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## Attainment of Spiritual Awareness

### THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

**E**very aspirant to self-realization is advised to study, acknowledge, accept, and apply to both the inner and the outer life the teachings of the *Rishis*, those Sages who have already attained Adeptship. These teachings are of the utmost importance because they reveal fundamental principles and laws governing the processes of both normal development and deliberate self-illumination and evolutionary self-quickening. They provide the veritable bedrock of knowledge upon which one may found one's whole life. This includes one's religion, spiritual aspirations, spiritual exercises and the practical conduct of one's day-by-day affairs. Aspirants are therefore very strongly advised to study the teachings of the *RISHIS* and carefully to avoid their neglect which can lead to error, frustration, and even despair.

### No Short Cuts

Apart from a reasonably rapid repetition of attainments in a former life, there are no actual short cuts to self-illumination. Matter itself and especially the atoms, and therefore cells, of the brain in the present convergence of five fourth<sup>1</sup> cycles and arcs of cycles constitute the

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<sup>1</sup> of Scheme, chain, Round, Globe and Race on earth (numerically).

great obstacle to swift attainment of the illumined state.

Only consistent and continuous faithful endeavour can overcome the obstacle of the inertia of the matter of the brain, reduce the *RAJASIC* (passionate) attributes of the desire body and universalize the normal *AHAMKARA* or egoistic individualism inherent in the formal mind. These obstacles need to be methodically overcome. They are personified by King Hansa, Ravana, Satan, Beelzebub, Herod, Judas and in the old Egyptian religion, by Set or Typhon, enemy of Osiris. Naturally, those who have achieved in former lives will be likely to find the process easier in this life. They may even for a time erroneously and very harmfully condemn the Path concept and regular self-training and meditation as preliminaries to enlightenment.

### **‘Wanting to Attain’**

The inner impulse and resolve to attain come from the Ego and intuitive memory of pursuit of the Quest in former lives. It is the fundamental necessity known as ‘wanting to attain’, meaning very great and increased interest in the subject. Emerson said, ‘Nothing great can be achieved without enthusiasm’, which may perhaps be defined as intense interest. The presence, moreover, of this inner aspiration and this resolve is a sure sign that the attainment is possible and in the present life. It has been stated as a basic principle that if one can consistently conceive of an attainment, it is within one’s power; otherwise the idea would not take hold of one’s mind. I offer that idea, less as an affirmation of truth and more as a thought to ponder. It may be more fully stated like this: ‘The fact that one experiences a resolve to attain in a particular direction, especially in one’s intellectual and spiritual life, is a sign that the attainment is within one’s reach IN THIS LIFE’.

### **Law Ruled**

If, then, this has happened, if one has begun to ‘dream’ creatively of Discipleship, Initiation, Adeptship and *NIRVANA* as definite goals, then they are not beyond one’s more immediate reach. The first attainments are within one’s reach in this life. But as I have come firmly to believe, one must proceed according to the rules. This conviction has grown from seeing so many splendid dreamers, full

of potentiality and promise, fall by the wayside, simply because they ignored, even scorned, the rules. This is a profound and hope shattering error, for in any natural procedure, whether at normal or a deliberately hastened pace, certain laws must be recognized. The Universe, human nature and human evolution, normal and hastened, are law-ruled. We are encouraged to progress by the regular, systematic subjection of mind, emotion and body, to certain restraints and by remembering constantly the great resolve we have made and maintaining the aspiration to fulfil it.

### **‘Get Within’**

A story is told in India, of a farmer who possessed a young cow; at first this cow used to stray continually in order to graze on the pastures outside her stall, even on the pastures of neighbouring farmers. Her owner tempted her to stay in her stall by such offerings as fresh grass, but she still preferred to stray off to the pastures outside. Gradually, however, she began to eat a little in the stall, although her innate tendency to stray always remained, and asserted itself time and again. On being repeatedly tempted by the owner she gradually accustomed herself to the stall and finally, even if let loose, she strayed away no more. Similarly, the human mind, when as a result of the consistent attempts to direct it, seeks and finds its inner happiness and life, it will not thereafter wander outwards.

Another pleasant saying to be heard in India goes like this: ‘Oh, humming bee, while you take the pains of collecting tiny sips of honey from innumerable flowers, there is One from whom you can have the whole storehouse of honey by simply thinking or speaking of Him. Get within and hum to Him’.

### **True Yoga**

Spiritualising influences brought to bear upon the Personality are mental in meditation and physical in the conduct of life. Both of these have the same purpose, which is to sensitise both body and brain to the presence and influences of the indwelling Spirit. This is Yoga in the full meaning of the word, as meditation and as life.

Meditation, as we well know, is based upon recognition that all man seeks of Spiritual power, wisdom, knowledge and happiness is

within him. Indeed, nothing is more intimate than the *ATMA*, which must in consequence be sought and found; for without the Self as Knower, there is nothing, no awareness, even no existence. All, then, is dependent upon Selfness, upon Consciousness of Being, upon knowing, 'I exist, I am'. This *atmic* Self is changeless, eternal, and in meditation one affirms with the purpose of full realization, 'I am That, That am I'. As a statement of ultimate Truth, as an aid to equanimity of mind, and a method of attaining experience of pure Spirit, that affirmation is without compare. *TAD BRAHMAN, TAD ASMI. SOHAM. AUM.*

The great solution to the more perplexing problems in life, to mental and emotional stress, to pain and to physical doubts and difficulties, is, I am sure, to withdraw mentally from them and the vehicles in which they exist, and to affirm the indwelling *ATMA*, then that the *ATMA* and the *PARAMATMA* are One, and then 'I am That, That am I'. From this great seed idea, there emanates Peace, an amazing relaxation of stresses and a return to happiness and harmonious equipoise. If one is distressed, worried, tempted, suffering or sorrowful from vain regrets, three things may usefully be affirmed in strength:

First, 'Be still and know that I am God'.

Second, 'Man's Spirit and God's Spirit are One Spirit'.

Third, 'I am That, That am I'.

This practice can become a veritable panacea and certain source of readjustment of one's ideas close to basic truth. It may even aid one to recover from the approach of death.

## **Stillness**

One rather strange seeming procedure in the search for the Self consists of the establishment within of non-activity. This cessation of action concerns primarily the mind which is to be silenced. The Yogi says with the Psalmist, 'Be still and know that I am God'.

Although the condition rather descends upon one than being self-induced, one might almost refer to the procedure as the Silence Method, meaning the attainment of, or entering into, the tranquil mind.

The body itself is relaxed and made very still, motionless. The breathing is slowed down until it becomes unnoticeable. Thought is directed to 'the Eternal Man', the Monad, for a time, and this action is followed by mental inaction, permitting the mind to fall silent in poised stillness. This is sometimes called 'mental fasting'. Many remarkable experiences can follow upon mental fasting. One of them consists of a sense of nothingness, total elimination of selfness. Paradoxically, such 'silence' is to another portion of one's consciousness as an 'eternal eloquence', quite beyond mental effort. Ignorance then vanishes.

Now this experience is not in the category of knowledge, though knowledge may ensue; for those who have discovered great truths have generally done so in the still depths of the Dweller in the Innermost, the deepest Self, the *ATMA*, which is associated with pure reality. When thought is thus still, pure consciousness remains over, as it were. This approach to reality might perhaps be regarded as a philosophy of stillness.

Some of these ideas and such phrases are gratefully drawn from the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharishi of Tiruvannamalai, which is the ancient township at the foot of the mountain known as Arunachala, which means 'Vision of Light', in South India. There is a tradition in Southern India that the Maharishi was a disciple of the Rishi Agastya, though he himself never stated it, nor did he give himself the title, *Maharishi*, Great Rishi. He did not agree even to the building of the large *Ashram*, preferring to remain in the cave in which they found him, plunged in abstracted thought. He it is who taught that 'mental fasting is followed by momentary nothingness, an elimination of self in a silence, which is an eternal eloquence, quite beyond mental effort. Ignorance then vanishes, and the residue (truth or reality) reveals itself'.

The active or vibrating mind is regarded as impure and the passive or still mind alone as pure. To the stilled mind a self declaration of Spirit occurs. This occurs because realization is already there. Any effort found to be necessary is but preliminary and only leads up to it. Effort which may be necessary at first can only take one so far. Then 'the beyond takes over' — graphic phrase — and will take care of itself.

## Unity of Consciousness

Such are the stages in meditation leading from affirmation through to full realization into absorption in the beyond; for this there are no words; so it is said, that the beyond will take care of itself. One is helpless there, no effort being able to reach ultimate reality which comes to you when you are still. Non-physical, non-mental, non-spatial experiences, which are interior and independent of time, are then entered into. The duality of seer and things seen merges into unity of consciousness. Life then acts through one as a prepared vehicle. A sunburst seems to occur within the stilled mind.

I remember the story I read in the paper some time ago, telling of a little boy of about six who lived in a home where he was deeply loved, cared for, protected and happy. He used to hear people talking about being afraid and mention the word 'fear'. He would sometimes say to his parents, 'What is this being afraid, what is fear?' Their answers did not help him. He was so perfectly safe and secure in his young life that the concept of the opposite negatives, fear and being afraid, never came near him. For him these were two meaningless words, afraid and fear. Then, one day, he was playing with his ball, and as so often happens with children, it went over the garden wall and on into the road. Without thinking or looking carefully, he dashed over to get the ball. On came a large truck, and he was right in its path. He looked up; he saw this enormous vehicle coming and realized his danger. Of course, the driver did all he could, and the startled boy leapt back into safety. Fortunately the truck just missed him. Recovering and breathless, he then exclaimed, 'Ah now I know what fear is and what it is to be afraid'. No substitute exists for direct experience. The story is a useful exposition both of the value of direct experience and of the fact that there is no substitute for it.

## The Song of Life

The Adept author of *Light On The Path* wrote: 'Listen to the song of Life . . . look for it and listen to it first in your own heart. At first you may say it is not there; when I search I find only discord. Look deeper. If again you are disappointed, pause and look deeper again. There is a natural melody, an obscure fount in every human

heart. It may be hidden over and utterly concealed and silenced — but it is there. At the very base of your nature you will find faith, hope and love. He that chooses evil refuses to look within himself, shuts his ears to the melody of his heart, as he blinds his eyes to the light of his soul. He does this because he finds it easier to live in desires. But underneath all life is the strong current that cannot be checked; the great waters are there in reality. Find them, and you will perceive that none, not the most wretched of creatures, but is a part of it, however he blind himself is the fact and build up for himself a phantasmal outer form of horror. In that sense it is that I say to you — All those beings among whom you struggle on are fragments of the divine. And so deceptive is the illusion in which you live, that it is hard to guess where you will first detect the sweet voice in the hearts of others’.

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