

In the beginning was the Word – Start with Meditation

In the *Voyage of Discovery* we can find a literal translation by Dr Roles of the Mandukya Upanishad. It helps to emphasise for us the importance of the 'Word' ie the mantra. It also brings to mind the Gospel according to John Verse 1 Chapter 1:

*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.*

The Word or the Mantra is what places us firmly on the Ladder. It is the beginning of everything. Dr Roles translated the first verse of this upanishad as follows:

*The Word (mantra) is imperishable; all this is its manifestation. Past, present and future – everything is the Word (mantra) and whatever transcends these three divisions of time, that also is the Word, the mantra.*

He tells us that Verse 12 sums up the whole upanishad:

*Thus the Word, the mantra is nothing but the Self (Atman). He who understands this through his individual Atman merges with the universal spirit (Param Atman) – Yes , he who understands this.*

Meditation

In 1964 the Shankaracharya said during an audience:

*Mantra is to help one's consciousness to be united with the Self. Once you have done so, the mantra disappears. Unity with the Atman is the aim, and in its purest form the meditator, mantra and meditation become one. When you start the mantra and let it repeat itself, it will go slower and longer until a stage comes when you experience no rhythm at all. Everything just merges into one Consciousness. (Record 1964 p122)*

And in 1965 He said concerning the mantra:

*The rhythm or the vibration leads to peace. Somewhere, in the heart, where the Atman is supposed to live, there is stillness and peace. All those people who feel tensions and activities going on in their body and mind, without turning to that peace, are running away from it. Once you get the taste of that peace, with regular meditation, you will find it again and again (Record 1965 p37-38)*

Meditation

The Mahabarata describes the person who reaches profound stillness as 'one who is steady and still in his knowledge and being' and the Shankaracharya has said: 'this stillness in itself is the real experience of meditation'.

Dr Roles tells us:

*You find that when you do what you can, the fourth state, Turiya, is a matter of grace and comes when this supreme Consciousness thinks it is right for you. So what you have to do is to try to deserve it. Just do what we can. (Voyage of Discovery)*

While this is what we are all aiming for, in the meantime it is good to be reminded of how the journey might have its ups and downs and how we must be of good heart and faithful to our aim and trust that there is always help available when we most need it.

*There is a story about a flock of crows. One of them was strong, clever and good looking, so they made him their leader. This king of the crows felt proud of his exploits, and looked down upon all other creatures. One day a young swan appeared. The crows assembled around him and asked if he knew about the great deed of their king. He pleaded ignorance and wished to see their king. The king crow appeared and asked the swan about the different types of flight. The swan, in his simplicity, said that he knew only one style. The king crow then embarked on an exhibition of his hundred-and-one styles of flight. Having performed his acrobatics, he asked to see the art of the swan. The young swan took off in a graceful, gentle and natural flight and, as usual, increased his speed only gradually. Since the crow was small and swift he flew fast, and realising that the swan was left behind, he came back to cheer him up. The swan gradually increased his speed, and it was not very long before the crow was tired and trembled, and eventually fell into the sea. The swan came down and rescued the crow and helped him back to his flock. The crow then became ashamed of his pride, and thanked the swan for his modesty and magnanimity. You see, the swan lived a natural life while the crow occupied himself with acrobatics and cleverness. The ultimate victory goes to the natural, steady, still and simple man.*

## Meditation