

August 1977

SUMMER PROGRAMME**(PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL)**

The following daily programme is based on two talks given by the Shankaracharya in his Ashram on July 20th & 24th, 1977. The idea is that after meditation twice a day, or after two five-minute periods of complete stillness, we should hold one of this sequence of ideas in mind *without thought*. Having tried it for a while each person can decide which idea to concentrate on.

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- DAY 1** There can be two different attitudes to ‘this endless universe’:
- a.m.** In reality it is like a rope – a help in trouble – if one understands its laws.
 - p.m.** But in imagination it can seem ‘like a big snake with all its terror’.
- DAY 2** People also fall into two classes in the way they regard it:
- a.m.** The ‘materialists’ (ignorant or knowledgeable) maintain that nothing exists except physical matter as depicted by the senses or recorded by technological devices.
 - p.m.** The ‘idealists’ (among whom there are many cults) either look for truth through reason or emotional realisation, or guess at it through some crude form of ‘spiritualism’.
- DAY 3** All of them are ‘trying for such as happiness as would never end; and sometimes even welcome unhappiness if they think it will lead to final happiness’.
- a.m.** On the Shankaracharya’s own way of Bhakti, ‘the redeemer from all our troubles is called “Param-Atman” (the Self that lives in the hearts of all)’.
 - p.m.** ‘Believers in the separate ego live in the unconscious world; and believers in Param-Atman live in the Conscious world’.
- DAY 4** ‘Param-Atman teaches action not inaction’; but with regard to the *results* of action, the Law of Causality operates on two scales which are proceeding simultaneously:
- a.m.** The individual can look within himself for the causes of his own actions, and so improve them.
 - p.m.** But often the Laws of Nature intervene, leading to unwanted results, as when we run into an ‘accident’ involving numbers of other people.
- DAY 5**
- a.m.** Our ideas of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ are subject to change and error, because always limited to a three-dimensional physical world.
 - p.m.** But seen from the causal level ‘Param-Atman is all good; all its acts are sweet; it plays countless numbers of sweet games as part of a great drama, for general enjoyment.’

DAY 6 Truth is One, but wise men describe it differently:

a.m. Some in intellectual systems, some in terms of emotional realizations and artistic creations or religious rituals; some as formless and some as having form.

p.m. ‘But in reality Truth is all One and to each, according to his own line of approach, Param-Atman says “you are right”’

DAY 7 Since everyone is sure he is right, ‘this leads them to call one another wrong’; but in doing so they themselves go wrong. A new interpretation of an old story accounts for how this happens:

A rumour went around a village that an elephant had come there. People flocked to see it, including even blind men who said they could recognise it by touch. Some touched its tail and said, ‘An elephant is like a rope;’ those who touched one of its legs said, ‘No, you are wrong, it is like the trunk of a tree’ – and so on.

Thus they kept calling each other wrong, until finally the keeper explained that each was right by his own experience; but in fact the elephant was One, though it gave different impressions to different people through different lines of approach.

The same thing holds in the case of Param-Atman; we must each go by our own experience but stop calling other people wrong.

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