

# *How to do Atma Vichara-pointers 1*

Here are some key pointers to the formal practice. If anyone is unsure about anything the opportunity to ask is available. The only real way forward is to engage fully in practice and where doubts arise get them cleared. Attending Satsang is an important aspect.

## **When is a question not a question?**

Who am I is a 3 word sentence that poses a question in language. Whenever you have posed any question like this before you have used logic, intellect, discussion and study to answer it. That is the normal habit, you may be tempted to do so again but watch out! The practice of Atma Vichara is different and the way to respond to the question is different. You don't think about it you feel it and allow it.

In this sense the question is not a normal question it is a device. The purpose of putting the question is to provoke you into an experiential acknowledgement of the prevailing state, a deep recognition of what is. This is felt and experienced not thought about. Normally you do not do that because attention is completely caught up in thinking and following the input of the senses. You are distracted from simply being by the urgency to evaluate, look, work things out and move on to the next stimulus.

If you think who am I as you would think with any other question posed you will merely puzzle about it and think about it. The prevailing sense of a thinker thinking will remain intact. You will be looking for an answer in understanding in the normal way. The solution to who am I is nothing to do with understanding in this linear way. You must probe more deeply and really encounter the experience of the question. Who am I really? What is the essence of my nature really? Results then can no longer be cognitive they can only be experiential and the antithesis of thinking. This is why we use the word being. Probe deeply into that and realise that all the aspects of the mind that you have been used to are structures and are in addition to you.

You can't work this out in the normal way it has to be patiently allowed through sustained practice. The only way to allow it is to reach the point of willingness where you are prepared to relinquish what you previously took to be so important and to melt into what remains- beautiful.

Unless this is accepted what will happen is that you will maintain the structure of believing you are the thinker ( the I thought) but simply not be thinking. This is a mind quietened but frustrated as you are still identified in that expectant place waiting and watching. Go deeper and see that that too is a structure.

Who am I? Not the body, not the mind, not the thoughts, not the thinker. I am what's left and that is the heart- merge and melt into that experientially and not through cognition. And if all this seems paradoxical then getting through that is the sadhana. it is not done in a moment. it is done through patiently eroding structures and habits that have dominated for ages past. It may take some time but that, alongside playing with the day is what this life is for.