grief in the banishment of his son. What's the best way to interpret and understand this?

A: Intensity of pain can remove attachment to life. When living becomes more painful than death, then one chooses to die.

- Q: Does that remove the parent's attachment to their child? Is the attachment to the memory of the son weakened and they choose to express it by their jumping in the funeral pyre?
- A: The samskara was worked out but the samskara of attachment remains until the samskara of dispassion gets stronger. Dasaratha killed Shравan Kumar by mistake. His parents died lamenting. Now by his two boons to Kaikeyi, his son was banished to the jungle. He died the same way as Shравan Kumar's parents. The samskara of killing was worked out.
- Q: If Dasaratha and Shравan Kumar's parents had gained immense dispassion, then there wouldn't be their deaths from the cause of lamenting?
- A: Then there was no need to lament. Lamenting is caused by attachment.
- Q: Is exile and banishment a common theme for a spiritual practitioner in today's world?
- A: In the yoga system, a yuga is for 12 years. Within this twelve years, the yogi lives in the gurukul. For 2 years the yogi lives independently to reflect on what the yogi has learned. In political way, there was a rule that if a person was out of the kingdom for 12 years, then the person cannot become a king. For this reason, Kaikeyi chose 12 years.
- Q: What is the symbolism of Dasaratha?
- A: Dasaratha = chariot of ten senses. Sound is the object of the ears created by the ether element, the subtlest of the five elements.
- Q: Does austerity produce dispassion or when dispassion comes, does one automatically do austerity?
- A: Dispassion creates austerity. Austerity creates dispassion. But dispassion comes first. Viveka = wisdom --> vairagya = dispassion --> tapaha = austerity.
- Q: If there's no attachment, then there's no karma created and no samskara?
- A: Yes, all samskaras are created by motivated action. Dasaratha's motive was not to kill Shравan Kumar but his motive was to kill.
- Q: How does dispassion relate to caring about others and love?
- A: Dispassion relates to freedom from self-interest or selfishness. Caring for others is not selfish.

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