

19 January 1976

## READING 1

## QUESTIONNAIRE, DECEMBER 1975

As Miss Cullinan's now famous question reached us at that Monday meeting: 'Does one have to think, have in mind, "I am doing this for the Param-Atman" in order to be doing it for Him?' – and as it seemed to be getting considerable support, we on the platform were quite stunned! It seemed to us all wrong (and a letter from her confirmed that it wasn't her real question at all), so we determined to appeal to everybody to tell us just what was wrong with it and how each person was dealing with the recommendation to 'remember the Param-Atman all the time'.

From the replies it seemed clear that nearly everyone felt it to be wrong for various reasons. The most trenchant criticism came from a schoolmaster who wrote:

I am reminded of the clergyman who was asked what happens when we die? He replied: 'I suppose we inherit Eternal Bliss; but I do wish you would talk about something less unpleasant.'

Another (from a Civil Servant) contained (like so many) an appeal for help:

Do you really mean, that we should use our Think-Boxes and repeat the words, 'I am doing this for the Param-Atman' all the day long? Because I don't like it; it feels like what the School Chaplain used to say in Sunday sermons to explain away the hideous tedium of Maths lessons. I wanted you to console and reassure me that when a loving impulse comes, it *really* comes from a Real Lord and can be confirmed and strengthened – be actualised – in *this* world, this our everyday life.

Yes; and, better than reassurance from anyone else, she will *prove for herself* that this is true, as soon as she removes all the 'Me and Mine' from her attitude. There is only *one* Self, one Real Lord, but 'like the white light from the sun, its energy is split up into all the different colours by the prism of the gunas and the illusion of a *separate ego*'.

So now, enough of last year's question. Taking, for 1976, the idea of 'keeping Param-Atman in memory' to *mean whatever you feel it means*, go ahead, gently encouraging whatever you've found to give good results, and gradually *shedding the feeling of duality*.

The answers expressed a firm majority opinion that many more of those delightful experiences we have called 'self-remembering', have been coming over the last few months as the result of hearing and discussing the sayings of the 'Fully Realized Man' on this subject. Also that all kinds of unexpected small insights accompany any little attempts we make. Your answers abound in these; here are one or two examples. I wish I could quote the lot but I believe that anonymity is the secret of the success of this questionnaire:

1. From our oldest member, now in her nineties:

You don't and cannot 'Do anything for' the Param-Atman. Param-Atman *is*. I try to remember this constantly.

2. from Michael N. (received January 4th)

My (first) answer seemed to be much too long-winded, and I could not bring myself to post it. Now, after some lapse in time, gently wondering about what seemed to be the problem, a most positive and uncomplicated way came: Before doing anything one says 'This *is* for Param-Atman', not 'This ought to be for Param-Atman,' or 'am I doing this for

Param-Atman?' Saying 'This *is* for the Param-Atman' wakes me up, and brings me face to face with the situation at the moment...

There is no judgement or disappointment, and there *is* joy...

3. from Jean R.

The phrase 'I am doing this for the Param-Atman' seems to suggest duality, whereas when one is actually doing it 'for Him', there is a feeling of oneness – of Unity... One mechanically goes through the day, but in moments of awareness it is always 'Thy will be done'.

Comment: Good. But there is *still* duality in the words used.

4. from a member of the Reigate group:

In moments of a little more unity, I feel that the drama of Param-Atman will go on, and we will play our part in it whether we are aware of it or not, but that somehow our active and joyful participation *is* necessary. How can this be?'

Comment: How could this *not* be? The more the Creator reveals to us His nature the more we are bound to enjoy participating in this wonderful drama.

These insights confirm the illustration given to the head of the (London) School of Meditation and repeated at our last visit:

A certain man had to go out to another town, ten miles away. It was night and pitch dark, and all he had was a tiny little lantern which could, at most, light a couple of steps. Because the journey seemed long, and the night dark, he was depressed and unsure of reaching his destination with only this tiny light.

While he stood at his door in utter frustration and helplessness, a Realized man happened to appear there, and asked him why he was standing at his door with a lantern. When he had described his dilemma, the Realized man explained to him that it was not necessary to have a light big enough to illumine the whole way. 'As you proceed,' he said, '*the light will move with you*, so that the next one or two steps will always be clear. All you need do is to hold on to your light and start walking. Then, as the darkness dissolves with the rising of the sun, you can put away your lantern and reach your destination in the full light of noon'.

(Record, 9 November 1973)

Although we have heard this several times, we must at once enquire whether we are actually using it in practice! For instance: at the start of every day we wake up, get out of bed, wash, dress and brew ourselves a hot drink. This we do every day, year in and year out; *none of it requires any thought whatever* – just a minimum of attention. Since we then have so much attention to spare, our tendency is either to continue the dreams of the night and of yesterday or to be full of plans for the day and tomorrow. So we must *resolve to give up all that mental activity*, and use the surplus attention for realizing the presence of the Self who is in fact 'doing' it all. This practice will soon transform the early meditation session and therefore the whole day as well. And it would fulfil this pious hope expressed by a busy young solicitor:

Mostly the hours of work are not inhabited by any background feeling that it is all being done for a larger whole... Best hope is that the habit is growing of using the vast periods of time spent travelling, walking etc., to bring to mind some principle of use. The magic in this is beginning to enliven the rest.

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