

4 October 1971

READING 2

Phase 2: The Search for the Source of these glimpses of Truth

Setting up our aim as expressed by the idea of Param-Atman, we find that we must seek first the Individual Self or Atman, and we can only do this by a process of exclusion – ‘Neti, Neti’, ‘not this, not this’.

Several of His Holiness’s stories (like the one quoted in our Summer Programme) start with the idea of a King (Param-Atman) making an announcement which attracts many people, but ‘one man’ (the Atman) goes right through all obstacles that separate him from the King without turning aside. This means that we can tell the Atman only by successful results. The final result, the goal of Self-realization, is the merging of the Atman with the Universal – the drop returning to the ocean. All that we call ‘I’ is shed on the way, like ‘a mirage which depends on certain conditions of light and disappears only when those conditions disappear’.

Metaphysical discussions about ‘I’ and ‘not I’, about ‘subject and object’ are a waste of time. The Atman, we are told, is to be discovered like this:

S. Sit quietly, feel your body and let it relax. When the body is relaxed, the breathing and circulation find themselves in a state of agitation since the body is being kept still. At this point one feels nervous; but slowly the body-chemistry adjusts, and a smooth and balanced rhythm of breathing and heartbeat follows.

But then, of course, comes the mind, the most mobile of all. When it doesn’t find the body and its chemistry moving in support, it picks up points to play with, and starts rocketing. It will rush to any minute source of sound or any mental picture, and engage in unnecessary duels with any thought or idea or dream it can provoke.

At this stage one needs to feel an expansion of one’s being so that it covers the whole of our universe (since each person’s ‘world’ is created by his own inner mechanism, out of a world of vibrations). Once this is established, one recognises that everything is happening within one’s own organism, *and the Self emerges as observer*. Now the Self gradually takes command, and though he observes that such and such things are happening, he lets them happen without bothering about them, or ‘identifying’ with them, *being only a witness*. This deprives the mind of its power to dominate, so it loses its force and speed, and ultimately settles down.

In this peaceful state of body, breathing and mind, the Self recharges the whole organism from the Source of energy and bliss. This is what we earn by meditating.

(Record, 8 August 1964)

Don’t be sad if you feel so far from achieving this. Just try to understand what is meant by the words:

At this stage one needs to feel an expansion of one’s being so that it covers the whole universe.

The mistake we always make at this stage is to let our attention depart from the goal – the great Self – and wander off onto personal thoughts and desires. A little will-power at this point will prove to us that only the tiny part of this great Creation that we are actually experiencing

exists for us; that is our whole world at that moment. Yet we can quite quickly train ourselves to leave this narrow personal world until our Consciousness indeed becomes boundless. And that means *being*, not thinking!

Also please don't worry because, at times, your life is so very busy. These busy periods are very precious; they are a test without which our progress would be much slower. Welcome them, try not to be too identified, and they will pass.

Again, it is quite understood that people's lives differ in degree of activity with their age and circumstances, and also that some people find meditation easy, and others difficult. So each of us does what he or she can, without repining. Sooner or later, the practice of keeping the Param-Atman in mind will bring manifest advantages. But we have also been told of a number of ways to help this along.

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Phase 3: The Way of the Householder

If some gentle discipline (such as that described) is done for a short time twice a day, can we do nothing to help that result during the rest of the day? Yes we can; and here is one suggestion:

Vyasa, that early leader of the Tradition of the Meditation who wrote the *Bhagavad Gita*, was recently quoted by His Holiness as saying:

I have several times made a critical study of all the teachings available to me. The gist of all that, as I found, is that we should hold the Param-Atman in mind all the time.

His Holiness continued as follows:

As soon as any other thought enters the mind, we are in the grip of 'Maya' or 'ignorance', which catches hold of us, and takes us very, very far away. The individual Self is a part of the Param-Atman, and it has come into the world for the sake of discovering the secret of permanent happiness. But, instead of that, it has fallen into the trap of ignorance – which is *forgetting the Reality*, and is the root cause of all the troubles associated with the world...

Our life can become a life of misery instead of happiness because of our feeling of *attachment* to worldly objects, and this feeling of attachment to worthless things is the root of all other miseries...

Attachment means, to consider as 'ours' what really belongs to the Param-Atman... Give up this feeling and you get rid of all troubles.

Do not think that the world around you, i.e., your house, your physical and mental possessions, your body, are unreal in the sense of being *unsubstantial*. Rather, it is your feeling of attachment to them which is unsubstantial. There is nothing wrong about what is happening around you; all that is wrong is the *view* you are taking of it. If you could correct your viewpoint, you would be happy...

The common outlook is that the 'world' is everything, and the Param-Atman is nothing. It is a crime to hold that view, and the punishment for such a crime is to be imprisoned in this physical body and its world. You cannot be happy while undergoing a term of imprisonment.

(Record, 7 May 1971)

If a mystical experience or a 'good impulse' is Step 1 of the Ladder of Self-realization, *Step 2 is 'coming to a firm decision, an aim above all other aims'*. 'When man', he said, 'sets himself on a true and unshakeable purpose, then the Param-Atman gives him full assistance, and problems bow down in submission.'

I have recently found that to maintain the unshakeable aim of holding the Param-Atman in mind all the time, makes all this come true – impossible though it may sound at first.

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Since June I had written several letters and asked questions, but received no answers until I at last got a reply last week to a letter sent off on 27th August:

During this month's holiday period, I have been trying to hold the idea of the Param-Atman in mind all the time and it has become the last thought before I go to sleep and the first to come back when I wake in the night or in the morning. This saves so much energy and unhappiness due to problems that I wish I had done it long ago! I find, for instance, that it is the only way in which I can both see and root out habits deep in my Prakriti which are preventing Self-realization. Has Your Holiness any comments to make?

H.H's reply (15th September) was translated for us as follows:

The habit of holding the idea of the Param-Atman in mind all the time, so that it becomes the last thought before going to sleep and the first when you wake up, is going to be most beneficial to you. States of waking, sleeping and dreaming are collaborative and they influence one another. Elevation in one leads to a corresponding elevation in others. But going to sleep with the thought of the Param-Atman and waking up with it again, means more than a mere good beginning and a good ending to the daily activities. Because then, subtle and powerful forces automatically guide your activities towards the Param-Atman and all sorts of imbalances are set right. This is why you are able to save energy and unhappiness, and see and root out hidden tendencies which obstruct your way.

H.H. sends his love and blessings to all members of your group.

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