

Start with Meditation

At the end of Spring Term meeting we discussed remembering the Param-Atman at intervals between activities during the day. And it was generally recognised the 'myriad of times' we missed in practicing this task. It was mentioned we need to give ourselves more treats such as looking up at the stars at night, when walking the dog.

There is something important here. Instead of looking upon using intervals between activities as a *task*, we should instead consider such opportunities as a *treat*. This positive approach might accelerate progress.

Remembering the Param-Atman requires giving up other things in order to have ears that will hear and eyes that will see.

We are told in meditation that it means 'giving up other directions of the mind, until you come to the complete silence where nothing is going on. Silence will enable Param-Atman to give us a hearing. He is there all the time, but when we make so much noise, we don't get the guidance'.

During the day we are asked to give up bad habits mainly connected with negative thoughts and emotions such as grumbling and criticising.

'But all these are nothing compared with the real meaning of *giving up*. The point of *giving up* is that the mind tends to make a god of everything that catches it and possesses it and the essence of union with the Param-Atman is: 'Thou shalt have none other gods but me.....'. Whatever the mind accepts and tends to dwell on – turns and turns about on – gradually becomes a god, and goodness knows where that will take us! ' Hence the importance of Remembering.

Pause

In 1972 the Shankaracharya told us:

We should think of Param-Atman all the time and as soon as any other thought enters the mind we are in the grip of Maya (illusion). This catches hold and takes us very, very far away. We forget Reality. Ignorance or illusion is forgetting the Reality. Only Param-Atman is real. So our long term aim must be to remember the Param-Atman all the time.

For a better understanding of Maya (illusion) the Shankaracharya relayed in 1969 the following story of Rama and Lakshman from the Indian epic the Ramayana. People asked to hear this story again:

Lakshman requested Rama to show him Maya.....(later) Rama asked Lakshman to pick up his ring which had fallen into the river. Lakshman dived to get it. Inside the water, he completely forgot where he was. He saw an altogether different world there, more beautiful than this one. A young girl stood there telling him that she had none to look after her. She requested Lakshman to take her under his protection and to marry her. Lakshman agreed, lived with her a whole lifetime, and had children and grand-children. Finally he grew old, fell sick, and died. His sons submerged his body into the river. But the touch of the cold water brought him back to life, and he raised his head above the water. Now he found himself again in this world, with Rama standing on the bank

in front of him. Lakshman, completely out of his wits told Rama what he saw under water and that he had spent a whole lifetime underneath. Rama told him that he had been under water for only a few moments by earthly time. It was all Maya, which he wanted to see – a few moments at one level but a lifetime in another. This is how time and distance change with level.

In terms of experiencing different speeds of time, this verifies what is said in our western tradition, that the speed of perception varies in different centres or minds, with the moving being faster than the ordinary intellectual mind and the emotional mind faster than the moving mind. This has also been experienced by people who have had a near death experience where their whole life has flashed before them in an instant.

Pause

A further question was asked regarding this story:

'The Atman and the false Ahankars are observing the same world, but what they see is totally different. I am confused because the world they see is totally different. I am confused because the world I see when I enjoy bliss is so different from the world I live in ordinarily that I cannot reconcile the two – like the world Lakshman saw before and during his dive. I would like to see ordinary situations and people and the problems of living more with the eye of the Atman. Everything in Prakriti appears to be changing, moving. Does Atman see it as moving or does He see no movement, as if everything is the same always? Or does He see movement as existing, but artificial, like a work of art (drama) or cinema film? Or does he see that everything repeats but always with a difference?

HH: *The two worlds which Lakshman saw were both false, due to Maya. So is everything that passes the eye, including the worlds you mention. Lakshman was confused at the irreconcilable duality. No wonder, therefore, if you or any of us on the worldly plane had the same feeling. If you want to get rid of it, we have to reach beyond Maya's field of gravity into the calm regions of the Atman, where alone the laws of sameness, oneness and changelessness hold good. This happens when the thrust of true knowledge is there to boost us up. Meanwhile, as you know, you have to try to be as objective as you can.*

He goes on to say that the Atman does see change in nature but as an onlooker watching a play. Ordinary man sees this as real. Atman sees it for what it is, a drama.

So why, we might ask are both worlds 'false due to Maya?' Is it because we are still maintaining a duality outlook? Non duality which means 'not two' is a basis of all true religions and mysticism. It means that the whole universe and everything connected with it is a whole. As such, it is a manifestation of One Universal Consciousness, and yet we mistakenly see the world (and even God) as separate from ourselves.

That is why the Doctor told us: 'If we want to awake spiritually we must gradually have to organise the brain on a different basis.' Everything is a Unity (not duality) and we have to see it as that. At another time the Doctor said: 'I have come to believe that it is a non-dualistic approach that is the ultimate solution to all problems. It would indeed be good if we could enter the third

millennium with such an approach expressed in current western terms.' (page 122 *Voyage of Discovery*).

We might bear this in mind during this summer term as a way of helping the inner work of the Society as well as ourselves. This is something FCR wanted done. Any observations, spoken or written will be welcome.

As a conclusion to the discussion which Dr Roles had with the Shankaracharya on Lakshman, a letter was later sent from the translator Mr Dixit, referring to the question about Lakshman and the two worlds. It read:

'His Holiness was glad you felt relieved to know that both worlds which Lakshman saw were illusory. "But" he added, laughingly, "The seer of the two worlds was real!"