

1972 PROGRAMME

MID-SUMMER EDITION

Private & Confidential

Self-discovery begins with the question ‘Who am I?’ My body (physical level) keeps changing and dies after a short life-span; my mind (subtle) is even more changeable and just as perishable; more permanent is an entity I can call my ‘Soul’ (causal), the home of that pure and unchanging Consciousness which alone should be called ‘I’. Looking downward, that ‘I’ (Atman) becomes confused and involved with the problems of the subtle and physical levels; but when liberated and allowed to look upward, it is happily at One with the ‘Self that lives in the hearts of all’ (Param-Atman).

DEFINITION: Param-Atman is the Self of the whole Universe – living and non-living, conceivable and non-conceivable.

SUMMARY: Vyasa (who wrote the *Bhagavad-Gita*) said: ‘I have made a critical study of all the Scriptures (available to me) several times. The gist of all that, as I found, is that we should hold the Param-Atman in memory all the time.’

A short-cut toward that objective consists in memorising certain sentences from the Shankaracharya’s recent talks about the Param-Atman. These can be made habitual so that they come into the mind whenever one’s attention is disengaged, particularly last thing at night and first thing in the morning.

The method is to learn by heart a couplet (say) each week. This is most easily done by repeating the first sentence eight times, then the second eight times, and then both together eight times. So, quite soon, the couplet will enter our inner nature and is automatically recalled when we are quiet. Choose whichever couplet appeals to you, continuing it for some time until a change is needed.

a) Thinking of Param-Atman (Yoga of Knowledge)

1. In the Soul (Antahkarana) of each person, there lives the Universal along with the individual Self for the purpose of guidance.
2. Therefore we get a guiding Voice from time to time when we are in difficulties.

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3. In order to hear that inner Voice, we should pray to the All-Knowing Param-Atman in solitude with a settled mind.
4. Then an answer, to bring us face to face with success, is sure to come forth.

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5. The manager of an estate gets on well only when he listens to the voice of the proprietor.
6. Similarly, for an embodied being, it is beneficial to distinguish the voice of Param-Atman that lives in his own Soul.

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7. Therefore, what we have to do is to take guidance in our Soul from that universal Source of Energy, the Param-Atman, with fullest concentration and humility.
8. As soon as any other thought enters the mind, we are in the grip of Maya (illusion) which catches hold of us and takes us very, very far away.

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b) Loving Param-Atman (Bhakti-Yoga)

1. Once you win over the Param-Atman by love, only then do you get all you need for a happy and profitable life.
2. But Love is unconditional, and there is no place in the kingdom of Love for demands and rewards.

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3. A strong and deep affection lives in our own heart for wife or son or parents; yet we go about our normal business without reciting their names all the time.
4. To hold the Param-Atman in memory means to listen and obey, by serving the Param-Atman with that attribute chiefly in which we excel.

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5. Though your own capacity for love may seem feeble, do not let your attention turn away from the Param-Atman to worry on that account.
6. Rather you should recall that the path of Love is that very path on which Param-Atman is pouring His favours and blessings all the time.

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7. Let the Yoga of Love, the lover and the object of love (the Param-Atman) merge together to form one single identity.
8. Then the mirage of time and change vanishes and Param-Atman appears in its place.

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This story, a translation of the version we heard delight the crowds at the big Festival, illustrates the relation between the Param-Atman (the King) and the Atman (the one man who met the King at the appointed time):

A king who had grown old decided to abdicate his throne and to go to the jungle for practising penance. He proclaimed that he would give away his kingdom to the first man who came to see him at 11 o'clock on the morning of the seventh day. Many people were attracted by this offer and they set out with the intention of appearing before the king at the appointed hour.

But the king laid out a well-constructed plan to select the most suitable person. On the way to his palace, he had built a beautiful tank with lotuses blooming – so beautiful that people were tempted to stop there and have a dip in it. Then the way led through a market which contained the best possible garments, which anybody could take. The third stop was a big dining hall with luscious foods and drinks laid out. The fourth was a big sleeping room containing voluptuous appointments and bedding. In the fifth there was beautiful music provided. The sixth contained gold and jewellery. At all these places, people stopped to help themselves, and lost time or forgot their quest.

But one man (who was the last to start), overcame all these temptations, and met the king at the appointed time. To him the king formally handed over his throne, and went away to the jungle. The first act of the new king was to put under arrest all the persons who had started out to see his predecessor, on the charge that they had taken things which did not belong to them. Thus *Tyaga* (renunciation) brought him a kingdom.

We want pleasures, but we get pain instead. This is so, because each pleasure contains the seeds of pain. The seeds of a thorny plant do not show any thorns. The thorns appear only much later when the seed has germinated and has grown up into a bush.

The question 'Who am I?' will reveal that, on the subtle and causal levels, all this takes place within oneself. The capital city is the Soul; the King and his proclamation are Param-Atman and the 'good impulse'; and the crowds of people are our 'many 'I's'.

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