

Śankara Bhagavadpāda's
|| 'Tat Tvam Asi' Meditations ||

(A 'Homeward bound' Meditative Journey into *self*-Knowing and Self-Realization)

Dates: Oct 3rd and 4th, 2015 (Sat 9:00 am to 6:00 pm & Sun 10:00 am to 7:00 pm), Tampa, FL, USA

Part I : The Larger Picture



“Meditation, certainly surpasses intelligent perception. The earth seems to be meditating. The space between earth and heaven seems to be meditating. Heaven itself seems to be meditating. Water too seems to be meditating. The mountains seem to be meditating. Devas and humans also seem to be meditating. Those who are truly great are so, only because of their meditations. So, worship Meditation as the ultimate Brahman”

- Chandogya Upanishad [Ch.7, Sec.6.1, Sanatkumara's teaching to Narada]

|| 'Tat Tvam Asi' ||

(An Indian Charitable Trust for Dharma & Moksha)



|| Jyotiṣāmayanam Cakṣuḥ ||
(Vedic Astrology is the Eye of Wisdom)

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|| 'Tat Tvam Asi' Meditations ||

(A 'Homeward bound' Meditative Journey into *self*-Knowing and Self-Realization)

Dates: Oct 3rd and 4th, 2015 (Sat 9:00 am to 6:00 pm & Sun 10:00 am to 7:00 pm)

Venue: Marshall Student Centre

4202, East Fowler Avenue, MSC 2708*

Tampa, Florida 33620

Programme Organized and Hosted by : Sri Subramanian M. Kumar

Part I : The Larger Picture

* 2708 is the Class Room No., in Marshall Student Centre.

Parking is in front of MSC, in any spot that is not marked "Reserved".



Humanity's Immortality and Divinity:

Man is fundamentally an Infinite Divine being, so he will always resist everything which goes against the grain of his Immortality and his Sovereignty. The Hindu name for his imperishable Divine Self is the Atman. This is also the reason why he abhors physical death. In this feeling of course, he is completely mistaken, because, the death of his physical body is not certainly the end of his eternal existence. As he is the Atman (the Timeless Divine Self), which was never born and which will therefore never die, his fear of death is nothing but the result of a delusion that sensory perceptions have bestowed upon him.

Paradoxically however, because he is in a kind of 'sleep' in this earthly existence, he does not remember very clearly, who he is and what his true nature is. Nevertheless, in spite of this forgetfulness, which in a way seems to be even Divinely ordained, the rumblings of some resistance always stirs up within him, every time he meets with the least kind of opposition-be it big or small. Psychologists do not yet have a proper clue to this ubiquitous tendency of his adamant nature. Far from being sourced in the grandiose aspirations of his immature ego, it is, on the contrary, sourced in his Immortality and in his Divinity, even though in his 'sleep', he is quite unconscious of this heritage. It is against the background of this eternal Truth of his Divine nature that we must view everything that happens in man's earthly life.

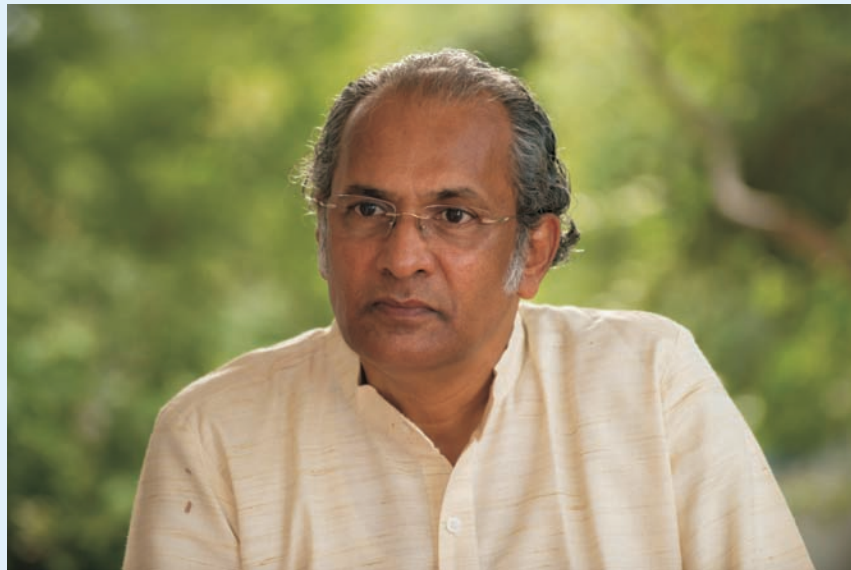
Man's Human Nature Co-Exists with his Hidden Divine Nature:

In contrast to his Divine nature, we also happen to have man's 'very troublesome' human nature, side by side. These two natures will seem to be contradictory till such time as 'Tat Tvam Asi', the ultimate destination in the spiritual

journey is reached. Once that destination has been reached, all contradictions will disappear, leaving only an ineffable mystery as the fruit of ‘Tat Tvam Asi’.

Can Man’s Divine Nature be Entirely Ignored during his Earthly Sojourn?

An important question arises at this stage, because we have just now glimpsed the co-existence of both natures - *Whether man’s human nature can go through this earthly life, entirely oblivious of the hidden Divine nature?* In the Hindu view, man’s Divine nature cannot entirely and permanently be hidden from his own view, for there will be times in a man’s life when this Divine nature (which by and large remains ‘behind the scenes’) will suddenly burst forth into the foreground of his life, coming into full view and thus, reminding him of his Divine origins. *The price we will have to pay for turning a blind eye to our Divine nature is actually enormous-this is the burdensome price of having to live with sorrow all through our earthly existence.*



Śankara Bhagavadpāda

Man’s Divine Nature in the Hindu View:

In fact, in the Hindu view, the last quarter of any human life is to be devoted very consciously to the quest of discovering and reclaiming our Divine nature, and the Hindus call this quest *moksha* or liberation. *Liberation from what? From the limitation of human nature, which implies liberation from the burden of unending sorrow.* We have to remember at this point that as we now turn our attention to man’s human nature, our ‘language’ too will be obliged to swing in an entirely different direction - suggestive of the complete absence of our Divine nature.

Man’s ‘Very Troublesome’ Human Nature, Two Primordial Illusions:

Deluded by sensory perceptions, man thinks of himself as ‘somebody’ or ‘something’, *which of course, he certainly is not* - for these ‘masks’ in which he

customarily clothes himself during his earthly sojourn are at best only, what in the Hindu world, are recognized to be his 'false selves' (*anatmas*). Similarly in his immaturity, approaching the Divine for reasons of fear and desire, he mistakes the Divine to be 'some Source' or an awesome Power outside of himself - *which again, It certainly is not*. Thus, man lives his entire life founded on these two primordial illusions, one regarding himself - that he is at least the ego, if not the body - and another regarding the Divine - that the Divine is 'some Power', according to his egoistic, fanciful and childish notions. *The illusion about the Divine, leads to pessimism or cynicism at best, or to arrogant atheism at worst; while the illusion about himself leads to interminable sorrow, with high and low tides.*

It is therefore not surprising that man is so deeply entrenched in misery in innumerable ways, ever since the *self*-centered thinking commenced in childhood itself. In whichever direction he turns, he seems to create more misery for himself. Every attempt to flee from this *self*-created condition is seen only to unleash newer problems. *We can see him perpetually in conflict with himself, in conflict with others and also in conflict with God-as he has conceived God or the Divine to be.*

It is obvious that such an approach to daily living based entirely on the *human* tendency of gratification of the senses and the ego, must sooner or later, come to its fatal end, precipitated by some colossal crisis in which the entire edifice that he so carefully built brick by brick, will crumble and go into the dust.

The Inner Journey Beyond 'Belief and Faith' of the Religions:

The religions came into existence because their founders were probably intensely aware of the tragedy in which man's human nature is mired-*so they attempted in various ways to redeem man from his life of illusions, thus revealing his Divine nature. In our own modern times, except for anchorage through belief sourced in fear and desire, or through an occasional miraculous healing or a superficial consolation that the religions may offer; as such, the religions have not raised man to the loftier plane of 'understanding' the Divine; instead the spiritual journey is considered to be 'fulfilled' at the rudimentary milestones of belief or faith itself. No wonder, man continues to be the same old confused, proud and arrogant creature, addicted to pleasure, prone to self-centeredness and given to endless perversity in thought.*

Is There a Way Out At All?

Seeing all this, we are left wondering whether man will ever change deeply from the centre of his being, from his heart? Does he have enough power within

himself to be able to ‘save himself’? Yes, to ‘save himself’, for gone are those former times when there was still that ‘bridge’ of innocent faith, that connected him to the Divine. *With the apotheosis of science and technology, even that ancient ‘bridge’ has been pulled down by his overwrought intellect.*

When Man is at the Saddle-Point of Endless Despondency:

His consummate weapon, his intellect of which he is so proud, will no more be at his disposal when calamities, sorrows and misfortunes knock on his door; when the great adversities of life - disease, old-age, dishonor & disgrace, loneliness, broken relationships and death become his lot. At such saddle-points, he will have but two options, one to die a sad lingering death of cynicism and bitterness and another, to be reborn anew by turning inwards, and building an authentic spiritual life that has anyway been long overdue. Misfortunes may seem ghastly, but they actually serve to open a door to the discovery of the Divine within man’s own bosom. For every modern, this is where the new life can possibly begin. From now on, it will have to be a journey ‘from unreality to Reality, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality’.

The Journey Back Home-to our Divine Nature, ‘Tat Tvam Asi’ (That Thou Art):

‘Tat Tvam Asi’ is humanity’s ultimate destination, as humanity sets out on a ‘Homeward bound’ meditative journey. It says that you (*Tvam*) are (*Asi*) the Divine (*Tat*), in its Absolute Unmanifest aspect. In this *sutra* (law), man is neither identified with his body, nor with the flux of his feelings and thoughts (his consciousness), but going beyond both of these superficial and illusory identities and negating them both, his True Self, the *Atman*, or his True identity is pointed to, an identity that is timeless, mysterious and ‘unknowable’, in the sense that this *Atman*, is a not a knowable object, like the infinite number of knowable sensory objects, to which man is so accustomed in his day to day life.

The sutra thus says, this silent core of the ‘Knowing Self’ (which we as humans have never bothered to enquire into) in all of us runs into the territory of the Unmanifest Divine in such a way that no dividing line can be drawn to separate this core of the ‘Knowing Self’ from the Unmanifest Divine.

The *Atman* (Divine Nature) vis-à-vis the Chattering *self* (Human Nature):

We are this ‘Knowing Self’ (*Atman*) as soon as *the chattering self* (to use J. Krishnamurti’s term) is calmed and silenced. This silent core of the human consciousness, the ‘Knowing Self’ (*Atman*) is, at it were, only the ‘tip of the Iceberg’ of the Unmanifest Divine, while the vast hidden remainder of that Iceberg, abides only in the realm of the Unmanifest, into which even the human ‘Knowing Self’ cannot possibly set foot. Christians call the Unmanifest aspect of the Divine, Godhead or the

Father in Heaven, while Hindus call this mysterious Source, *Parabrahma*, meaning, 'That' which transcends the sum total of all creation (*Brahman*). *Atman* is also the Hindus term for this Timeless 'Knowing Self'.

The Limitations of the Populist Forms of the Religions:

Traditional religions which are populist, pander to the ego-needs of the masses and are therefore quite often innocent of the farther reaches of the religious and spiritual life, for they operate in the world of duality, in which, man functions not as the Atman, but as many anatmas (false selves). Because of this disguise coming upon man, sorrow and ignorance become central to the human drama, which paradoxically man cannot accept either, much less tolerate, because man is by nature Divine and therefore limitless.



Prema, Sankara and Kumar offering prayers at the commencement of the 'Tat Tvam Asi' retreat in Tampa, 2014



Participants offering prayers at the commencement of the 'Tat Tvam Asi' retreat in Tampa, 2014

Part II; The Content and Scope of 'Tat Tvam Asi' Meditations:
This has been prepared as a separate document. It may be read as a sequel
to Part I.

All Other Details Regarding the Retreat:

Venue:

Marshall Student Centre, 4202, East Fowler Avenue, MSC 2708
Tampa, Florida 33620

Organizer's Address:

Sri Subramanian M. Kumar,
1135, Anolas Way, Lutz, FL 33548. Cell # : (813) 679 4237

For more information / bookings / consultations:

Sri Subramanian M. Kumar's Email: smkumar3591@gmail.com

Vedic Astrology and/or Private Consultations with Sankara Bhagavadpada:

Sri Subramanian M. Kumar, the Organizer must be contacted,
as he gives these appointments.

Sankara Bhagavadpada's Websites:

www.tat-tvam-asi.org, www.hinduworldastrology.net

Completion of Registration Forms:

Participants are requested to fill in the registration forms, sign them and e-mail them to the organizer well in advance. These registration forms can be downloaded from the website: www.tat-tvam-asi.org

Fee for Participation:

\$300/- per participant (\$500/- for a couple; \$150/-, for a student).

Mode of Payment:

Please send your cheques in favor of 'Subramanian Kumar' to the above address.

Lunch & Beverages:

Apart from Lunch, a refreshing beverage with some cookies will be provided in the fore-noon and also in the after-noon on both the days.

Śankara Bhagavadpāda Clarifies the Origin of his Name:

“The name, Śankara Bhagavadpāda was bestowed on me by my master Śri Śri Bhagavan, as a spiritual blessing. This happened, as far back as in 1991- some two years after the commencement of his spiritual mission. My responsibility in his mission during those early years was enormous. This bestowed name actually happens to be that of the highly venerated historical figure of *Ādi Śaṅkarāchārya* [509 BC to 477 BC]. In my view, my master selected this name because, ever since his younger years, the illustrious, historical figure of *Ādi Śaṅkarāchārya* was very beloved to him. My master's compassion for me was also very extraordinary, so he gave this name as a blessing.

“Now that I am in public life again as an independent teacher (since 2011), I felt morally obliged to make it known to those who have taken a serious interest in my ‘Tat Tvam Asi’ mission; that neither now, nor at any time in the past, have I ever staked any claim, overtly or covertly, to being connected to the illustrious historical figure of *Ādi Śaṅkarāchārya*, through past-life *samskaras*. To my mind, any such claim would be wholly repugnant and also morally indefensible. Importantly, I feel so deeply self-composed within myself that even a single flutter of thought in that obnoxious direction would not even occur to me. On the contrary, I am very deeply moved by the historical figure of *Ādi Śaṅkarāchārya*, in just the same devotional way in which I have always been moved by my many masters.

“The name change from Shanker Ramachandran to Śankara Bhagavadpāda was published in the Tamil Nadu Government Gazette, dated September 18th, 1991, that is, almost 24 years ago.”

-Śankara Bhagavadpāda, Chennai, India, on June 13th, 2015.
www.hinduworldastrology.net, www.tat-tvam-asi.org

