

The light of the Guru – Bringing practice alive

The guru is that which lights the darkness. I am telling you that this light is percolating, it is subtle, it emerges across years and decades, it is the passage of the dawn that parts the veil. And when any veil is parted there is some embarrassment, some inhibition, some caution, some uncertainty, some fear, some curiosity, some exposure in the glare of scrutiny. But to be beyond all this and to be naked and whole, unfettered, unburdened, unaffected and free is the prize.

Yoga is the movement from dissonance and chaos to singularity from discord, to harmony from agitation, to stability in the core ground of being. But note carefully, this does not mean the cessation of movement. Whilst the universe turns, there is bound to be movement, thought and action. If you live a life of engagement then this movement may be intense, the interplay of work, family, relationship, society, children, health, money, the functioning of societies both national and international. This is the destiny of this body and it must be faced. This is no hardship because I am not afraid of storms. I am the sruti note, the underlying ground, within which the dancer steps and within which both storm and calm waters play.

Yoga will bring you from complexity to simplicity, from the miasma of indulgence and inconsistency to the simplicity and natural ease of being unassailable but how to make this journey in a world of such diversity? What sadhana to undertake? What are the measures by which quality can be judged? The measures are these:

- Authenticity
- Dignity
- Simplicity
- Ancient, unadulterated lineage
- Tested, timeless credibility

These qualities are all present and identifiable in Atma Vichara. Is it the only approach? Of course not. Does it suit everybody? Of course not. But if you have a hunch for it, if it appears in your life with prominence and persistence, note that fact.

The cliché is, “When the student is ready the teacher appears.”

But is the teacher welcome?

Maybe not.

Is the teaching immediately appealing and accessible?

No.

Does the student rail against it?

Yes, often.

But without provocation, without challenge and re-ordering there can be no substantial change, there will only be the repetition of the old in new guises.

Will that be comfortable to experience?

Yes.

Will that be satisfying in the long term?

No.

Will that address the yearning that I can't articulate but which is central to my life?

Definitely not.

So what to do?

Commit to sadhana. If it has an appeal for you, plunge in, be rigorous in your studies and exercise shrudha – faith. Don't say it doesn't work, for that is the commentary of the weak and there is no place for weakness in spiritual life. It does work, it is working, but it may not be pleasing to your old habits. Well, the prevailing organisation of assumption and old habit is the territory of the old, the trap of the mind and the bondage of the soul. Freedom is not contained within these things. Freedom is in the absence of identification with these things. To pass through that, to get beyond, to be free of the interest in it, is the process, is the yoga. This requires bravery, surrender and patience, patience. This is a project for life. It is the underpinning purpose of this life. It is where you have reached in your glorious evolution. So face it, embrace it, enjoy it, live it and be glad of it.

Right now you are the Self. You cannot be anything else but you do not fully know it; the veil is partially drawn and you are being lived through the assumed personal identity that has risen up within the being that you are. Irrespective of the presence of this identity, what you are, is being, consciousness, Self, the heart, I. Whatever word we choose it is all the same. This beingness is the essence of this ordinary moment, existence itself, the power of knowing. It is already here as part of this current experience for it is your very existence. But it is only dimly perceived.

Atma Vichara effects that change, clarifies and strengthens the vision, and that which was already present becomes recognised and is self-evidently radiant just as it is, confident, established and constant. The keys to practice are there, the method clear, apply them with skill. Clarify doubts where you need to and enjoy the ride – we are all in it together and what an adventure.

Base practice around:

Satyam Sharanam Gacchami
Yogam Sharanam Gacchami
Guram Sharanam Gacchami
Sangham Sharanam Gacchami

The way forward is a life of integration. Work for it. As the day appears I will watch this body live a well-ordered life, contributing where I can, doing good where I can; work, rest and easy play. Where there are problems, I will act as a good person; as a functional and effective human being. Doing my best, honest and true, reliable, enjoying pleasures and giving pleasures. Fast of

mind, fleet of foot, spontaneous, I will not dwell or stick. I will welcome the day.

Welcome beautiful day. In you there are marvels and wonders, such splendid artistry. Whether your play is benevolent and bountiful or whether it is containing and hazardous, I see the beauty inherent in all things and realise that where there is suffering it is a surface trend, a play of the waves and currents that have risen.

But I do not fear storms. I am not distracted by temporary movements because these things are merely eddies. Whether they be beguiling, evocative, tremendous fun, or dangerous, I will act accordingly, fleet of foot and responsive, enjoying the curiosity and the intricacies of this adventurous dance. It is pleasing to emerge as a good dancer. Fleet of foot, I will dance well in this world, a dance of honour, honesty, integrity and dignity.

I will dance like that, enjoying the pleasures as they arise and where they are absent, enjoy that too. Where I can I will take the hand of others and pirouette through this day. My steps will be good steps and the footprint I leave will be nothing at all...

Whatever patterns the music of the day creates, I am in resonance with the sruti note, the underlying ground on which all appears, the certainty of being. You call it heart, it's a good word. I see it in the enduring essence of nature; in the dawn, an English field, in the hilltops and mountains, in the ancient and timeless places and in the content of each moment as the beingness of I.

This depth of knowing, this clarity, this reliable fountainhead of truth and honesty is all that I am and all that I need, upon which dancing unfolds. Whilst it lasts I will marvel at the spontaneity of it, when it drops away, I will love you more. Love in fullness and love in absence, love prevailing, untouched and unaffected like the sruti note. I am that. I am that.

Accept what comes
Release what goes
Claim the moment
Trust the future
Realise the Self
Om Namah Shivaya

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