

The Atmajnana Yajnas of Dr S Bhagavadpada:

The Scope, Goals, and Fruits

1. Introduction:

All things in nature have to be cleaned periodically so that they may always function at their peak efficiency in their original state of pristine purity. For this very reason, consciousness too just like our vehicles, our bodies and all our machinery, has to be periodically cleaned and fine tuned. Our human experiences, such as insults & hurts; intensely pleasurable as well as intensely painful incidents, *when not properly 'digested' and assimilated*, will result in consciousness getting clogged & jammed, leading to a definite impairment of its original efficiency and subtlety.

The *Atmajnana Yajnas evocative of the Upanishadic ethos of self-knowing and Self-Realization* are an opportunity for such a cleansing and healing of our consciousness. The human ego is often a major factor of obstruction in such contexts, because it acts like a 'toxic substance' [demonic energy], causing pain, and eventually leading to a breakdown in the healthy functioning of consciousness. Every kind of *yoga*, including the present *Atmajnana Yajnas*, addresses in one way or the other, only this important question of the purification of our consciousness.

The intensity of the 'new life' that may bloom into existence, as a result of the awakening [*Atmaprasannata*], can vary widely from one individual to another. For serious seekers who have already been on the path [*mumukshus*], who are blessed with *shraddha*[faith] & *bhakti* [devotion to the Divine]; *it may tantamount to a radical*

‘metamorphosis’, much like the gluttonous caterpillar in them, ‘dying’ and the beautiful butterfly, flying out in freedom from the chrysalis, the moment its time of deliverance has arrived. For others, if it is not found to be so dramatic a transformation, it will also have to do with their own receptivity and their own willingness to change, *and the lengths to which they are prepared to go, and the degree to which they are prepared to sacrifice the little self, for the attainment of this sublime goal. For in all this, one can only go so far as one is willing to, and the samkalpa [intention] matters, except that this samkalpa ought not to take the form of a willful insistence.* Through the following glimpses, we are no more than attempting to give a taste of the ‘new life’, and we shall do this by contrasting it sharply with the relatively lifeless condition in which we now find ourselves.

2. ‘A New Life’ Displaces the Old One of ‘Excessive Sensory Extroversion’:

Understanding the origin of ‘conflict’ [as the perpetual division between *what is & what should be*] and then, going beyond this conflict, *through the seeing of what is, and through the giving up of all effort, to ‘improve’ and modify this what is, to an idealistic what should be- we arrive suddenly at the ‘new life’, whose hall mark is the absence of all mental effort, of all becoming. With this, the old life of excessive extroversion of the senses, and of the consciousness itself, suffers a profound setback, which is itself the blessing. If this setback to the extroversion of the senses and consciousness happens ‘again & again’, the chances are much better for the auspicious new life to displace the older troublesome one.*

3. Pratyahara [Withdrawal of the Senses from their Sense-Objects]:

On account of *watching what is, effortlessly*, not only does learning about the ways of the self, occurs; more importantly, the old life suffers repeated setbacks and thus falls away, giving place to the new one. Once this happens, *Pratyahara* or withdrawal of the senses from the sense objects, also comes to pass, and we become skillful in withdrawing the horses of the senses, from their alluring sense-objects. **This results in a palpable calming of consciousness, thus enabling us to abide in the *Atma*, the Imperceptible Inner Self. The *Atma* is also the abode of Intelligence, Compassion, and the store house of Sattvaguna.**

4. Feelings, Sensitivity & Empathy are Awakened:

In the old life, feelings and sensitivity were wholly absent-they were completely eclipsed by self-centered activity, and excessive extroversion of the senses and consciousness. **In the new life, *Pratyahara* and the consequent calming of consciousness happens.**

Feelings can arise only when *Sattva* has increased in consciousness, and with feelings, another refinement in consciousness-sensitivity, and then empathy, all become natural. *In this state, struggle for survival, which was so dominant in the old life, is wholly absent, or at any rate greatly diminished. The smallest and most insignificant acts of daily living, like bending down and picking up a piece of paper, shaking someone's hands, watching a crow walk, or driving a car, all become experiences suffused with feeling and tranquility, and in this state, the old tendency of 'being divisive' hardly has a chance to surface. In the new life, feelings dominate, rather than logical thought, yet these feelings also permit the flow of a number of astonishing insights.*

5. 'Swadharma' Comes to Displace 'Survival for Bread & Butter':

'Swadharma' ['vocation for each as mandated by the Divine'] in life, emerges, *as a result of realizing our correct identity, namely, the*

Atma. Once this happens, one no more works for mere ‘bread & butter’, or one no more attempts to seek recognition. *Instead, coming under Atmic inspiration, with its indelible stamp which will be visible for all to see, one meets all challenges in life face to face, through Atma Shakti, and self-dignity, its offshoot. Note that this is wholly different from the empowerment of the personality that is being much talked about.*

Of course, for some people, who are more fortunate, ‘Swadharma’ may also fall into their lap, without they doing any kind of *sadhana* or enquiry-*in such cases, it must be inferred that connection to the Atma, has occurred at birth itself as a blessing - though the individual, may still be quite unaware of it!*

6. ‘Becoming as a Way of Life’, subsides, whereas ‘Being as a Way of Life’, comes to add Luster to our Inner Wellbeing & its Palpable Presence is Strongly Felt:

An auspicious sense of ‘self’ as ‘Being’, arises, which is not even a higher personality, *but just Being- which you will never want to exchange with any other ‘self’, howsoever, grandiose that self, may appear to you and to the world [this is the acid test]. The old life of becoming falls away, to give way to abiding in Being. Whether, it is drinking a glass of water, or buttoning a shirt, or looking at a face, a peculiar calmness and silent joy, comes to pervade every moment, in this way, the present moment offers infinitely more than the pleasurable excitements and painful disappointments of the past and future.*

7. With ‘Being’ Comes ‘the Power of Innocence & Unknowingness’:

Life entirely ceases to be ‘*a movement in conflict*’, and a struggle, and the old life of games, cunning, cold calculation, ulterior motives, is all together gone, *replaced by only the power of innocence, the power of unknowingness, whose value will impress itself upon us, provided we*

become vulnerable to this transformation that may effortlessly come to pass, during the Atmajnana Yajnas.

8. Intelligence is Awakened, when You Abide as the *Atma*:

Importantly [Prajna], Intelligence is awakened, *as a result of abiding in the seemingly 'non-existent' Being of the Atma [Self].*

9. The Presence of 'An Unseen Power' Is with You Always!

In the new life, you can go through life very intensely & creatively, very sensitively, wisely, objectively, intelligently, *facing all its challenges, without ever being cowed down, depressed, or feeling incapable.*

10. Ending of Conflict, Bestows Abundant Energy, Courage:

You begin to approach every situation in life, *not from fear, not from a competitive spirit, not out of a self-defensive egoism, but freshly, originally, intelligently, and importantly, with abundant energy.*

11. Past & Future Lose their Attraction. The Present Alone is Soothing and Untouched by the Scars of Time:

No sorrow, no wallowing in the past, no day dreaming into the future, but being ever alert and awake in the present, you start flowing with life, whose sacredness and mystery you may begin to feel, for the first time.

12. Blessings of Self-Abnegation and Self-Expression Are Yours.

Depending upon what is called for by a given life situation, *you will find yourself, spontaneously self-abnegating, or spontaneously self-expressive. You will be amazed to find that, the awakened Intelligence [Prajna] needs no special formula for a successful life.*

13. Equipoise, and Equanimity, Doorways to All Beneficence:

A peculiar transformation takes place-*Sukha & Dukha* [pleasure & pain], **both cease to attract your attention**, you are neither excited, nor are you depressed & crest-fallen. *Instead you have pleasant equanimity as your constant basic beat in consciousness. Without this blessing, our human life becomes devoid of sacredness and significance.*

14. No Mismatch Between your Consciousness and Changing Reality:

As the ‘self’ is rendered sterile, inactive & ‘**broken**’, the eclipse on the Atma, created by ‘the self’, by *Maya* [primordial illusion, according to the Hindu Sages], and by ignorance is lifted, *and the Atma, shines, as Intelligence & Compassion. This means that, in every life situation, Intelligence will begin to flow naturally & spontaneously, along with Compassion, so that, there is hardly a mismatch, between changing Reality, and the rhythm of consciousness, which must exactly tally with and reflect this changing Reality.... Significance of the Hindu ritual of the breaking of the coconut, in front of the Deity.*

15. The Versatility and Flexibility of the Sage:

You will approach life, not as a petty little warrior, but as a godly Sage, who perceives the oneness of life, and who is therefore vulnerable to the totality of life, yet totally undaunted. You will weep with life, where this is called for, you will laugh with life, if this is natural and appropriate, and you will even fight with life, if this is called for by the changing Reality. In other words, Intelligence will respond to every changing life situation.


16. The Exalted Place of Avatars, Masters, Sages & Acharyas:

Contemplating again & again, the ‘Tat Tvam Asi’ Sutra from the Chandogya Upanishad [6.8.6.7; 6.9.3.4, etc]

||That which is the subtlest of all, is the ‘Self’ of all this. It is the Truth, it is the ‘Self’ [Atma]. That, Thou Art [‘Tat Tvam Asi’]||

You may come to realize in a flash that the luminaries of all spiritual traditions: the Masters, Avatars, Sages & Acharyas, were all either God-Realized or, Self-Realized beings, and that they spoke from their authentic Realizations-this then became their wondrous teachings. And that the customary duality between the Master/Avatar /Sage/ Acharya and the devotee/disciple, *is not even acknowledged* in the Advaita & in the Atmajnana traditions. *Nevertheless, you may also see great wisdom in a devotional adoration of the Masters, Avatars, Sages & Acharyas - possibly as a preparation for Self-Realization, and also perhaps, for soaking in the purifying feelings of humility and devotion.*

- Dr S Bhagavadpada, Oct 31st, 2011, as an Introduction for the 2nd, Atmajnana Yajna, which was scheduled to take place in Chennai on Nov 5th, 6th, 2011.



Dr.S. Bhagavadpada's Atmajnana Yajnas

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