

1 ATMAN OR THE SELF

1. The Background, the Reality, of everyone is that same Eternal, Ever Blessed, Ever Pure, and Ever Perfect One. It is the Atman, the Soul, in the saint and the sinner, in the happy and the miserable, in the beautiful and the ugly, in men and in animals; it is the same throughout.

It is the Shining One.

2. Here I stand and if I shut my eyes and try to conceive my existence, "I", "I", "I",- what is the idea before me? The idea of a body. Am I, then, nothing but a combination of material substances? The Vedas declare, `No', I am a spirit living in a body. I am not the body.

The body will die, but I shall not die. Here am I in this body; it will fall, but I shall go on living.

3. The Vedas say the whole world is a mixture of independence and dependence, of freedom and slavery, but through it all shines the soul independent, immortal, pure, perfect, holy.

For if it is independent, it cannot perish, as death is but a change, and depends upon conditions; if independent, it must be perfect, for imperfection is again but a condition, and therefore dependent. And this immortal and perfect soul must be the same in the highest God as well as in the humblest man, the difference between them being only in the degree in which this soul manifests itself.

4. It cannot be that the soul knows, but it is knowledge. It cannot be that the soul is happy, it is happiness itself. That which is happy, has borrowed its happiness; that which has knowledge, has received its knowledge; and that which has relative existence, has only a reflected existence.

5. That very thing which we now see as the universe, will appear to us as God Absolute, and that very God who has so long been external will appear to be internal, as our own Self.

6. There is no change whatsoever in the Soul-Infinite, Absolute, Eternal, Knowledge, Bliss, and Existence.

7. If there is one common doctrine that runs through all our apparently fighting and contradictory sects, it is that all glory, power and purity are within the soul already; only according to Ramanuja the soul contracts and expands at times, and according to Shankara, it comes under a delusion. Never mind these differences. All admit the truth that the power is there- potential or manifest, it is there--and the sooner you believe that, the better for you.

8. The feeling of independence which possesses us all, shows there is something in us besides mind and body. The soul that reigns within is independent, and creates the desire for freedom.

9. Each soul is a star, and all stars are set in that infinite azure, dial eternal sky, the Lord. There is the root, the reality, the real individuality of each and all. Religion began with the search after some of these stars that had passed beyond our horizon, and ended in finding them all in God, and ourselves in the same place.

10. Know then, that thou art He, and model your whole life accordingly, and he who knows this and models his life accordingly, will no more grovel in darkness.

11. This truth about the soul is first to be heard. If you have heard, it, think about it. Once you have done that, meditate upon it. No more vain arguments! Satisfy yourself once that you are the infinite spirit. If that is true, it must be nonsense that you are the body. You are the Self, and that must be realised. Spirit must see itself as spirit. Now the spirit is seeing itself as the body. That must stop. The moment you begin to realise that, you are released.

12. As we cannot know except through effects that we have eyes, so we cannot see the Self except by Its effects. It cannot be brought down to the low plane of sense-perception. It is the condition of everything in the universe, though Itself unconditioned.

13. It is not for the sake of the husband that the wife loves the husband, but for the sake of the Atman that she loves the husband, because she loves the Self. None loves the wife for the sake of the wife, but it is because he loves the Self that he loves the wife. None loves the children for the children; but because one loves the Self, therefore one loves the children. None loves wealth on account of the wealth; but because one loves the Self, therefore one loves wealth. None loves the Brahmana for the sake of the Brahmana; but because one loves the Self, one loves the Brahmana. So, none loves the Kshatriya for the sake of the Kshatriya, but because one loves the Self. Neither does any one love the world on account of the world, but because one loves the Self. None, similarly, loves the gods on account of the gods, but because one loves the Self. None loves a thing for that thing's sake; but it is for the Self that one loves it. This Self, therefore, is to be heard, reasoned about, and meditated upon.

14. Within there is the lion-the eternally pure, illumined and ever free Atman; and directly one realises It through meditation and concentration, this world of Maya vanishes. It is equally present in all, and the more one practises, the quicker does the Kundalini the "coiled-up power awaken in one. When this power reaches the head, one's vision is unobstructed-one realises the Atman.

15. "Whom the ignorant worship. Him I preach unto thee. This one and only God is the "Knownest" of the known. He is the one thing we see every where. All know their own Self, all know, "I am", even animals. All we know is the projection of the Self.

16. That Self-existent One is far removed from the organs. The organs or instruments see outwards, but the self-existing One, the Self, is seen inwards. You must remember the

qualification that is required: the desire to know this Self by turning the eyes inwards.

17. Those who are evil-doers, whose minds are not peaceful, can never see the Light. It is to those who are true in heart, pure in deed; whose senses are controlled, that this Self manifests itself.

18. This Atman is not to be reached by too much talking, nor is it to be reached by the power of the intellect, nor by much study of the scriptures.

19. After long searches here and there, in temples and churches, in earths and in heavens, at last you come back, completing the circle from where you started, to your own soul and find that He, for whom you have been seeking all over the world, for whom you have been weeping and praying in churches and temples, on whom you were looking as the mystery of all mysteries shrouded in the clouds, is nearest of the near, is your own Self, the reality of your life, body, and soul.