

The practice of Atma Vichara -1

Who am I?

Practice

Sit quietly, relax and become still.

Let your attitude become gentle, easy and soft.

In this moment there is no doubt that you are aware, it is natural and obvious.

Remain steady and pose the question "Who am I?"

Ask that question once or twice.

You are not seeking an intellectual answer. You are recognising that there is an I that knows and is aware but you do not know what it is. It is not the body, not the thoughts nor the events but closer than that, more intimate than that; the presence of being itself.

Hold attentiveness in this presence of being. You are not meditating on an object you are not trying to find something, you are being the subject, that which already exists. When all things cease this subject remains, when all thoughts subside, this subject remains.

Be steady with this, be still with this, attentive and alert as who am I?

When thoughts arise to disturb you, ask "Who knows these thoughts?" Then again you will recognise they're appearing within the presence of being that presents as the feeling I. It is this to which our attention turns.

When your attention drifts, periodically put the question, "Who am I?" again. This brings you back to awareness of the presence of being. Be steady as that.

Commentary

All the time perception is operating and following certain habits. Most of the time our attention is fully taken up in this outward display and inner commentary, watching it, assessing it and thinking about it. As you sit any kind of experience may come to you; sensations in your body, information through the senses, memories, thoughts, moods and feelings. All of these things are the current of life, they are happening by themselves. They are inevitable and are part of the play of events, they rise and fall. It doesn't matter what these things are but consider instead in what are they rising and falling, what is it that is the constant factor that knows all these changing things.

There is something in this moment, something constant which is here now and which endures perpetually. It is not something new to find, it is something to be accepted as already here. This something is direct, familiar and full; continuous without break or gap. It is awareness, the knowing that I exist, the intimate presence of being. This feeling has been here every second throughout your whole life, to which you have never turned your interest. Turning your interest there and diving deep into that as the essential I is Atma Vichara.