

## PROGRAMME

FEBRUARY 1973

In desperation at my own inability to practise what I preach, I recently found a short-cut which, so far, works well and is surprisingly simple. It could help anybody who desperately wants to take Step 2 of the Ladder – Resolution – both those who have temporarily given up meditation or those who seem to be meditating happily, but deeply feel the need to take it further.

This programme can help the two half-hours, but does not take their place. It is meant for only a few people; if there is anyone you feel would benefit from its use, let me know.

We are given so many transient ideas that they pass us by; and we need just one idea to carry with us all the time. This 'short-cut' consists in committing to memory certain sentences from the Shankaracharya's recent talks designed to make us remember Param-Atman all the time – and particularly last thing at night and first thing in the morning.

We consist of an outer nervous system (cerebrospinal) through which we carry on our daily life, and a quite separate inner nervous system (autonomic). To achieve unity, we have to bring *both* together under the control of the causal level in the forebrain (Soul) – and this is a good way to sow a seed there which can grow into a flowering shrub.

The method is to learn by heart a couplet (say) every week. This is most easily done by repeating with full attention the first sentence eight times, then the second sentence eight times, and then both together eight times, so that the two are 'running in one's head' to the exclusion of all other thoughts and desires before one goes to sleep; then one will wake up with them still in mind. There is no special order; choose whichever couplet appeals to you, continuing with it for some time until a change is needed.

### DEFINITION

Param-Atman is the Atman of the whole Universe – living and non-living, conceivable and inconceivable.

### SUMMARY

Vyasa (who wrote the *Bhagavad-Gita*) says:

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 (Universal Self) in memory all the time.

Similarly, this single idea can include for us all other books and Scriptures.

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a) The first four couplets refer to the *Inner* life:

1. In the Soul (Antahkarana) of each person, there lives the Universal (Param-Atman) along with the individual Self (Jiva-Atman) 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. Therefore what we have to do is to take guidance in our Soul from that immense source of energy, the Param-Atman, with fullest concentration of mind and in all humility.
6. This body (physical, subtle and causal) is the vehicle, and Param-Atman is the rider; regard the rider as separate from the vehicle.

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7. Our mind has the property of thinking of something or other all the time; it cannot remain idle.
8. Thinking of the Param-Atman leads to happiness, but thinking of worldly things leads only to unhappiness in the end.

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b) The following four couplets can bring this same idea into one's daily activities in the *outside* world:

1. The states of consciousness which we experience are governed by the influx of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas – in people, places, situations and events.
2. These all undergo change, but the Observer who sees them all as a passing show, always remains the same.

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3. What to ordinary people are *different* shapes and forms, are to a Realized person, all manifestations of one and the same Param-Atman.
4. What he sees then, around and within himself, is Param-Atman, and not the transient mirage which we call 'the world'.

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

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7. 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.
8. Each of us should try to serve the Param-Atman with that attribute chiefly in which we excel.

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c) Sometimes we feel the need for love of Param-Atman with no intervening mental argument. This is the path of Bhakti or Union by Devotion – here outlined by the Shankaracharya:

1. Though your own capacity for love may seem feeble, you should not let your attention turn away-from Param-Atman to worry on that account.
2. 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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3. Love is not an action but a feeling; moreover Love and True Knowledge are just two names for one and the same thing.
4. This Unity is a natural property of the Self, and it comes to the surface inevitably when the soul concentrates upon it.

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5. Through your beneficial and holy endeavour, let your fullness perceive the fullness of Param-Atman,
6. And let the Yoga of Love, the lover, and the object of love, merge together to form one single identity.

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7. Then the mirage of time and change vanishes, and Param-Atman appears in its place.
8. This summarises the practice of Bhakti through love.

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The following 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* (inner 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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